

## **EMBRACE RENUNCIATION and LIFE**

**Final Week of the 6-Week Series, "Embrace Your Power"**

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So today ... we're going to just jump right in, everybody. Tie your running shoes; here we go. Are you ready? We're off!

Because we're wrapping up a six-week series today. The six-week series was "Embrace Your Power." What a great theme for 2025: Embrace Your Power! Rev. Richard Maraj has been really speaking into -- this is a part of encouraging all of us to step into, walk into, embrace our own spiritual power.

It's based on the 12 spiritual powers or attributes that Unity's co-founder Charles Fillmore founded and wrote about; spoke about a lot. So, just so that we're all on the same page, a little reminder about what are our spiritual powers.

Our spiritual powers are these spiritual qualities that make up our divine identity. Now, all of us have every single one of the 12 spiritual qualities within us. Whether we're conscious of it or not, we're always using them. Sometimes we use them a little bit more or a little bit less than other times, so we can overuse them or underuse them. But it's all about gaining awareness. And as we gain awareness and become more conscious of these spiritual attributes that are within us -- that we are -- then we can plug into and ignite them and apply them more or less in different situations in our lives.

So, they really help us to empower our life, depending on how we're going to use and choose to use them in each moment that presents itself to us.

So, this morning, I'm going to be talking about the last two of 12 spiritual powers. Originally called renunciation -- that was back in the early 1900s; modern language we say release. So, RELEASE and LIFE. And release and life go hand in hand. Right? In order to have more life, more energy -- more of anything that you want to create in your life -- you first have to let go and open up a space for what you want to bring in.

So we let go; we release, and then life fills it -- fills that space. That creative life energy comes in and fills that space with new energy, with new life.

So, here's just a real simple example just to get us warmed up here. So I just moved again; second time in 11 months. I don't recommend that part! Here's what I will tell you: that, in our new home, the closets are smaller than our last closets. [Congregants laugh] Oh, that was -- all the women were laughing. [Congregants laugh louder] You see where I'm going with this, right?

So, I had to release -- let go of -- some of the clothing that I brought with me, so that I could even move around in the closet, right? Because I could either be boxed in if I didn't let go of any of it -- literally boxed in; can't move around -- or I could release some of that -- give it to Goodwill or another thrift store organization. And now I can move freely around the closet.

See how it's a simple example, but that's the basis of what we're talking about here. So, let's dive in more specifically.

**THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF RELEASE OR ELIMINATION.** So, this spiritual power allows us to release: let go of those thoughts, actions, beliefs, habits that are no longer useful in our life. Do you have any of those? And since these spiritual attributes or powers make up our divine identity, when we let go of these old beliefs and habits that aren't serving us, then when we let them go, we can step into our divine nature even more strongly, more boldly than before.

Because, see, with all of these spiritual powers or attributes, we can use them productively or non-productively. Again, we can overuse them or underuse them. How do we want to use them? So, we want to make sure that we're aware of how we're using these.

So, if you are someone who's not very productive, or have an underdeveloped quality of the spiritual power of elimination or release, then maybe you are a pack rat. [Congregants laugh] Or maybe you have a hard time with change. Or maybe you are so sentimental about the past that you're holding onto it, and it's keeping you there in the past, instead of letting it inform you for the future or even staying present for this present moment.

And that's just to notice. Do I notice myself in that? Interesting. Not to shame or judge; just interesting, right?

If you have an overdeveloped quality of elimination or release, then you probably demonstrate rash decision-making. You probably leave a job or a relationship prematurely. Or that old saying: you throw the baby out with the bathwater, right?

So, to overuse -- or to be overly productive with this spiritual attribute of release -- means you let go of everything, including all those things that could keep you connected and productive and energized so that you can enjoy and participate in life.

But when we're using this and applying this spiritual quality effectively, then we let go of the old thoughts, the old ways of doing things that are keeping us stuck. Which means, in turn, we can be the most divine expressions of ourselves and step into our Christness, our divineness.

When we're in balance with this spiritual power, then nothing's getting in our way, because we aren't too full, and we aren't too empty. We don't have too many clothes and boxes, but we're also not naked. [Congregants laugh] We've got something to wear, right? That's when we're in balance.

