

LUCKY CHARM

Final Week of a 2-Week Series on Luck

Rev. Dr. Michele Whittington

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Last week and tonight we're talking about this idea of luck. And I asked last week the question: What's luck got to do with it? And our answer was: Nothing! Because there is no such thing as luck! But we think that Humanity thinks that, and even us in a in a spiritual system that knows that that is not true, sometimes we still do think that.

Sometimes we might be like the little two women in this story. But it starts with a bright young girl named Lena O'Malley, who graduated from school, shook the dust of Ireland off her shoes, and moved to New York. [Congregant: "Yay!"] Yay! And she got a job as an acrobat, and soon she became very successful and very famous in this acrobatic show. A couple of years later, she decided to go home and to visit -- to visit, not to stay -- but to visit Ireland, visit her family. And Saturday evening, she decided to go to confessional to the church that she grew up in.

And so, she went into the confessional and Father Sullivan recognized her voice and said, "*Lina! Lina! Is that you?*"

And she said,

"Oh yes, Father Sullivan, it is."

He goes, "*I hear you went to New York. What? Tell me, you need to...*" So we kind of went off track here of the confessional, but anyway ... [Congregants laugh] There you go.

"Tell me, what are you doing in New York?"

She said, "*Well, I'm an acrobat.*"

He says, "*You're an acrobat? I don't know what that is. What is an acrobat?*"

She says, "*Well, I'll show you.*"

So, she comes out of the confessional, and she -- right there in front of the platform -- she starts to doing flips and turns and cartwheels and flying splits, and all these kind of things.

And these two little women who are sitting in a pew waiting to go into the confessional. [Congregants laugh]

One says to the other, "*Oh, will you look at the...*" I can't do it. Irish accent. I'm sorry.

"Will you look at the penance Father Sullivan is given out tonight?" [Congregants laugh] *"And me not wearing my bloomers!"* [Congregants laugh]

Now that's some bad luck, frankly. Right? That is bad luck. We've just got to call that one bad luck. [Laughs]

No; it's not bad luck. Luck has nothing to do with it! But there is very much a thing of mental, emotional, spiritual approach to life that helps us create our lives and not be subject to what feels like good or bad luck.

And I love that this concept is not only foundational of our New Thought and Unity teachings, but also backed up by some science. I love it when science backs things up. So, we're going to dig into that tonight.

But before we do, I gave you all an assignment. Well, I gave you a couple assignments, but one of them was – since St. Patrick's Day was yesterday, or day before yesterday -- wear green to service tonight. And if you wear green to service tonight, there may be a little something. So, I see many of you wearing green; yay! Your underwear doesn't count! I don't want to see your bloomers, so that does not that does not count! [Congregants laugh]

But if you wore green tonight, I said there would be a little something something for you. Well, there is a little something something for you! You will notice there's a pot of gold sitting at the base of the stage. And in the pot of gold, there is gold. There are gold coins. All right, let me be clear about that. There's gold chocolate coins, which may be better even than gold coins! I don't know. It depends on your perspective on things.

But if you are wearing green tonight, don't rush the stage right now. But after service is over, please come feel free. I've got a lot in there. You can even have two or maybe even three; you decide,. Come take a gold coin or so. And if you are not wearing green, and you are desperate for chocolate tonight, eh Come on up anyway. [Congregants laugh]

But thank you for playing along with me and for wearing your green. I love it! I love it! I love it! And, of course, I will do anything for chocolate, so I am fully decked out in green. [Congregants laugh] All right!

So, before we get to talking about results – or more results; we talked about some results last week -- more results of this scientific study, I want to once again remind you of the foundation -- the spiritual foundation we laid last week -- and I want to add something to it.

So, what we said last week: that our spiritual foundation -- that this concept that we're talking about last week and this week is based on OO is a concept that the Master Teacher shared when he was walking this earth. And he said, "*Be in this world, but not of this world.*"

Be in this world, but not of this world ... Meaning, I believe, to acknowledge that we live in this physical world. We live in a world of polarity, meaning opposites. We live in a world of failure and accomplishment; a world of loss and gain; love and fear; joy and heartbreak; happiness and sadness. We live in a world that has that. We are in that world. We all live in this world. We experience this world.

