

PRIORITIZE YOURSELF

Final Week of the 4-Week Series Inspired by the Book, "The Let Them Theory"

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So how many people have someone in your life that you love, adore and care about, but there are, like, one or two things you wish they would change? [Congregants laugh] Anybody? We wish they would take better care of themselves. You wish they would be more positive. You wish they would pick up after themselves. Or you wish they would drink less.

And so how many people have ever tried to change someone by repeatedly telling them what they need to change and how it'll make things better? Like you've got a friend who repeatedly says, *"Look, your life will get better; just stop dating on emotionally unavailable men."* *"You've got to have a better diet. You've got to exercise. You'll feel better. Just keep doing it. Just keep trying."*

And how about the last one: How many people have ever had someone who loves you pressure you into changing and developing a good and better habit?

You know, even with our hearts filled with love, even with the very best of intentions, and even with the very best advice, people will not change until they want to change; until they're ready to change. And the more that we try to pressure them and force them, the more they push back; the more they resist; the more stubborn they will be to do this thing, even if it is for their good.

You know, we are hardwired to be in control and, when we get pressured, it creates this resistance and almost feels like a threat. So, we want to push back automatically and not do it, even though it's in our best interest. And so trying to motivate ourselves and others to change when it's for the better is not always easy to get that motivation.

You know, it reminds me of a friend of mine. Her husband had been putting on some weight. His tests didn't come back great. And she was really concerned about his health. And she kept bugging him and nagging him -- *"You've got to start an exercise program. You've an exercise program!"* -- trying to motivate him.

Finally, he gets so tired. He says, *"Okay! I'll get up in the morning and I'll go for a jog."* And so, he gets up the next morning and he puts on his jogging clothes. And it's 6 a.m. and he's getting dressed slowly and reluctantly. And this knock comes and he's thinking, *"Who could that be at 6 a.m.?"*

So, he goes to the door and he opens the door and he sees this beautiful, petite blonde woman in jogging clothes. And she says, *"Hi! My name is Bambi. And your wife says If you can catch me, you can have me."* [Congregants laugh]

You talk about a motivated runner! [Congregants laugh] But he ran out of gas after two blocks. And every day, 6 a.m.; knock on the door and there's Bambi. There they go! And he's running after, running after, running after. After four or five weeks, he's getting a little closer and a little closer. And in the seventh week, he's just within grasp of catching Bambi. And you knew by the gleam in the eye, he thought tomorrow would be the day.

So, he went to bed and got up really early, got his jogging clothes on. Waiting, waiting for six o'clock. Finally, six o'clock comes. He goes to the door; he opens it. And there standing in the doorway is a large, muscular blonde woman in jogging clothes. And she says, *"Hi! My name is Olga. And your wife says if I can catch you, I can have you. Woo!"* [Congregants laugh]

So, are you motivated to change? [Laughs]

So, this is our fourth and final week in Mel Robbins' fabulous book, *The Let Them Theory*. This book really helps us deal with other people and the way that we sometimes give other people power over our decision-making. Give them power over our happiness and our peace and the way that we live our lives.

Week #1: it was entitled "Let Go of Control." While we all love to be in control, the truth is there are a lot of things in life we can't control. And probably the number one thing we can't control are other people: what they say, what their opinions are, and what they think. And so, to let go of control, that's where we've got to say, *"Just let them."* If they don't like us; if they talk behind our back; if they don't like how we live our lives ... just let them. Let go of that. Don't carry that weight and energy of what other people think.

Week #2 was to "Reclaim Your Power." The one thing we can control is ourselves: our attitude, our perspective, our mindset. And so, it's really about giving us opportunities to let ourselves master ourselves and to show up in the best way -- the most positive and effective way -- we can in all situations of our lives.

Last week we looked at what I called "The Gift of Learning." Two of the hardest things in life to learn are how to deal with other people's emotions. And then the other one is how to deal with it when we compare ourselves and others; compare ourselves with each other. Because we're not born emotionally mature. We have to learn and work at it. And we're not born knowing how to handle being compared, so we need to learn and work at it. Instead of comparing ourselves to others, and feeling inferior, and using it to torture ourselves, basically, we can use comparing others to teaching. You know, instead of hurting us, it can help us. Instead of pulling us down, it can actually lift us.

