

CREATION RATHER THAN CONTROL

Rev. Dr. Michele Whittington

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Would it be okay with you if your life really worked? Would that be all right? [Congregants laugh] You wouldn't object to that, would you? Yeah, yeah. I see something like, *"Yeah, yeah; I'm kind of used to this."* Well, now it's time to change your mind. [Laughs]

Would it be okay with you? Would you like to design a life that you love living? Even more maybe than you love it now?

Well, good. Several of you like that idea, so we're going to dig in tonight to two spiritual truths that, when we live them, we can create a life that works. We can design a life that we love living.

So, before we jump into what those two spiritual truths are, maybe we ought to define -- according to the Gospel of Michele [congregants laugh], which by the way is a very sacred text, very, very sacred text ... According to the Gospel of Michele, let's define what a life that we love living or a life that works might look like.

Now, if you were here two Wednesdays ago, we actually ... I was here; I spoke that evening. And we actually talked about that. And we came up with a list. And that crowd agreed with my list, which is why I can confirm that the Gospel of Michele is really good. [Congregants laugh] Right? But I want to say that list again tonight ... And maybe you guys have a different idea, or maybe you want to add something to the list.

So, I really would love your input if you think the things I say here fit into a life that works: a life that you would love living. And maybe some of the things you're experiencing and you do love. But maybe there's something else also that you think should be added here. Be prepared, because I want to hear from you. I do like to hear from you now and again. I want to hear from anyone if you have other ideas, but let me give you my list first.

Here's my list. First and foremost -- foundation of all of it -- is that you feel deeply, unshakably connected to the divine presence of God within. [Congregants: *"Amen!"*] Amen. Foundational. Boom.

And then after that, we flow with effortless financial ease. Oh, I heard that! *"Ah yes, yes."* I like to say on that one that we have more than enough money to spend, to spare, and to share. I actually have made that an affirmation in my life in the past when I didn't feel like there was that flow. That's a great little affirmation, by the way: I have more than enough money to spend, to spare, and to share. Okay, so that's the second thing.

The rest of these are in no particular order. Loving and being loved in nurturing relationships. Okay, the enthusiasm is getting less for that one.

Waking up peaceful, serene, and feeling free every morning. [Congregants: *"Yay! Yeah!"*] Oh, yeah, I think we like that one.

Joyfully sharing your gifts and talents with others. Gives us a sense of purpose and a sense of giving back.

Trusting yourself and your divine intuition and inner wisdom. [Congregant: *"Yes."*]_Yes? Okay. Good.

Thriving in radiant health and vitality. That's an important one, isn't it? Yep.

And then the last one I have -- I'm making sure I covered all of my list -- is ... This one's probably really for me, because in the past ... Not so much anymore ... But in the past I have been a little constricted around

this one ... And that is to feel a spaciousness with time. You know, not always running like a chicken without a head, which I have done in my past. Feeling just that there's a spaciousness of time.

Yes? Do we like all of those? [Congregants: "Yes!"] Would we add anything to the list? [Congregant: "*Last time you said chocolate cake.*"] Chocolate cake! I do believe you're right. She was here and she paid attention. Chocolate cake! Were you saying yes to chocolate cake, or do you have an ... "Oh, she's yes to chocolate cake ... or lemon or whatever your ... [Congregant: "*Just cake.*"] Just let's just call it cake. Yes. [Congregant: "*Or just chocolate.*"] Or just chocolate. Okay, I've lost control now, I can see. [Congregants laugh] That's what happens when you ask people to share. It happens. Yes.

[Congregant says something unintelligible] Nice. Beautiful. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. [Congregants applaud] So that's beautiful. Nicely done. So that those who are watching this later can hear what you said, she said that we could see others for the amazing God being that they are; that we see through the eyes of God and not other people's mistakes and foibles and weaknesses. I'm making up a little bit, but I think that's the gist of what you said. And that we allow people to shine their brilliance. Yes? Does that summarize what you said? Nice. I like that. Perfect.

I wrote that down. I added it. All right.

So ... I believe that we can have that kind of life, even when things get bumpy, because life does get bumpy. Even when things get bumpy, we can still have those experiences. We can still have that amazing connection with the Divine, and feel in the flow; trust that we're in the flow; feel spacious; and all of those wonderful things when – *when* -- we deeply, fully, completely embrace, believe, and live the two spiritual truths that I want us to talk about tonight.

The first of which is ... drumroll. Can you hear it? Drumroll. **THE UNIVERSE IS A WHOLE LOT SMARTER THAN WE ARE.** Ah! [Laughs] The Universe -- Divine Intelligence -- is a whole lot smarter than we are.

