

## BE A GOOD RECEIVER

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Sunday, Oct. 6, 2024

*So, this small town only had four churches: a Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic, and Baptist church. But they were all struggling with the same problem, and that was having a bunch of squirrels in the church they couldn't get rid of. So, they each had a meeting and came up with their own solution.*

*The Presbyterians decided that it was predestined that the squirrels were to be in church, and they decided that they would just live with them. The Methodists decided to do something with the squirrels that was very loving in nature, and that was: they trapped them, and then they released them to a park at the edge of town. And three days later, they were all back in the church. [Congregants laugh] The Catholics also humanely trapped them and attempted to teach them the rhythm method. [Congregants laugh] And ... which, of course, did not work. But the Baptists had the best solution: they voted to make all of the squirrels members ... and now they only see them at Christmas and Easter. [Congregants laugh]*

So, how many people as children were taught: it is better to give than to receive? And that, of course, is from Acts 20: Verse 35. One of the versions Jesus says is, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

And why is that? And it is because giving is an expression of God's love. It is an expression of compassion and kindness and generosity. It helps us make connections with other people and think of others. I mean, there is something powerful and amazing about giving. Jesus said, *"Give and you shall receive."* And he's talking about the Law of Circulation; the Law of Giving and Receiving. And the thing is: giving is the thing that activates that Law of circulation. Giving is the thing that activates the Law of Giving and Receiving. We are told that God loves a cheerful giver, so giving is powerful.

But my question today is about the other half of that Law of Circulation and that Law of Giving and Receiving. So, how many people would say that you are a good receiver? How many people would say you struggle and it's kind of hard sometimes to be a good receiver? How many people would admit that you've ever felt uncomfortable, awkward or even embarrassed when people are complimenting you and saying all these fabulous things about you? And you feel uncomfortable about that?

You know, being a gracious receiver is an art ... and an art that we don't often consciously cultivate, because we have been taught so much about giving and thinking of others that we sometimes minimize, devalue and even trivialize receiving and being a good receiver.

You know, we always say we want prosperity and wealth and abundance; we want to make millions, we want to win the lottery; we want to have a happy and successful life. We want to receive all this abundance from the universe. Yet, someone gives us a little compliment and we can't deal with it. We make some self-deprecating joke about it or some excuse.

You know, you say, *"Oh, your dress looks so beautiful."*

*"Oh, it's cheap. I got it on sale."*

*"Your hair looks so wonderful today."*

*"Oh, I couldn't figure out what to do, so I just put it up in a bun."*

You know, it's like, *"That was a great presentation that you gave!"*

*"Eh. I could have done better ..."*

It is amazing! We want all this abundance from the universe, but we have a hard time even accepting simple things like a compliment! We have a difficult time even accepting gifts; the first thing we say:

"Oh, you really shouldn't have." "No, no; that wasn't necessary at all." "Oh, that's too expensive; that's too much. I can't accept it." Again, we want all this abundance from the universe, but we get gifts and we begin to reject and have a difficult time accepting it.

Even somebody offering us help: "Hey, want me to give you a hand with that?"

"Oh, that's okay. I got it." Even though we could use some help, we always say, "Hey, I've got it. I can do it myself."

Another area where we have a hard time receiving is with love. We say we want love and deeper experiences of love ... but sometimes we have love show up in our lives in some way and we're overwhelmed and we shut down our hearts or we withdraw or push it away in some form.

So we wonder why we aren't living as prosperous as lives or with as much love as we want. And the answer is because we're not really good at receiving. We're not great at letting it in and allowing ourselves to have and accept and enjoy the abundant good that we desire.

And so the question is: Why do we have such a hard time accepting and receiving the very things that we desire? And here are five reasons I think we have a hard time receiving.

The first one is: **we've been so trained that it is better to give than receive that we think receiving is bad.** We think it's selfish. We think it's greedy to want what we want and to be a receiver. We are so conditioned to give -- so conditioned to share -- we have a difficult time receiving. Anybody ever been to a restaurant and you're splitting an appetizer like calamari or bruschetta, and the last piece comes and no one will take it? Because we're all embarrassed! And if we do say anything we're like, "Oh, no; you can have it." You know, and I'm just showing it. We have a hard time receiving; we have a hard time with it.

Another one is that: we have a hard time with receiving because **we don't want to look like we're needy.** We don't want to look like we're weak or we're not capable. "I don't need anyone's help; I can take care of it myself." And that makes us a vault feel vulnerable and out of control, when we receive. Giving feels like it's got power and control, where receiving seems like it's more vulnerable and we don't have as much control. We feel weaker.

The third one is a **fear of intimacy.** To be a receiver, you have to be more vulnerable. You have to let the walls down. You have to kind of let yourself be known. And sometimes we have a hard time with that. We'd rather not receive because of that fear of intimacy.