So, we need to be in it. We need to be present for it, not spiritually bypass it by saying, "*No, I'm not going to feel that, because I don't want to feel that.*" We do need to be in this world, yes; and the Master Teacher says yes, do that; but don't be of this world.

And I think what he meant by that is don't be ruled by the things that are happening in this world. Don't be ruled by the waves of the seas smashing you around. Don't be ruled by that. In the midst of the ups and downs of this world -- and even in the presence of that thing that's in front of you that's really challenging ... and I suspect there's someone who's got something here tonight facing them that's challenging ... Even in the midst of that, know that there's something higher. Know that there's something more. Know that there's something greater at play; something that is beyond this world of physicality and duality. That's what Jesus meant by not being of this world.

And I want to give you an analogy for that. Think about a door jamb. Right? Think about the door jamb. And that door jamb is solid, right? It's anchored; it's solid. And it has attached to it a door. And that door swings, right? That door might swing hard because somebody slammed it; that door may shut softly. That door may get thrown off the hinges because it got thrown so hard. That door can do all sorts of different things. But what does the door jamb do? Thank you! It just stays. (I love it when you answer me; I love it so much.) It just stays solid and anchored and grounded.

That door jamb is a great analogy for being in the world -- the door slapping, flying around -- but not of it. Does that make sense?

So, remember that, because we're going to come back to that in a bit. But for now, I want to go to some more research that was ... some things that were revealed in the research that was done by Dr. Wiseman. This was many, many, many years ago. Richard Wiseman. He did this 10-year study on luck: people who thought they were lucky, people who thought they weren't lucky, and did they have any common traits; common ways of looking at life; common perspectives; attitudes.

And what he found in his 10 years of studies: absolutely, they did. They had a set of attitudes, mental and emotional ways of approaching life that made them -- in their minds -- either lucky or unlucky.

And the ones who found themselves lucky -- that had the attitudes that they called lucky -- are really the attitudes that support us in being in this world but not of this world.

So tonight, I want to change my language a little bit about talking about lucky and unlucky people. Because I want to be really clear: I don't believe in luck. [Laughs] And this study said, no; there's no such thing as luck.

So, I'm going to quit talking, just in case there was any confusion last week about, you know, why should you keep talking about lucky people and lucky events. I put it in quotes, but even still. So I'm going to change it from "lucky people" to "people who create their own lives." All right?

So, people who create their own lives have a very specific way of approaching, several specific ways. So last week we looked at one of the ways, and that was that they maximize. If you were here last week, you remember they maximize. What do they maximize? They maximize what they already have.

And I love the statement -- I didn't share this last week, but I saved it for tonight. I love the statement from Micah Dooley, who's a beautiful spiritual teacher in today's world. He said, "*To do all you can with what you have where you are.*" That's maximizing. The first level of maximizing. Maximize what you already have. Do all you can with what you have, where you are.

And then the second piece of maximizing is to take advantage of opportunities as they come to you, knowing that opportunities are always available. And people who create their own lives see them. People who don't create their own don't even see them! All right, so that was last week.

Tonight, we move to another idea -- another attitude -- of people who create their own lives. And what they do is turn seemingly -- I'm going to use the word luck here -- seemingly ... They turn seemingly bad luck into good luck. In other words, they turn disadvantages into advantages. They turn problems into opportunities.

Ah. But man, when we have bad luck facing us; when we have a disadvantage facing us; when we have a challenge facing us, we may feel like Calvin. Do you remember or does anybody know -- I hope you do! -- the cartoon, the comics *Calvin and Hobbes* by Bill Waterston. Waterson? Brilliant! Brilliant! I'm so sad they're not around anymore. I used to ... I owned every ... They put them in books. They had, like, six or seven books. I, my husband and I, owned all of the, because we loved them. They're adorable, precious, funny and spot on right.