So, let's turn that; make it personal. Divine Intelligence is a whole lot smarter than I am. Can you do it?

With me: [with congregants] "*Divine intelligence is a whole lot smarter than I am.*"

Now, we're going to test out how you really feel about that. Okay? So, I'm going to have you say it again in a minute, and then I'm going to have you kind of touch in about how you felt about that. And I want you to give it a number. And the number is going to be between one and 10. And a 10 is that you are truly, deeply, fully, and completely in belief of that statement. A one is, "*Yeah; not so much.*" And you know, you're going to be somewhere in there. I'm not going to ask you to share. I'm not going to ask you to share. I just want you to notice.

Okay. So, again, the statement is, "*Divine intelligence is a whole lot smarter than I am.*"

Ready? [with congregants] "*Divine Intelligence is a whole lot smarter than I am.*" Touch into your heart. Give it a number.

I love hearing the numbers being said. All right. I suspect -- I suspect -- most, most, most of us ... There's a dead zone there, apparently ... That most of us were close to a 10, or at least were over a five, I would think, on that one. Right? Even though our ego may have not been 100% crazy about that idea, we really can believe that, yeah; the Divine Intelligence -- universe -- is a lot smarter than I am.

Okay. Here's the second truth that we're going to explore tonight. And we're going to put it on the same scale. We're going to test how this one lands in you for fully, completely, totally accepting it, believing it. And I'm going to add another word to this one: and living it, and living it.

So, the second spiritual truth for us tonight is: **CREATION IS MORE EFFECTIVE AND EVEN MORE FUN THAN CONTROL.** [Congregants murmur] Ooh. Creation is more effective and even more fun than control.

Let's say that out loud: [with congregants] *"Creation is more effective and even more fun than control."*

Where does that one land? Fine. [Congregants shout out] Okay, you can speak them out if you want. I love it. Yeah. Oh, she's a 10. I love it. Then, Sandy, you can go home. You don't need to hear the rest of this talk, because you don't need it. But the rest of us might need to sit and stay because ... Oh, that sounded like a command to a dog: sit and stay. [Laughs]

So, I suspect most of us are not quite as high on that one as we were on the first one. That's just my guess. I could be wrong, but that's my guess.

So, we're going to spend some time on both of those tonight, and perhaps a little bit more time in the second one. Because I do think -- and maybe I'm just speaking for myself -- most of us kind of like being in control. And I see people looking down and not making eye contact with me. [Congregants laugh] So, I think that might be true for a lot of us then.

So, okay. Truth number one again is: The Universe -- Divine Intelligence -- is a whole lot smarter than we are.

And I love digging into source material -- I call it source material -- back to the founders of some of our New Thought teachings. And I have two quotes for you: one from the founder of Science of Mind -- his name was Ernest Holmes -- and the other one is from the founder of Unity ... Co-founder of Unity, Charles Fillmore.

So, here's the first one. This is from Ernest Holmes in the book entitled *Science of Mind* for the denomination called Science of Mind. Here it is:

"We sense the presence of an intelligence which is beyond human comprehension: an intelligence which is great enough to encompass the past; to understand the present; and to be the father of the future. It is the cause of everything that has been and is that out of which must unfold everything that is to be."

I love that. I heard her say, "Wow!" Yeah. Charles Fillmore wrote in his book, *The Revealing Word*:

"The next great proclamation of scientific minds will be that one directive intelligence is the essential cause of the harmonious universe."

Those two guys were thinking alike. So scientific minds have maybe not made that proclamation yet, but they have recently made a scientific proclamation. There was a convention of scientists recently. Did you hear about it? No; you didn't. All right. Well, let me tell you about it.

So, these scientists convened, and they brought their research papers. You know, people from all over the world, and they brought their research papers. And at this conference they studied them, and went over them, and saw the similarities of the research. And they concluded -- after digging into all these papers and having debates and discussions and arguments and figuring things out -- that science has figured out the secret to life itself and, in fact, can now create life itself. Science can now do that.

This is just a story, by the way. Just a joke. Just in case you're thinking, *"Really? I didn't hear that. Let me hear that."*

So, one of the scientists was commissioned to go tell God that she could take a rest. Oh, come on. God. Okay. All right. That He/It/Them/They/He/Her -- doesn't matter! That God could take a rest because we've got it figured out. Now scientists have got it figured out. *"We can create life now; so God you're not necessary anymore. Just go, you know ... go to Hawaii do whatever you want to do."*

So, the scientists went to God to say that. And God just sat there smiling and said, *"Oh; okay. Well, show me."*

So, the scientist says, "Of course; I'd be happy to." And with that, he bends down and he picks up a clump of dirt.

