

HOW TO OVERCOME SELF-DOUBT

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I'm so excited to be here and talking about self-doubt! Now, this was given to me, everybody: this title. And when it was given to me I thought, *"I've got to overcome my self-doubt about teaching 'How to Overcome Self-Doubt.'"* [Congregants laugh] *"That's going to be interesting!"* We teach best what we most need to learn, right? [Laughs]

And I will say that, whenever I'm up here speaking, it's usually because I have gone through that myself, and so I'm teaching what I've learned. Or I'm going through it myself, and so I'm teaching as I go. I'm giving examples directly from my life ... So you'll always know it's living in me as I'm teaching it.

And when it comes to self-doubt, I feel like we've all experienced self-doubt at one point in our lives or another. Do you feel like that's true? [Congregants: "Yes."] Yes! And it's not like it's just once; like a one and done. Like, it's different times in our life, and different events, and different situations where we may have self-doubt.

So I was really thinking about that, and I thought, *"What have I observed? My own self-doubt or others having self-doubt?"* And I realized there's about three different realms within this. One is that our **self-talk** – how we talk to ourselves – gets the best of us. And then we may feel like we're the only ones to have this self-doubt or feel this way. Another one is that we **compare ourselves to others**. And then we think, *"I'm not good enough."* And then third is that we **forget our true identity**. We forget our spiritual nature: That we are God expressing in the world. And when we do that, then we forget our purpose. And that can cause a lot of doubt.

It's interesting to me that Rev. Richard Rogers -- I know last week he spoke about the power of relationships with his talk, "Creating Powerful Relationships." Because I was doing research on the topic last week and I happened to come across a great article. It's a study called the "Harvard Study of Adult Development." It's the longest-running study in history. It started in 1938 about human happiness: looking at human happiness.

Now, you're all saying, *"I thought this was about self-doubt."* Put a pin in it; I'm coming back to that! [Congregants laugh]

But here's the results. The key for a happier life comes down to the quality of our relationships. The quality of our relationships! The director of the study, Dr. Robert Waldinger, said he was surprised at how important staying actively connected to at least just a few people made a huge impact on our happiness. Just a few people made a difference for a lifetime of happiness. Also surprisingly, they found that the people also who had those connections lived longer, as well. So they lived longer and happier lives.

So here's where it comes back around. **Because when I'm having self-doubt, the first thing I do is turn to the people I'm closest to: my support system, those who impact my happiness.** They're the ones I go back to for their support; their love; their cheerleading; their reflecting back to me. Their reminding me of my strengths. Their reminding me of what I add to their life, to other people's lives. How I've overcome adversity before. My family and friends are the ones I'm most connected to who help guide me away from self-doubt.

So, absolutely, we need those connections with other people who remind us of who we truly are and what we can truly do. So, the importance of friendships and connections.

There's this great Instagram site; it's called "My Easy Therapy." It's for people like me. [Congregants laugh] "My Easy Therapy." But the woman who -- the therapist who -- runs it: she just happened to have this post about self-doubt. And she says, "*Self-doubt thrives in silence.*" So, getting help from our friends allows us to have those conversations around our feelings of self-doubt; of not feeling good enough. And it allows them to pull us back up and out of that "self-doubt dark hole" of silence so that we can, again, remember and come back to our truth.

She also recommended -- in getting rid of the silence around self-doubt -- talking back to self-doubt as if it is one of your friends. That, when that self-doubt arises, to really speak to it like you would speak to one of those individuals that you're connected to. Huh. Maybe saying, "*Huh. You're really not feeling sure of yourself right now; your abilities right now. But I know I've seen you do differently and better,*" etc. etc. Really speaking to it so that you place noise around feeling unsure ... whatever you're feeling unsure about.

Of course, this is all of us being ... Do you remember the saying, a Doubting Thomas? So, when we're a Doubting Thomas ... A Doubting Thomas, of course, is a skeptic who refuses to believe without direct personal experience. And, of course, it comes from the Gospel of John's depiction of the Apostle Thomas, who refused to believe that the resurrected Jesus had appeared to the 10 other apostles until he could actually see Jesus' crucifixion wounds.

And I feel like: you know what? Oftentimes we're the same way. We refuse to believe in the amazing, creative beings that we are. And so, we hold ourselves to a standard of needing to see it perfectly to believe in ourselves.

But it's about letting go of that old voice; the old thoughts about ourselves. And when those voices of self-doubt come up, what I like to ask myself is: "*And whose voice is that?*" And whose voice is that? Because a lot of times it could be society's; maybe a teacher; a parent; a grandparent; a neighbor. But it's not my voice. So that's when we say, "*This is not my voice and this is not my truth.*"

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You want to say that with me? [With congregants:] "*This is not my voice and this is not my truth.*"

Right! As Rev. Linda Martella-Whitsett points out in her book, *Divine Capacity*, Jesus represents our divine identity: that aspect of our nature that consists of all of our divine capacities. Our godness; our godness.

And so, our inner Doubting Thomas that each of us have is that part of us that's seeking to understand our eternal divine nature. And our divine nature is who we truly are! I'm not this body. You're not this body. You're a soul in a body. You're a soul in a body. This is just our earth suits, everyone. You have an earth suit. But you're a soul in a body. We're extensions of God; we're expressions of life, expressing as unique parts of the One, of the All.