The fourth one is a **fear of obligation.** You know, we often grow up with the thing is: "If I give you ... If you give me, I should give you back something." I remember in our family, my mom at Christmas, if somebody came over and they brought a gift for us and we didn't have a gift for them, she would tell one of my sisters, "Go in my closet and get one of those extra box of Turtles or an extra tin of biscuits; wrap it and bring it." Because if they give us a gift, we should give them a gift. I mean, we have that in our mindset. And then it triggers distrust, you know, because we think, "Oh; if they're giving me something, I wonder what they want from me." "Or I don't want to owe anybody anything, you know, so I don't want to receive anything from them."

And then the fifth one is that we have a hard time with receiving because **we don't feel worthy.** We don't feel deserving of gifts or compliments. We don't feel deserving of much success or love or greatness or incredible responsibility. Sometimes we don't feel worthy of the things that we actually desire.

Now I want to make a differentiation between a getter, a taker and a receiver.

So a **GETTER** is someone whose energy is single-minded. They know what they want, and they go after it. If they got to do a lot of work, they'll do the work. If they've got to manipulate, they'll manipulate. If they've got to charm, they'll do what it takes to get what it is they want. And whether it's a promotion, or it's a marriage proposal, or to make a certain amount of money, they will be focused on that.

The **TAKER** is more of an energy of entitlement: you know, a feeling that, you know, *"I'm entitled to this."* You know, *"My job owes me; my parents owe me; the world/life owes me."* And the thing about it is: they want to get theirs before they lose it or before someone else takes it. And so, the idea of a taker is also steeped in a consciousness of lack and limitation. *"There's not enough; I'd better get mine."*

But the mindset of a **RECEIVER** is a state of mind and a state of being centered in abundance, and an awareness of how much good is around us. It is an energy that is open; that is receptive and welcomes new opportunities; welcomes new friendships; welcomes new experiences. You know, a good receiver accepts good with grace and humility, and is joyful and thankful, and feels a level of worthiness.

So why is it important to learn to be a good receiver? Well, I think the most important reason is because it shows that we understand and that we are aligned with the spiritual laws of life: the Law of Circulation; the Law of Abundance; and the Law of Giving and Receiving. These are the dynamic laws of how the universe works, and it's all centered on giving and receiving.

So being a good receiver is important, because it is a spiritual law; it is a spiritual practice; and it is a spiritual responsibility for all of us to be good receivers. Because it lets in more light in and through us in our lives, and in and to the world. It lets in more love and more joy and goodness. You know, us being the happiest we can be -- the most fulfilled and successful and joyful we can be -- is our spiritual responsibility. To bring more light into this world.

And so, receiving blesses us; it blesses others; and it keeps the flow of abundance moving in our lives. And anytime we resist or reject or have a hard time accepting and receiving, we are blocking our own good; blocking good for others; and slowing down and blocking the flow in life.

So my question is: Where in your life do you have a hard time receiving? And how many people believe that your life would improve and get better if you learned how to be a good receiver? Anybody?

All right, so today we're going to look at three ways to become a good receiver.

And the first one is to **SAY 'THANK YOU' WHEN YOU RECEIVE**. It sounds simple, but sometimes we are so uncomfortable receiving that we either clam up and say nothing, and we have a difficult time actually acknowledging and giving thanks. And so, even if we're uncomfortable with receiving -- and we're resisting -- we should all smile and say, *"Thank you; I appreciate that."*

Someone gives you a compliment? Just smile; say, *"Thank you; I appreciate that."*

Someone gives you a gift? Just smile; say, *"Thank you; I appreciate that."*

*"Do you know you look fabulous today?"*

[Congregants:] *"Thank you; I appreciate that!"*

*"You know, you're one of the most positive people I know."*

[Congregants:] *"Thank you; I appreciate that!"*

*"You know, I love the way you handled that difficult situation so smoothly."*

[Congregants:] *"Thank you; I appreciate that!"*

Thank you; I appreciate that! A simple, simple practice for us to help us learn how to be better receivers. Help us to get over the discomfort and the awkwardness we all sometimes feel in that; you know, to help us receive it; to help us acknowledge it; to help us to accept it. And whether you say, just say, "Thank you," or "Thank you; I appreciate that," or "Thank you for thinking of me," or "Thank you for noticing," expressing some thanks when we receive it is a very, very powerful way to become a good receiver.

If good things just happen in our lives, we just say, "Thank you, God; I appreciate that." Just giving thanks at the time we receive it is a powerful, powerful practice.