So, it's about this little, very precocious little boy, Calvin, and his toy, Tiger Hobbes. Except when they're alone, Hobbs comes to life. And one day, Calvin says to Hobbs, "*You know, Hobbs, some days even my lucky rocket ship underpants don't help.*" [Congregants laugh]

Seem to be talking a lot about underwear tonight. [Congregants laugh] I'm not really quite sure what the under theme is there. We won't read anything into that. Okay; let's not.

So, people who create their own lives do not rely on lucky rocket ship underpants, or any other lucky charm, for that matter. They take what seems to be bad luck -- the disadvantages, the problems -- and they turn them around.

And the research that Wiseman did revealed three specific attitudes that they have that helped them do that. So, strap in, because here come the three attitudes that they have that help them turn things around.

The first one will not come as any surprise here, but it is: **THEY CHOOSE TO SEE THE POSITIVE SIDE OF ANY EXPERIENCE.** They choose to see -- it's a choice. A choice. They choose to see the positive side of any experience.

I want to give you a couple of real-life examples. Some of these people you may have heard of, maybe not. There's a young man named Nick Vujicic. [Phonetically] Vu-che-chush. I said that like 10 times in my brain to get it right. [Phoenetically] Voo-a-chesh. There it is! [Phonetically] Voo-a-chesh. There it is!

Nick Vujicic. You may recognize that he's done a lot of YouTube videos and things. He was born without arms or legs. Now, he could have let that condition define who he was and be hopeless and helpless all his life. But he said, *"No; I am not going to have that happen."* And so, instead of focusing on what he lacked, he decided to build a successful -- a very successful career -- as a motivational speaker, as an author and, ultimately, as an evangelist, inspiring millions of people worldwide. He often says that his struggles allowed him to connect with others and help them overcome their challenges.

Thirteen-year-old Bethany Hamilton was a surfer ... and a good surfer, wanting to be a professional surfer. And one day when she is surfing, her arm was bitten off by a shark. Hoo; that is some bad "luck," end quotes. But she did not let that stop her. In just one month -- one month from losing her arm -- she was back on a surfboard. She became an author, a successful professional surfer -- as her goal was her desire -- a TV personality and a speaker, inspiring others to live lives of tenacity, courage and faith.

One more. Malala -- these difficult last names here -- Yousafzai. There you go. [Phonetically] You-chef-sigh. Malala Yousafzai may not be someone you recognize her name, but you may recognize her story. She was shot by the Taliban for advocating for girls' education in Pakistan. She could have let that experience stop her from doing anything and just live in fear. But she said, *"No, I will not let that stop me."* And, in fact, she became an activist for education rights across the world, which led her to become the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. Her tragedy turned into a global movement that changed millions of lives.

Each of these people faced significant hardships, but chose to see the positive side. Chose to turn that disadvantage into an advantage; that problem into an opportunity.

And the other thing about each of these people is that they each had a deeply held spiritual belief. And that deeply held spiritual belief helped them; gave them an anchor to then do what they did in the world.

So, could we do that as well? Can we rely on our spiritual belief that God is all there is? That God sits right here in the middle of everything, and that every misfortune we could use as an opportunity to call forth the good?

Many years ago, I memorized a passage in the *Science of Mind* textbook. That's the Religious Science textbook. I have it written down here, but it's been a long time since I've said it. I think I still know it, though:

"Perfect God within me, perfect life within me, come forth into expression through me as that which I am. Lead me ever into paths of perfection and cause me to see only the good."

[Sighs heavily] I love that passage. I want us to do it together. I will break it in chunks.

"Perfect God within me."

[Congregants:] *"Perfect God within me."*

"Perfect Life within me."

[Congregants:] *"Perfect life within me."*

Which is God.

"Come forth into expression through me."

[Congregants:] *"Come forth into expression through me."*

"As that which I am."

[Congregants:] *"As that which I am."*

"Lead me ever into paths of perfection ..."

[Congregants:] *"Lead me ever into paths of perfection ..."*

"...and cause me to see only the good."

[Congregants:] *"... and cause me to see only the good."*

Hmmm. Nice. When we can see the good in any situation, we will be well on the road of changing our luck – ooh, ooh; let me change that -- of changing our lives for the better.