And God says, "*Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa whoa! Get your own dirt!*" [Congregants laugh]

Let that sink in. [Laughs] Let that sink in. You got it. Okay; good. You got it.

Combining Holmes' and Fillmore's quotes that I just shared with you: "*Divine intelligence is the cause from which must unfold everything.*" Dirt is needed. "*Everything that is to be; it is the essential cause of the Universe.*"

And I think when they wrote those words, they were inviting us into a deeper understanding. That this Infinite Intelligence is not limited by logic like we can be. It is not confined by conditions, which we can be. It's not fettered by facts, as we can be. It is the living, breathing Mind of God that knows how to do everything: hang the planets in the sky; create the waters of the sea; brought the flora and fauna to this earth. Also, it is the Creative Energy behind ideas that transform; concepts that heal; love that binds us together. It's all that, as well as a bag of chips. [Congregants laugh] It's all that.

Ernest Holmes said at another place in the *Science of Mind* textbook,:

"As we look at the many millions of forms of all different shapes and colors, are we not compelled to accept the fact that Intelligence is the ultimate creative agency of the Universe?"

Intelligence is the ultimate creative agency of the Universe. So, let's embody that a little bit more. Let's take that a little bit deeper with a statement. I love saying things out loud; we can really anchor together.

And so, this is the statement. I'm going to say it once. It's a *tad* long ... Not *really* very long, but a tiny bit long. So, I'll say it first and then I'll chunk it up and we can say it in parts. So, I'm not testing your memory here. All right.

So here's the statement:

"Divine Intelligence is the ultimate creative agency of the Universe, and it knows more -- way more -- than I do."

Okay? Here we go. We'll chunk it up.

"Divine Intelligence ..."

[Congregants:] *"Divine Intelligence ..."*

... *"Is the ultimate creative agency of the Universe ..."*

[With congregants:] ... *"is the ultimate creative agency of the Universe ..."*

"And it knows more ..."

[With congregants:] *"It knows more ..."*

"Way more!"

[With congregants:] *"Way more!"*

... *"Than I do."*

[Congregants:] ... *Than I do."*

Yeah. Yeah; it does. It really does.

But here is the cool thing. It does know way more than I do -- than any of us do. *And* at exactly the same time, it is living right here! [Points to herself, then points to other congregants] Right there, right there, right there, right there, right there.

So, this Infinite Intelligence that knows so much more than we do, we have access to. We have the ability to tap into that and to call it forth through us.

So, we don't have to go it alone! We're not navigating this life. We don't have to navigate. Sometimes we do navigate without a map, but we don't *have* to. Because this Divine Intelligence is always ready to guide, to direct, to support. We don't have to know it all! We just have to remember that we are part of it all. And the "All" lives and moves and has its being *as us*.

Infinite Intelligence lives in me, works through me, and creates as me. That's the truth. That's the truth!

So that takes us to the second spiritual truth -- my field is getting more narrow -- to the second spiritual truth I want to look at tonight. The one that we had a little bit more challenge believing and saying that we actually live it. And that is: that creation is more effective and even more fun than control.

And, of course, the crux of this truth is that we need to let go of control. And, as Shakespeare said in the one of his famous plays, *Hamlet*: "*Ah; there's the rub.*" There's the problem. There's the issue.

"You mean I have to let go of control? But if I don't control every aspect of whatever it is I want to create, it won't happen, or it won't happen like I want it to. Or everything will go to you-know-where in a handbasket! I have to be in control."

Now I do want a show off hands. How many of us actually have thought or still think that to some degree? [Congregants laugh] Right. Many of us do! Thank you for your honesty, those of you who held your hands up. We do! We think that, if we just plan enough, if we just do it well enough, if we just micromanage it enough, that we can control the outcome.

But, my friends, thinking we can control *any* outcome is an illusion. We have zero control of outcome. And it is an illusion based on fear.

Thank you very much for giving my talk. Come on up here; finish it out for me. Let's do it.

It's an illusion based on fear. A fear that if I don't do it, it won't happen. Or it won't happen like I want. Or it's going to get messed up That's our fear.

But what -- my gosh -- what might happen if we actually let go of this need to control, desire to manipulate, coerce, cajole the Universe -- whatever it is we might want to do -- so that we can hang tight and create an outcome that we can never create ... What if we let go of that and gave grace a space to work through us?