And I think we need to, to be a good receiver, we need to expand and express more gratitude in our lives in any way, shape or form. Texting our gratitude, or an email, or a phone call, or a card, or a video sharing our gratitude with our family; with the people at work; the people at Whole Foods or Fry's or Target or wherever you frequent! Express your gratitude more, because it helps us acknowledge and realize how much we're already receiving. How blessed our lives already are! How much good that there is!

Gratitude is a powerful, powerful spiritual tool. It raises our vibration; it raises our consciousness to a higher level. And you know how important gratitude is? Let me show you in the Book of Timothy. Here's what it says in the Bible. And it shows how important gratitude is by showing how bad being ungrateful is. And it says in the book of Timothy being ungrateful is the same as being unholy; unloving; unforgiving; disobedient to our parents; and abusive.

Why would being ungrateful be so horrible? Do you know why? It's because it means that we don't acknowledge or accept or appreciate the good that God has put in our lives. And that is what's so negative and harmful about ingratitude, because it is not acknowledging the good that is always there. And it's not acknowledging God: the source of that good.

You know, when we refuse a gift or a compliment, what we're doing is denying the giver the joy of giving. And it denies us the joy of receiving. And, to me -- if you look a little deeper -- when somebody gives us a compliment or somebody gives us a gift, it's really saying that that person thinks so much of you that they have taken their time to say something kind. They've taken their time and thought to get that gift for you. You are so meaningful to them! And I think acknowledging that, to me, is a powerful, powerful, practice for us ... in the moment and for the experience of being a good receiver as well.

Saying, "Thank you; I appreciate that" does good for you; it does good for them; and I think it increases the flow of the good in our lives. And helps us realize how loved we are and how much people really do care about us.

First thing: being a good receiver is to say, "Thank you" when you receive and practice gratitude.

Second one is to **EXPAND YOUR CAPACITY TO RECEIVE**. You know, Jesus said, "It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom." Think about that! It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom! And what he is saying is: God isn't withholding anything from us, but delights to give as much as we are willing to open ourselves to receive. God will give us as much as we open our hearts and our minds and our lives to receive. And that's a powerful and important thing to remember.

How many people have ever read Gay Hendrick's book, *The Big Leap*? In this, he has a concept that I love. And he says, "Every one of us suffer from a ULP." Everybody has a "ULP" ... and that is an upper limit problem. Everyone has an upper limit -- in all the various areas of our lives -- that we don't allow or feel that we are worthy of having any more than that. That, in our lives -- even not consciously -- we have a level and a limit of how much love we think we deserve. Or how much success we deserve. Or how much peace and happiness we deserve. Or how much harmony in our family and our relationship

than we deserve. Or how much spiritual connection, you know. And when we come up against that limit that we feel uncomfortable. You know, we feel awkward. And we will often undermine and sabotage our own success and happiness, because we don't believe that we are worthy of whatever level that is.

And it's interesting: different areas of different levels. Like, some people have a high degree of limit on how successful they are in their business and a low one in their love life and relationship. We all have different levels in different areas. And we need to be aware of our upper limits and how we literally hold ourselves back from how much love and goodness we can experience.

I remember the first Unity minister I had; her name was Rev. Betty Aken. And one of the things she believed was: there's all the abundance you need already. The question is: Are you open to it, and are you willing to accept it and receive it?

And all of her prayers were always, "*I am open and receptive to the living Spirit of God,*" or "*I am open and receptive to the unlimited abundance of God,*" or "*I am open and receptive to the guidance and wisdom of God.*" You know, "*I am open and receptive to the fulfillment of all my dreams.*"

Anything that she wanted to attract or create, she always began as, "*I am open and receptive.*" I am willing to receive; I am willing to have; I am willing to accept God's good in my life, because it is already there. The question is: Are you willing to expand your capacity to receive?

So I want you right now to think of how much love is in your life. And, for the amount of love that's in your life, are you willing to open yourself to expand your capacity for more love? What would it look like if you expanded your capacity to feel more love to receive more love and to express more love in all areas of your life? Because that's our work to do. It's already there! It's the Father's good pleasure! The question is: Are you willing to expand your heart, your mind, your life to receive more love?

What about your current level of happiness? Think about how happy you are. Can you expand your capacity for more joy and happiness? Are you willing to expand your capacity for more fulfillment and for more happiness?

And then, finally, for success. Think how successful you are in your life right now. And are you willing to expand your capacity to experience more levels of success in all areas of your life?

It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom, and we don't need to put an upper limit on it! That abundance is available! The question is: How much are you willing to receive? And how much are you willing to expand your current capacity of good to even greater amounts?

One of the things about receiving is that, sometimes it makes us uncomfortable. It makes us feel awkward. And for us to truly expand our capacity, we need to be vulnerable. We need to express some humility. We need to let go; let down the walls and allow ourselves to be known. To open ourselves; to allow Spirit to raise our consciousness; you know, to raise our mindset; to raise our upper limit.