My favorite Bible verse -- as long as I'm here, you're going to hear this many times, because it's my favorite! It's from Exodus Chapter 3, Verses 13-14. It's when Moses is talking to God and God is sending him back out to the Israelites. And so then Moses asked God, "*Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' And they asked me, 'What is his name?' What should I tell them?*"

And God said to Moses, "*I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'*"

I AM is your spiritual name. God Is; I Am. God Is; You Are. So, whatever you put behind your I AM is what you're calling God! "*I am a failure.*" "*I am dumb.*" "*I'm never going to.*" "*I'm not good enough.*" "*I'm fat.*"

I'm ..." All those things we put behind our I AM. Whatever you place behind your I AM is what you're calling God: Divine Life, Divine Intelligence! And yet, see, we wrestle with our own spirit.

It was reminding me of the story of Jacob wrestling with the angel. Remember: Jacob has this dream. He's wrestling with the angel, meaning he's wrestling with his true self. And then what's so great is: later in the story, Esau – or Jacob, rather -- decides to return home to his brother, his angry brother, Esau. So, before he returns home -- because he knows it might be volatile -- he decides to take some time to spend a night alone. He sends the rest of his caravan to another safe place, and he spends the night alone.

Here's what it says in Genesis: *"Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. Then the man said, 'Let me go for the day has broken.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' And he said to him: What is your name? And Jacob said, 'Jacob.' And then the man said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel. For you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.'"*

Here's what's so interesting, everyone. Metaphysically, "Israel" means spiritual consciousness. So, he's returning home -- kind of like my "E.T." talk a couple of weeks ago; if you haven't watched it, go back and watch it! Returning home to the divine within, to a new spiritual consciousness. And this doubt that he's wrestling with is now being replaced. He's been wrestling with the doubt -- with the anger towards his brother -- and now it's being replaced with a spiritual consciousness of his own divine identity.

So, what we're being called to do is to stop wrestling with ourselves and return home to the divinity within.

And then this: *"I won't let you go until you bless me."* Blessing yourself! Stop wrestling with yourself; stop doubting yourself. And, instead, bless yourself. Give yourself grace.

And what else is happening here? Jacob is on the cusp of something big. And so often, when we are on the cusp of something big -- when we're stretching ourselves into new territory -- that's when we start to have those doubts come up. For Jacob, literally he's going into new territory. And so, that's when we start to have that wrestling and those doubts. And so, to recognize, *"Ooh; I'm stepping into new territory. I'm stepping into something bigger."*

So, let's summarize so far. Relationships support us when we're doubting ourselves. These relationships remind us of who we really are. Who we really are is an expression of God on earth. And when we are playing the Doubting Thomas, we're forgetting our divine nature.

So, let's go back to the definition of doubt. The Webster Dictionary says doubt is "unsettled state of opinion concerning the reality of the truth about something." Meaning: you have forgotten your truth.

And so, here's my next point. **It's easy to forget your truth when you're comparing yourself to other people.** And we do this subconsciously. We do it without thinking. If you're on social media -- Facebook, Instagram -- you're doing it. In fact, we have an acronym now called FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out. [Congregants laugh] We didn't have that before, right? We're comparing ourselves to so many other people!

And yet, one of my favorite quotes comes from, actually, President Theodore Roosevelt. He said, *"Comparison is the thief of joy."* Comparison is the thief of joy!

I remember being in a yoga class, and I was starting to compare myself with the person next to me. And had I just keep telling myself, *"Stacy, comparison is the thief of joy."* And you know what? I got stronger and happier when I did that! Because comparison ... comparison is robbing us of our joy.

So, as soon as you start noticing yourself comparing yourself to someone else and their vacation; their success; their weight; their family, their ... whatever it is ... Stop! And instead of planting the seed of doubt within yourself -- forgetting the expression of God that you, too, are -- then reminding yourself that you're robbing yourself of joy, and you're then robbing yourself of your purpose. Because we can't be on purpose if we're busy comparing ourselves.

And that's the next point about self-doubt is: it takes you away from purpose. So, going back to purpose. And sometimes we think, "*Purpose: I've got to save the world.*" No! You have to be a light in your corner of the world. That's saving the world! Each one of us showing up as the light that we are in our corner of the world.

Unity co-founder Charles Fillmore wrote in *The Revealing Word*: "*If we have faith in ourselves and the ability of Spirit within us, we would become giants where we were but pygmies.*"

Now, pygmies are cute. But don't stunt yourself by being a pygmy. Become a spiritual giant! That's who you are!

So, how do we overcome self-doubt? We use our close relationships to help pull us up and away from self-doubt; to remind us and support us in who we really are: our true selves.

We're mindful not to compare ourselves to others, but to remember our divine nature, and that you are the same beauty expressed in nature. You're one more expression of that beautiful expression of God.

Be mindful of what you're calling God. Watch what you place behind your I AM.

And return to your purpose. And your purpose is not, "*What should I do?*" but it's, "*What should I be? What am I here to be?*" And once you've got, "*What am I here to be?*" then you can go with, "*And how do I do that? And how do I express that?*"

You know, for myself, when I start to get in that self-doubt, I go right back to purpose. "*I have a message to bring. I have kindness and compassion to share with others. I'm here to help others have a happy life to remind them of their divine identity.*"

God didn't place a message in me only for me to doubt it. God placed a message in me -- and all of us -- so we could share it, not doubt it.

Here's from mindfulness author Tara Brack. She wrote, "*The gold of our true nature can never be tarnished. No matter how it might get covered over or disguised by feelings of anger, deficiency, self-doubt, or fear, our awareness (or what we might call our Beingness) remains radiant and pure.*"

She says, "*In the moments of remembering and trusting this basic goodness of our Being, the grip of 'something's wrong' dissolves and we open to happiness, peace and freedom.*"

Open yourself up to happiness, peace and freedom! You can't do that while you're doubting yourselves. You must embrace the basic goodness of your Being.

So, like Jacob, I implore you to stop wrestling with the doubt and become the spiritual giant that you are. Blessings, everyone. Thank you.