Take a breath. I love that little phrase that I just kind of came up with right now. What if we gave grace a space to work through us? And, in fact, even perhaps create miracles for us that we would never expect.

So, just to be clear, when I say letting go of control, I don't mean giving up. I don't mean not being passionate about something. I don't mean not having hearts' desires of things that you want to create or be or do or have or experience. It's not that. It's also not praying to win the lottery and yet not buying a ticket. You know that old joke, right? Y'all know that old joke that I just told the punchline of? You know it? Good, then I won't tell it again. Good. Yeah. It's not any of that.

It's doing our divinely guided steps; taking our divinely guided steps. Doing our divinely guided work. And then letting go of the outcome, trusting Infinite Intelligence -- that we just said a minute ago we really believe in, right? We just kind of anchored in the fact that we believe in that. We had a lot of beautiful statements from people who, you know, created the religions that we follow who said, "*Divine*

intelligence is the creator of everything." Do we think that that Creative Intelligence can't then unfold our lives?

By the way, just as a little aside, I'm talking to myself here tonight as well as all of you. Just so you know. I needed to hear this one.

There's a great sage advice in Proverbs which says, *"Trust in the Lord with all your hearts and lean not on your own understanding."*

So, what is needed is our cooperation with Divine Intelligence. Not trying to control it.

So, I want to give you an example. This is also a scientific example, but it's actually true, unlike my other little story, which was not true. This one is actually true. Scientists discovered -- researchers discovered -- a very simple and easy way to temporarily catch monkeys in the forest so that they could tag them and study them. And what they discovered they could do is: they took a bottle that had a fairly large bottom but then a long, thin -- fairly thin -- neck. And they put in the bottom of this bottle nuts and fruits. And then they tethered this bottle to the ground. And then they went away and they watched the monkeys come up to the bottles and see the fruits and the nuts -- *"Oh, boy! Snack time!"* And they put their hands -- their little paws -- into the bottle, grabbed the snacks, and then could not get their hands out of the thin neck of the bottle.

And these monkeys would not let go of their booty, of their good. They would not let go! And the scientists could then tranquilize them and get their hands out and tag them. And then, you know, let them wake up and send them off on their merry way.

Just think about that for a second, though, and how we can do this. We can hold on trying to control things, trying to manipulate it so that it turns out the way we want it. Because we know how it needs to go! *"And let's go, God; I'm going to do this and I'm going to do this and then it's going to happen."* And mmm mmm mmm.

That's what the monkeys are doing: holding on to this few -- a handful -- of nuts and fruit. But if they just, like, would look behind them or above them or around them, there are trees filled with all of it! An infinite and ever-replenishing supply of everything they could ever want.

Isn't that a great metaphor for letting go and what is available to us? Infinite supply! Maybe we can't see it -- like the monkeys can see it in the trees -- but it's nonetheless there. It's nonetheless there! We just have to let go of the grip.

There's a great song that I think summarizes this idea better than any song ever. And had I really prepared this talk in time to have you sing this song, I would have. But I didn't prepare it in time. But don't worry! I'm not going to sing. I tried that a little bit two weeks ago; it didn't go over that well, so I will never do that again. But I'm going to give you the lyrics, because they're so powerful and beautiful.

And they're written by -- the song is written by -- an amazing singer/songwriter that I suspect ... Well, you all know his music, even if you don't know that you know it. His name is Daniel Nahmod. And he has written hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of songs, one of which we sang tonight. *"I'm Reaching Out"* is one of Daniel's songs.

So, his song that I want to mention tonight is called *"Planting Seeds."* And here are the lines. So just listen to these in the context of the idea that creation is much more effective -- and I have added even more fun -- than control. Here are some of the lyrics to the song, not all of it:

***Whatever grows will grow
Whatever dies will die***

***Whatever works will work
Whatever flies will fly
Whatever fails will fail
What's meant to soar will soar
I am planting seeds, nothing more ...***

***Sometimes I like to pretend I know what the harvest will be
But I always found out in the end it was never really up to me.***

***Funny thing is, when I just do my work and simply trust
Always seems that life is looking out for me.***

There it is; there it is. Look that song up. It's kind of a little Irish jig; has a little Irish jig flavor. You can dance around your house to it and take a really powerful spiritual message into your heart with it.

So, I want to give you one more true story about the power of letting go.

So, my little monkey story was about the negative power of not letting go. This is about the power of letting go. And it was actually told by Unity great spiritual master/author, Eric Butterworth. And he told the story on himself. I listened to it. I never heard him speak live, but I listened in my ministerial training to a lot of his tapes. And I heard him tell the story about himself on this tape.