You know, one of the most potent aspects of integrating our human and our spiritual selves is about harnessing the courage to make a new choice. So, when we let go -- when we plug into the spiritual quality of elimination -- then we're making a new choice about what we want to have fill that space.

So, here's a quote from Charles Fillmore himself on this slide. It says, *"Thoughts are things they occupy space in the mental field. A healthy state of mind is attained and continued when the thinker willingly lets go of the old thoughts and takes on the new."*

So just a question for yourself: What is an old thought that you've been holding on to? What is an old thought you've been holding on to? What's an old story that you've been telling yourself, either about yourself or someone else? What's the old story that you're playing? What's an old belief that is keeping you from stepping into your spiritual power -- your true identity as an expression of God on earth?

See, I find even myself: there's thoughts that I'm thinking about myself that are not helpful. They keep me from expressing my divine nature. It's those thoughts towards ourselves that usually are the worst, right? That's when you've got to catch yourself and say, *"I've got to choose a new thought."* I don't "got to." I'm choosing to choose a new thought.

And keep in mind, also, when it comes to the power of elimination: one piece here, too, is that, in order to let go of something, often we have to say, *"No."* And a lot of times in spiritual circles, we think "No" is a bad word. But I'm here to remind you: it's a full and complete sentence. You can just say, *"No."*

You want to say that with me? [With congregants]: *"No."*

See how easy that was? [Congregants laugh] So you can say, *"No; I'm not going to overextend myself anymore. No; I don't want to drive at night or that far. I'm not comfortable doing so. For my own self, I'll*

*say, No; I can't meet at that time, because I have my workout at that time, and my health is important to me. And I don't want to say no to my workout and my health."*

And you can even say, *"No thank you; I don't want to go out tonight"* or, *"I'm not going to go over to your house."* You don't have to have any other plans. You can just say, *"No thank you,"* because you're honoring your own energy level -- your own feelings -- about wanting to stay in. That's okay! You're honoring your own energy level, which is that spiritual quality of life. This is how they go hand in hand.

And remember: then, also there has to be an outflow. If we don't let go, there's no outflow. This is why the Dead Sea has no life. The Dead Sea has no life because there's no outflow. "It just goes in and goes in, and goes in ... But you've got to let go and order for new life to come in.

Here's a great quote from Mitchell Clark. He says, *"At some point you gotta be real with yourself about the gap between the life that you want to live and the life that your daily habits are leading you toward."*

Yeah. At some point, you gotta be real with yourself about the gap between the life you want to live and the life that your daily habits are leading you toward. In other words, if you want to live the life of your dreams or the life that you want to experience, then you've got to let go and release those habits that aren't getting you there.

So asking yourself the question: *"What do I need to let go of so I can live the life I want?"* What do I need to let go of so I can live the life I want? And whatever just popped up in you right now, grab that. And if nothing popped up in you right now with that question, that's okay. I would invite you to bring that into your meditation, into your journaling, into your time of walking. What do I need to let go of so I can live the life I want?

Because that brings us to that spiritual power, that **SPIRITUAL ATTRIBUTE OF LIFE**. Here's what the definition of the spiritual power of life is: the ability to energize, to vitalize, to enliven, to make whole.

See, we use the spiritual attribute of life to energize worthwhile projects; to heal our bodies; to make them whole again; to create more of the energy that we want to experience to manifest the life that we want.

If you think about anything that you were successful in or love to do, you had a lot of energy around that, right? And if there was something that you didn't have a whole lot of joy about, energy around, it probably didn't go very far.

Because, see, if we underuse the spiritual quality of life, then we may be apathetic. We might have very little energy to do anything, to get projects moving. Having not plugged into a lot of energy of life here, it means, like, getting ill, not feeling well. And, of course, if you're ill or not feeling well, your life energy is not going to be high. But is it chronic? If your energy is low, and you're chronically ill, then maybe we can ask ourselves: How can I bring more vitality, more wholeness, to the situation? How can I really ignite and plug into that spiritual quality of life within me? To have it reach every cell?