We need to get over ourselves with the idea that, "*I'm strong and I don't need help,*" because the truth is: we all do. Nobody does it alone.

There's a book I have, which was a movie that won a short film Oscar, called "The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse." And, in it, the boy asked the horse, "*What's the hardest thing you've ever done?*" And he thought for a minute, and he said, "*To ask for help. That's the hardest thing I ever did: ask for help.*" He says, "*Because I used to think that was giving up, but I realized asking for help is not giving up. It is choosing to acknowledge we all need help.*" And to be vulnerable enough to allow people to help us; to support us; you know, to love us. And to allow ourselves to give the same, as well.

Martin Root said, "We have to do it for ourselves, and we can't do it alone." And so, we need some humility. We need to be vulnerable. We need to be open and willing to allow others to help, and to allow others in, as well as for us to help others, and let them let us in, as well.

When Jesus said, "For my strength is made perfect in weakness," he was saying that, when we surrender, that's when we allow God to work us through us the most. It is not always being rigid and firm. It is about opening and surrendering and being vulnerable and humble.

And so being a good receiver is about being willing to be vulnerable and humble and, especially, in the practice of expanding our capacity to receive more good.

And the last one to be a good receiver is to **KNOW YOU ARE WORTHY**. One of the things we've all had growing up is that we have been taught in some ways that we need to earn love. That we need to prove ourselves; we need to validate to gain or attain love. And that is so not true! We are inherently worthy. We are inherently good. We are inherently lovable.

And the thing about it is: we always think we have to prove it. You know the only proof you need is to know that you're worthy? To know that you're wonderful? To know that you're amazing and lovable? It's the fact that you're alive! The fact that you were born and created in the image and likeness of God shows how worthy and wonderful you are!

You know, and if [Scripture] says that we are created in the image and likeness of God, and God is love, that means we're created in the image and likeness of love! That we are lovable; that we are worthy!

It says in the Bible we are the light of the world! We are the temple of the living God! All these things are written. The question is: Are we receiving it? Are we accepting it? Are we allowing it in? And beginning to identify with the truth of who we are at that soul level."

I am worthy.

Together: [with congregants] "I am worthy."

I am worthy of God's love.

Together: [with congregants]: "I am worthy of God's love."

I am worthy of God's abundance.

[Congregants:] "I am worthy of God's abundance."

I am worthy of a wonderful life.

[Congregants:] "I am worthy of a wonderful life."

I am worthy!

[Congregants:] "I am worthy!"

And that's the truth! And so, what we need to do is to begin to center and live from that place of self-worth; that place of knowing that we are whole, complete, and lacking in nothing. Because when we live from that space, guess what? We open ourselves to be better receivers, and we open ourselves to be in alignment with the Law of Circulation; the Law of Giving and Receiving; and the Law of Abundance. We become greater channels of light and goodness for God in this world and for ourselves.

You know, we're better at receiving than we think, because when we all woke up this morning, we received another day. Every time we breathe, we receive another breath. Another beat of our heart. We receive every day an opportunity -- a new opportunity -- to live and to learn and to love and to laugh.

And are we willing to receive the fullness and the goodness of life that wants to pour through us and move through us? It's all available for us if we're willing to receive!

And the bottom line of it is: you've got to know that you're worthy. Because it is the absolute truth. And we've been told some untruths that make us believe that we're not. So, we need to work on reconnecting with the truth of who we are. To know our worth is to know our oneness with God. It is to know our true divine nature.

And the only way you can know that on a deeper conscious level is immersing your mind in the Mind of God. The more time we spend in the stillness and the silence immersing in God, guess what? Everything that is not of God begins to fall away. Those false beliefs begin to go away, and we know our self-worth. We know the truth of who we are. We know that we are powerful, amazing spiritual beings. We know that we are children of God: God's beloved children.

And what happens is that falls away. Our consciousness begins to rise and to know our self-worth. And guess what? Our upper limits begin to rise. We begin to allow in more love. Allow in more success. Allow in more goodness. Allow in more greatness.

You know the Law of Circulation and the Law of Giving and Receiving are the two dynamic laws of life. And if we want to better life, we need to learn to be good receivers. Because it's a spiritual practice; it's a spiritual law; and it is our spiritual responsibility.

AND THE way to do it, again, is to give thanks when we receive and practice gratitude. It helps us acknowledge and realize how much good is in our life, how much we always have received. And secondly, expand our capacity to receive. Expand our hearts to say, *"I'm open to more love. I'm open to more joy and abundance."* And finally, know your worth by knowing your oneness and knowing your true nature: that you are whole, complete, and lacking in nothing.

You know, one of the greatest and most important spiritual practices we can engage in to improve our lives is to learn to be a good receiver. God bless you all.