Today, we're going to wrap up, and the title is "Prioritize Your Power; Prioritize Yourself." And there are three ways we're going to look at how to prioritize ourselves. And number one is to inspire people to change. Two is to help those who are struggling. And three is to choose the love we deserve.

Let's look at how to **INSPIRE PEOPLE TO CHANGE**. You know, sometimes people don't want to change, and our response would be, *"Let them. Let them not change."* You know, but on the *"let me,"* it's pretty significant: *"Let me stop pressuring the people in my life to change. Let me start accepting them as the way they are. Let me have compassion and understanding."*

Change is really hard for everyone. Change is tough, even when tough, even we're trying to ourselves. And then we add to it pressuring someone we love to do it; it really adds the complexity and creates more challenge for us.

"Let me" is about *"Let me open the door to inspire and be a positive influence on that person and other people in my life."*

You know one of the most interesting things is that we are social creatures and we inspire and influence us in amazing ways: simple ways and great ways. They did research that says if you take out an apple when you're on the train and eat the apple, people around you will crave an apple. That, if you go for a walk outside at lunch every single day, over time people will be interested and inspired to maybe join you for that walk.

If a friend says, *"I bought this great golf club, and it's taken off four or five strokes from my game; it's the best! It makes golf fun again!"* They call it "socially contagious." That we will think, *"Oh wow; that's pretty good!"*

"Hey, did you hear about that Mel Robbin's book? 'Let Them'?" And you'll get interested, because when other people do things ... Because we're always seeking to find things that are that are more pleasant,

more positive; that are easier and happier. And when we hear about things that are easy, positive, pleasant, and will make our lives better, we get intrigued by them. We get inspired by them.

And so, instead of telling someone, *"Do this or do that,"* socially contagious is saying: be a role model and your role model, alone, will be contagious and it will inspire and influence people to pick up their own game.

Like, if you wanted someone to exercise and have a healthier lifestyle, you could get up and do seven minutes of Tai Chi right in your living room, especially if they're in your family. And do it. And then over time they'll see like, *"Wow! Your energy is better; your mood is better."* And sometimes when they see those benefits and that positive energy and change, they, too, will begin to be intrigued. And it'll be like their "Aha" moment. It's like, *"Oh yeah, that would be really cool!"* And you're not forcing anything.

The only trick about it is: you have to actually be sincere, and focus all your intention and energy on doing the exercise ... not doing it for the payoff to someone else. But it's because you enjoy it that it is meaningful for you. And you have to do it without the expectation That's that they will see and that they will change. Even though you'd actually like that, It is not what the motivation is all about. The main focus has to be on you enjoying it sincerely and having it bring you benefits, and having it bring you greater joy.

And this kind of strategy of influence actually takes time. Because the person might already be struggling with their whole idea about exercise and trying it and it not going well. So, that takes a little bit of time. And then, all the pressure that's been piled on and the sense of shame and being judged ... some of that energy takes time. It takes time to shift that energy of judgment and pressure to something that's safe and easy, and then conducive to them being inspired to actually bring some change.

So, she recommends a process to help that energy. And that is A-B-C. A is **apologize**. To say to the person, *"You know, I'm sorry that I always tell you to change. I'm sorry that I pressure you to do this and to be different than you are. And I'm sure that doesn't feel good."* And so, just honoring them by apologizing and acknowledging is a huge step.

And then the second one is to **back off**. To literally just do your thing. Leave them alone. Don't drop hints or inspirational quotes anywhere. Just leave them alone; do your thing. Give them that space.

And then, the third is: **celebrate**. When they do, at some point, do that, give them a little hug. Give a little high five. Don't throw a parade or a party, because you don't want to seem patronizing that they did this. But the encouragement absolutely makes a difference.

Now, you might ask the question: Suppose they don't do this and it doesn't change? That doesn't do any good!

No; it does do a lot of good. Because stopping pressuring someone to wish they were different than they were brings a level of harmony between the two of you that's unspoken. You picking up your game and being a better role model and a better person helps your life be more joyful, which actually helps their life be more joyful.

So, whether they specifically do that thing or not, you're using your influence to inspire them to be better and actually create a healthier environment for your relationship. Your example is powerful! You are a huge role model and bigger than you realize. Sometimes we're just not patient to keep doing it for the length of time that is needed and is required.