And then, on the other hand, when we overuse -- we're overproductive in the spiritual attribute of life -- It means we're filling up our time too much. We're over scheduled. We're chaotic. We're running around. It's go, go, go. It's that hectic, chaotic whirlwind, right? The Tasmanian devil. Remember him?

Like, we just keep going without stopping, and then we have to stop, because then our bodies have so overused that life energy, and we burn out. It can also mean taking too many vitamins and over-exercising.

I know this is a group: *"No, Stacy, I can't take too many vitamins."* Yes, you can! Because it goes back to: What's the energy behind it? Is it a nervousness? Is it a restlessness? Is it a more, more, more? That's overusing the spiritual quality of life.

And, also, it's about noticing: Where am I placing my focus on when it comes to negative situations? What negative situations am I putting all my attention at? Because that's, then, using your life energy to drain away, right? Your life energy is draining away as your focus is just on this situation or that person or that conversation.

So, again, asking yourself: What am I giving energy to in my life? What thoughts, beliefs, habits, am I giving energy to in my life? And what do I want to give my energy to? What do I want to give energy to in my life? That's how you can effectively use this power.

And the spiritual power of life enlivens all the other spiritual powers, because we need that energy. We need the forward movement: that aliveness that gets all those other spiritual qualities working and going. Without that life energy, nothing else moves forward and grows.

So it's important that we balance this spiritual power, in particular, so that we can be the most divine us that we can be. So we can embody our divine awesomeness, because that is what you are! That is who you are! And that allows you to experience the life that you want to embrace.

So, here's a quote from Jeff Moore, an author. He says this; on the screen: *"When you catch yourself repeating an old negative pattern, say in your head, I'm choosing something better now. You aren't just making a choice, you are rewriting your story in real time, one line at a time. That's what reinvention looks like. Keep going."*

And that's what the spiritual attributes of elimination and life look like: making a better choice. Releasing the old one, so that you can rewrite and create the life that you want to by putting your energy there. You release and let go so you can bring in that energy of what you want there.

You know, the biggest changes in my life ... the biggest changes in my own life that brought me more of that life -- more vitality, more joy, more experiences to me -- were the ones where I had to let go and release a part of my life first in order to manifest and experience what I wanted to.

I was even thinking back with college. I was in California; I chose to go to Michigan State ... all the way to Michigan to go to college. Okay, here's a Spartan! [Congregants laugh] Nice! Go green; go white. [Laughs] But that was a big change for a Californian, right? And, at 18, I left behind all my friends, who were pretty much still all in California; my family. But, boy, was that a magnificent experience! Those Michiganders ... what a fantastic, beautiful group of people! It was a whole new culture to me. What an experience!

And I know my father says I pay too much for out-of-state tuition. And I always say to him, *"That was one of the best experiences of my life."* But I had to let go.

I was thinking about my job at UCLA as a research dietitian. Every dietitian in the area wanted that job. But you know what? I got so, literally, sick it was draining my life energy. And, finally, I just had to let it go. And when I did, what I realized is I was able to bring in time to dive deeper into my own spirituality. To get deeper into: How do I really, really, really want to show up in this world? What do I want to do? What do I want to be? But I had to let go of this prestigious job in order to do that.

Letting go of, last year, moving from Arizona to California. Letting go of our home of 18 years, plus where we raised our sons. Letting go of saying goodbye to friends and family.

And look where I am now! Wow! Wow; this is beautiful. And I'm so happy I'm here; that I let go and made the choice to be here.

I was thinking about old spiritual beliefs about God; about spirituality. Because even growing up in Unity, you don't stop evolving unless you choose *not* to eliminate old ideas and beliefs and ways of thinking about God and praying. There you go; I said it! As Linda Martella-Whitsett, it says, *"Evolve your God."*

So when I was speaking at 17 in front of 500 people at Unity conferences, I wasn't speaking and saying the same things that I'm saying now. Do you hear that? You can transform your life continuously, but it means having to let go of old beliefs, old ideas. Challenge yourself! I don't care if you've been sitting in that chair 25 years. Is your belief the same as 25 years ago?