So that takes us to the second quality. The second quality that was discovered that people who create their lives seemingly turned seemingly bad luck into good. The second thing they do I want to introduce with the story. Got lots of stories tonight.

So, the story is about two monks who had taken a vow of celibacy. And they were walking and they came upon a muddy river. and they were about to cross this muddy river. and all of a sudden this beautiful woman in fine clothing walked up, as well, to cross the river. And one of the monks -- not wanting her to ruin her beautiful clothing -- simply picked her up and carried her across the muddy water, set her down on the other side. And the two monks went walking on.

Hours – hours! -- later, the monk who didn't carry the woman said to the monk who did carry the woman, *"I can't believe you did that."*

And the other monk said, *"Did what?"*

He said, *"I cannot believe you carried her! You touched her! You're not supposed to touch a woman; we've taken vows of celibacy!"*

And he said, *"Oh my gosh, I let go of her hours ago; can't you?"* [Congregants laugh]

All right, so what does that have to do with anything? What that has to do with is that the second thing people who turn bad luck -- seemingly bad luck into good -- is **THEY LET GO OF THEIR MISFORTUNES.** They let go. They do not hold on when bad -- quote unquote -- stuff happens. because life happens and sometimes it's painful and it's difficult. Remember we are in this world. We live in This world and things do happen.

But people who create their lives do not dwell on that thing that happened. They don't dwell on the loss of a job. They don't dwell on the slight that that person did to them. They don't dwell on things.

And another story; quick story. The famous Italian composer Rossini -- this is two millennia ago -- he wrote a play, or an opera, called *The Barber of Seville*. You may have heard it; If you're an opera fan, you probably have seen it. *The Barber of Seville*.

It was opening night -- opening night for *The Barber of Seville*. And it was a big 100% flop. Hisses and boos. The audience hated it. The diva -- the soloist -- the soprano was in tears. The lead male singer was talked of suicide. And everyone was worried about Rossini and, "*Oh my gosh, what's he going to do? What's happening?*"

And they couldn't find him. They're looking all over the theater. They couldn't find him anywhere. They looked and they looked and they looked. And they finally went to his home and they found him in bed asleep. [Congregants laugh] This is a true story!

And they woke him up and they said, "*Maestro, Maestro, are you all right?*"

And he said, "*Well, I was having a nice sleep until you woke me up.*" [Congregants laugh]

"But the opera! The fiasco!"

And his response was, "*Evidently, the barber is not good enough. So, I must compose something better. And I will, but we'll discuss it in the morning after I get a good night's sleep.*" [Congregants laugh]

And after centuries -- not millennia, but centuries; after two centuries -- that is still a very famous, popular and good opera.

Ernest Holmes, founder of Science of Mind, wrote, "*As you learn to release all your burdens to the right action of God, you will find that everything falls into its proper place. Let your problems slip away from you, realizing that a Power greater than you are and a Presence that is within you is ready, willing and able to guide your way.*"

So, if you're still dwelling on something -- a misfortune of some kind -- would you be willing to leave it at the riverbed here today? Because if you do, again, you'll take another step toward being that person who creates his or her life.

The third thing, and the final way, people shift bad luck (quote/unquote) into good luck, is that **THEY DO BELIEVE ANY MISFORTUNE THAT THEY HAVE WILL TURN OUT FOR THE BEST.** So, it's a bit of an extension of the second one. but they believe it will turn out for the best.

And there's no better foundation for that than found in the Bible at Romans 8:28 that says, "*And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God.*"

And I shared a lot of stories -- secular stories -- with you, so I'm going to share a Biblical story right now. it's from Genesis. And it's the story of Joseph, who -- not going into the big, long story -- but basically his brothers were very jealous of their father's love for him. And so, one night they kidnapped him, and they took him to the desert. They were going to leave him to die, but instead some merchants came along, and the brothers sold Joseph into slavery.

That's kind of crummy. That sort of stinks. Right?

And a lot of things unfolded but, ultimately, Joseph became the right hand of the Pharaoh, and in a dream foresaw that a famine was coming. And so, he had the Pharaoh stockpile all this grain in preparation for this famine. And when the famine did come, all the people from the country came to the capital (we'll call it) to get grain.