And the story is that he was in an airport in California waiting to board a plane to Chicago, his destination. And all of a sudden, there's an announcement that that flight has been canceled. And then there's another announcement that two other flights to Chicago have been canceled. And now hundreds of people are milling around this area in the airport: not happy, upset, angry, frustrated, complaining, even yelling at the people at the counter. And he even, himself, said he found himself getting frustrated, because he really needed to get to Chicago. He probably had a Sunday service he needed to do. He needed to get to Chicago.

So, he was even feeling some tension and frustration. And then he remembered a quote that he had heard a long time before. And the quote is: *"When you are the hammer, strike; when you are the anvil, bear."* In other words, if there's something you can do, do it. But if there's nothing you can do -- and in this context I'm saying the outcome. There's nothing you can do to create an outcome, can't do it. You do what you need to do and then you've got to let it go. If there's nothing you can do, don't do anything.

And so, he settled down and he was just sitting there amidst all these other people frustrated and upset and angry and yelling and complaining. Rrrr rrr rrr. And he noticed a man sitting out a little ways away who was kind of also calm and just sitting there peacefully. And he decided to go over and talk to him. He thought, *"Well, there's a sane person over there. I think I'll go talk to him."*

They struck up a conversation. They had just a lovely connection. It was sweet. It was lovely. They kind of were in their little cocoon of conversation, not paying any attention to all the ruckus that was happening around him. And then, what I like to call an "oh-how-usual" event occurred. *"Oh, how usual"* is a lovely statement to say when a miracle happens in your life; when this thing just comes out of the blue; when something just drops in your lap. Sometimes we say, *"I can't believe that happened!"* Right? Don't we say that sometimes? *"I can't believe that happened!"*

I like to say, "Oh, how usual," because that's how it works. An "oh-how-usual" moment happened. Eric Butterworth and his friend were chatting away, and all of a sudden, an announcement comes over the loudspeaker: *"We are getting ready; we have one plane that's going to be able to take off and go to Chicago. But we also know we've got three planes worth of people who want to go. And so we're going to do the fair thing. We're going to put all the names randomly in a hat"* ... I don't know if they really put

them in a hat, but somehow we got all the names and we're going to randomly select the number of people that this plane can take. Not coincidentally, but oh-how-usually, Butterworth's quiet friend was pick number one and Butterworth was pick number two. [Congregants laugh]

The power of letting go.

Diane Harmony -- in her great book, *Five Gifts for an Abundant Life* -- wrote:

"When we let go and let God, we are in the midst of a spiritual practice so powerful that the core beliefs that have held us captive and small can be dismantled. Resistance to our good can melt away. Fear of the unknown can be shattered and a sense of oneness with God and all life can be embodied. And a whole new world of infinite possibilities can open up for us."

So tonight, I invite you into a deepening, an anchoring, an embodiment of these two spiritual truths: The Divine Intelligence -- the Universe -- knows way more than you do. Than I do. And the way that I can live in harmony with that Divine Intelligence is by letting go of control.

So, I ask you tonight: Where are you grabbing on to fruit and nuts? And I'm not suggesting you're monkeys, but I do sometimes think that we behave that way. And when we grab and don't let go, is there a place for you tonight that you can identify that, *"Yeah, I could let that go; I could release my grip"*? My invitation is to do that.

And I want to leave you with a poem: a poem that was written particularly, especially for tonight. And I so wish I could tell you that I wrote it, but I did not. But there is a new poet in town. It's a little scary and it's quite amazing. And this new poet is called AI. And I plugged in the parameters of tonight's talk, and I asked for a poem. And then we worked with it and massaged it a bit, but this is what we have.

So, this is a poem called "I Lay It Down" by AI. We've got to give AI a name: Albert? I don't know; whatever it's going to be. Here we go:

*I lay it down: the grasp, the grind,
The sacred illusion that I must design,
Each curve of the road, each turn of the tide,
As if the whole cosmos were mine to decide.*

*I breathe, and in the quiet rise of that holy inhale,
I remember: I'm not the wind; I'm the sail.
I do not command the currents or stars,
I yield to the rhythm that's already ours.*

*The Infinite knows what I've let slip.
The path is shaped by trust, not grip.
So I release the reins I once held tight,
And allow Divine Wisdom to direct my flight.*

*No need for fear; no push or shove.
Not in loss, but held in love.
Today I rest; no need to strive.
I walk in faith, fully alive.*

And so it is.