A mother brought her son to Gandhi, asking him to tell the boy to stop eating sugar. Gandhi asked her to return in a few weeks. And when they returned, Gandhi advised the boy to stop eating sugar and he said, "Yes." And he was committed to not eating sugar. The mother was puzzled. She asked Gandhi: *"Why*

didn't you just say that in the first meeting?" And Gandhi said, "Madam, two weeks ago I was still eating sugar; it took me two weeks to stop eating sugar." [Congregants laugh]

And so, what Gandhi is really saying here: that consciousness matters. But if you want to demonstrate more good in this world, it's not just a matter of the words; it's a matter of consciousness. To tell somebody, *"Don't look at your iPhone during a meeting"* while you're holding your iPhone at a meeting is probably not the greatest amount of credibility. Telling someone, *"You've got to eat healthy"* while they're eating a bag of chips; telling you this while eating ice cream probably doesn't have the credibility.

So, your example has to be pure. It has to be sincere. Because it is about consciousness. It is the vibration that we emit that changes the energy and atmosphere and creates a space for people to be influenced; for people to be inspired and motivated to elevate their own game.

The second thing to prioritize our power and prioritize ourselves is to **HELP THOSE WHO ARE STRUGGLING**. I think one of the hardest things in life is to watch someone you love struggle with addiction or mental health issues or not being financially responsible ... and especially when they don't want to face it. Especially when they don't want to get help. Especially when they don't want to do the work or even acknowledge it. And they get lost in the struggle, and they're almost drowning in it.

Mel Robbins says the more we try to rescue someone from their problems, the more that they struggle and keep sinking into their problems. She says this: *"Allowing someone to face the natural consequences of their actions is a necessary part of healing. We may unknowingly be preventing others from finding their strength to face their struggles by trying to rescue them."*

And it's probably one of the hardest things to let go of: is to let go of helping or trying to rescue someone we love when we're worried and afraid, you know, that they may hurt themselves; that something worse might happen. It is a very painful and difficult thing.

And the truth is: people will not change until they're ready to change. People will not heal until they're ready to heal. That people will not rise and overcome until they are ready. And they need our love and support, but they do not need to be rescued. Rescuing someone is not the same as supporting them. Enabling someone's self-destructive behavior is not loving them.

Giving an adult child money when they don't want to find a job, they're not looking for a job, and they're not good with money is enabling. And even though we think it's loving -- because that's where our heart is -- in a functional way, it's not helping. It's actually hindering. Covering up for someone who is drinking or making an excuse for your spouse's anger -- for all kinds of different things -- they're just not as helpful! They prolong the suffering and they enable and don't help someone find their own power. They don't help that person rise above and find their own strength and resilience. Let them struggle. Let them drop the ball. Let them pay. Let them face the repercussions.

And the "let me" is: *"Let me face the fact that they're not ready to change."* *"Let me stop lying to myself."* *"Let me stop giving money."* *"Let me be loving and supportive."*

Dr. Robert Waldinger, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, says, *"Let people learn from life. Don't shield them from the consequences of what they choose. Maybe they need to spend the night in jail. Maybe they need to lose their job or their family. Maybe they need you to take them out of college. Maybe they are so far gone that they are going to become homeless."*

Struggle is a part of life, and it's one of the most difficult things -- when we love someone -- to be able to let go and trust that they will find their power; that they will find their strength to face their challenges and difficulties. Let them struggle, but let me validate and comfort their feelings. Let me show me their support. Let me tell them how painful it is to see them in pain. Let me be present with them, to have

love and compassion for them. Let me have faith in knowing that the Spirit of God in them *is* in them; that the light of God is within and surrounds them. That they have it in them, even though they may not feel it in this very moment. Let me affirm divine order and pray for their highest and best.

You know, we are here not to rescue, but to support people in their own spiritual awakening. To support people in their transformation and finding their own spiritual power, and finding the truth of who they are and the truth of their purpose in this experience.

Larry Dossey wrote a book years ago called *Healing Words*. And they were doing studies on the efficacy of prayer and the different types of prayer. And so, they did this experiment where they had these Petri dishes of bacteria. And one group would pray that the bacteria would multiply by ten -- ten times, or a hundred times. And then the other group would pray that the other Petri dish of bacteria -- that whatever was for the highest and best of the bacteria would happen.