Let go and expand. Empower yourself. Spiritually transform. But it comes from letting go.

And then I think one of the best things I let go of over 27 years ago, was being single so I could marry my husband, Juan. [Congregants laugh] Yeah! [Congregants applaud]

And then we let go of being two of us to becoming four of us, literally growing more life into the world. And I've got to say, those two boys -- they're young men now. Those two young men: you're welcome. [Congregants laugh] It's all Juan, but they're two amazing, beautiful human beings. But I had to let go, right? We had to let go in order to allow that life to come in.

See, none of these positive, life-changing, enhancing, spiritually-transformative events would have happened if I didn't let go first! And I'm not saying it's easy. It's not easy. But you call forth that renunciation; you call forth that release and elimination. If you want to live your best life, you've got to let go first.

Here's what author Corey Mascara says in this slide. He says, *"The life you're looking for is on the other side of the life you're terrified to let go of."*

The life you're looking for is on the other side of the life you're terrified to let go of. Be comfortable and do it anyway. Embrace life by letting go. It's an oxymoron: embrace life by letting go.

So, when it comes to the spiritual attributes of elimination in life, here's your soul work for the week. Brainstorm specific things -- material things, mental attitudes, emotions that you've been hanging on to; outdated spiritual beliefs -- and how you are willing to let them go. And then write down a goal that supports your life: the life that you want to live; the life that you want to manifest. Where do you want to put your energy? What do you want to put your energy into? That's where the focus is.

So, as we wrap up our series on the 12 spiritual powers, again, it means nothing just to sit here. This is our fifth Unity principle: it says it's not enough just to know and regurgitate the spiritual ideas, principles and tools, but we've got to live our truth. We've got to walk our talk. We've got to apply it, right?

So, with all of these 12 powers, before any situation, you can ask yourself: What spiritual quality within me that I want to do I want to bring to this situation? To this conversation? To this goal? Maybe you're walking into a conversation that you know might be uncomfortable or might get heated. And so, before you go, when you can really think about: "I'm going to bring more love; more of that spiritual quality of love to this. I'm going to harmonize with this person. Maybe my spiritual power of imagination: I'm going to imagine and visualize this going peacefully, harmoniously. Maybe I want to tamper down on that quality of life, because I don't want to come to it with this energy.

See, you can really look and say in every situation, in every conversation, in every challenge, in every goal: What qualities -- spiritual powers that I have, that I possess within me -- am I going to bring to the situation? Because you've got all of them! All 12 of these spiritual powers are within you!

You are faith. You are faith expressing through intuition and believing in what is possible.

You are strength. You are and can endure and stay the course in your spiritual growth, and also in any physical or mental challenges that come your way. You can persevere.

You are wisdom and you are wise. You can use your spiritual judgment to discern and to evaluate to be wise and apply what you know.

You are absolutely love. You are love. You can harmonize with and attract those ideas, those people, those things that align with your love power.

You are and have power/dominion over your thoughts, words, actions and beliefs. That's what we're talking about.

You are imagination. You can imagine the life you want and create it.

You are understanding, meaning when spiritually in tune with your divine identity and your loving heart, you know that you know that you know what is your highest and best to do.

You are the power of will to choose and be willing to be the divine on earth, an expression of God on earth.

You are order. You order up your life. You order up your life with balance, and you make adjustments as you go along so that you can show up with zeal.

Because you are zeal. You are that power of enthusiasm to express what is yours to express. Be passionate about your life.

And you can release; you can let go and eliminate anything that's getting in the way of you expressing your divine identity and the life that you want.

And you are life. You are the energy, the aliveness of the divine on earth.

This is who you are. These are the fundamental aspects of your divine nature. And by applying these 12 spiritual attributes, you power up your life. You transform your life.

So, bring your Christ nature -- your divine nature -- into every area of your life. Because, in doing so, you bless yourself, but you also bless everyone that you come into contact with. And the world needs that now. The world needs that now. They need your light. We need your light. I invite you to be it.

I invite you to be the light: to embrace and embody all 12 of your spiritual powers. Power up your life. Power up the world.

Blessings, everyone. Thank you. Thank you.