Well, guess who showed up, of course? His brothers. They thought he was probably dead. They had no idea what had happened to him. Here is Joseph doling out grain. And the brothers probably thought,

"Well, we should just duck and run." But they didn't. They came up to him and said, "Behold, we are your servants."

And here's what Joseph said to them: *"Do not be afraid, for I am in the place of God. But for you: you meant evil against me."*

Hmmm. Now, right at this moment, he could have tossed him, right? You might be thinking with that sentence, his brothers are thinking, *"Oh, we're out of here because he's holding a grudge against us for what we did."*

But that's not what happened. What he said next was -- let me start that again: *"But as for you: you meant evil against me. But God meant it for good in order to bring it about this day to save many people. Now, therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones."*

Ah! All things -- not some things -- all things work together for our good. And people who create their own lives know that.

I remember when my beloved husband of almost 30 years passed away. One of my neighbors -- I was out walking the dog and, you know, I was in a lot of grief, as you can well imagine. And I saw one of my neighbors who said, *"You know, Michelle, I know how hard this is. I know how hard this is. But I want you to know that this is an opportunity for you to find out who you really are."*

[Clears throat] I won't use the word that went through my mind when she said that. [Congregants laugh] But let's just say I wasn't happy. I didn't want to hear that. I said, *"Thank you very much,"* but I walked away thinking, *"I know who I am. I know exactly who I am. I don't need ... I didn't need this to find out who I am. Dut dut dut dut dah."*

But what I will say is seven years later -- now, seven years later -- his passing helped me uncover layers of me that I did not know were there. It helped me find a resilience in me that I did not know I had. It helped me find a creativity I did not know I had. It helped me deepen my faith -- after a dark night of the soul, I might add. But I had to go through that, but ultimately deepened my faith. It helped me realize a new level of self-reliance. And it truly made me a better me and gave me the ability to create a life that I truly do love.

Joseph Campbell wrote, *"Opportunities to find deeper powers within ourselves come when life seems the most challenging."* People who create their own lives know that.

So there it is. The three things, "lucky" (quote/unquote) people do. They turn disadvantages into advantages -- problems into opportunities -- by seeing the positive side of their situation. They don't dwell on their misfortune. And they know that any misfortune ultimately -- ultimately -- will work out for the best.

So, I believe I promised you in our talk last week ... or maybe I said it tonight, I can't remember, but I did. In my mind, I promised you! And the name of tonight's talk is "Lucky Charm." I want to give you a lucky charm tonight that will help you be in this world, but not of this world.

And it goes back to that door jamb, where I said ... *"Remember the door jamb."*

So, when life is throwing you around and you're not feeling very "lucky," and you want to be able to grab onto these things I've said ... but ooh, you don't; you just don't quite have it. I want you to think about your physical body and the energy in your body here, here, and here [touches stomach, heart and forehead]. This is your ... we're going to call this your vertical core.

Here [touches stomach] in the Eastern beliefs, it's called Dantean, and it's the roots of the tree of life. When we anchor here, we are solid. When we bring a strand of light up to our hearts, we connect with

love. When we come up to our heads, we connect with divine intelligence and wisdom. So power [touches stomach]; love [touches heart]; wisdom [touches forehead]. Take a breath. Put your hands right here [touches stomach] -- stay with me: Power. Bring your hand up to your heart: Love. Come up [touches forehead]: Wisdom.

Your lucky charm is spending a little bit of time every morning -- or when you get smacked around by the world -- to take a breath here [touches stomach]. See a golden light, of you will come up to your heart, knowing you're connected with power, love, wisdom.

That could be a lucky charm. So you don't need a four-leaf clover. You don't need lucky underpants. [Congregants laugh] You don't need fuzzy dice charm. You don't need anything. This is your lucky charm.

When we do that -- and when we anchor in these ideas that we've had tonight -- life does get easier and better, and we move through things with ease and grace.

Because remember: luck has got nothing -- luck has got nothing -- to do with it! But your mindset; your approach to life; your ability to stay centered in God no matter what does make all the difference in the world.

Namaste.

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