I have no idea what the definition of the highest and best for bacteria is ... [Congregants laugh] But it was their study, so we'll just go with their results. [Congregants laugh]

Which one do you think was more effective? Multiply the bacteria by ten times or a hundred times? Or whatever was for the highest and best of the bacteria? I think we all know the answer.

And here's the example: when we pray for the people we love in our lives, particularly ones that are struggling, we pray, "*God, make them do this*" or, "*Have them stop doing that.*" "*Let them change this and that.*" And it all sounds logical; it's all reasonable. It's all from a place of love and total sincerity. However, when you pray like that, we limit whatever is for their highest good. We think we know what's for everyone else's highest good -- and does seem logical to a certain extent -- but it's not true. We don't know what is for someone's highest and best.

So praying for anyone we pray for in our lives is whatever is for their highest and best. Whatever will bring them peace; whatever will bring them healing; whatever will lead them in their next spiritual evolutionary step ... let that be done for them.

Being a rock and taking that stand in how we pray -- how we see them, how we affirm them, how we believe in them -- is the most powerful and best thing we could do for those who are struggling. To just show up and be present and say, "*I love you. I believe in you. I'm here to believe in you on the days that you can't believe in yourself.*" And just doing those things to create a consciousness and an atmosphere around them while they struggle to help them find their own power is a powerful and important thing.

The final way for us to prioritize our power by prioritizing ourselves is to **CHOOSE THE LOVE WE DESERVE**. In a chapter she's got called "Choose the Love You Deserve," she has this line: "*The reality is: adults choose who and how they love, and sometimes they don't choose you.*" Which I thought was a bit of a shocking and sobering line!

And the truth is: we all want to be loved, but there's always risk in that romantic sense. The fear of being rejected; the fear of being abandoned; the fear of being alone. The fear that we might never find somebody. And so, what we do -- we want to be loved so much -- is that we give our power away to somebody else, thinking if we just please them; if we just act in a certain way they'll like us, and they will want us, and they'll love us.

And so, what we do is: we sometimes just bend ourselves to be whatever is needed, and we totally give our power away. And the fact is: that's not true love. Anybody see the movie "27 Dresses?" And it was about this ... the main actor -- her sister saw a guy, and he's rich and good looking. She wants him. And so, she just tells him the stuff he wants to hear so he'll like her.

Like she says, *"Oh, I love hiking."* She didn't like hiking, but he did. [Congregants laugh] He loved volunteering and charity. And she said, *"Oh, I love..."* And she never did that. And then she said, *"Oh, I love health food. I love healthy food."* She didn't like that.

But she got the guy ... for a bit. But, ultimately, that just does not last! Because it's pretend love! It's not real love; it's just acting and trying to impress others. You know, following dating tips and the secret to landing a woman or a man. I mean, these are not sincere things.

But the point I'm trying to make is: we have this drive and need in our culture for love that sometimes we spin it in some unhealthy ways. Instead of choosing love, we chase love. And to chase love is not healthy. You know, to be the one in the relationship -- you're the only one that texts; you're the only one that reaches out -- means you're chasing. You know, to make excuses because, *"Oh, he's busy, so that's why we don't see each other very much ..."* that's chasing. You know, to fantasize about this life and travel all over the world -- when the evidence just isn't there -- is chasing. When we think, *"Oh, I can fix him. He's got potential. He's trainable,"* we're chasing. [Congregants laugh]

But she says we need to choose. Ultimately somebody will choose us or choose not. But we get to choose what love looks like. We get to choose what a relationship looks like. We get to choose what we'll accept and what we'll not accept; what will work for us and not work for us.

And then ... and that's what really dating does. It's not to find the right one; it's to help us figure out who we are. And what is it that I'm seeking; that I'm needing; that I want to share with a partner. And the clearer we get by empowering ourselves in that way, then dating is more a matter of saying no than it is about saying yes. Because it's an elimination process, because we are grounded in who we are. We are grounded in what we want our lives to look like and experience, especially when it comes to our relationship.

You know, this series is about: stop making people the problem for why our lives are not happy. And the truth is: the one with the power is us. You're the one. You have the power to choose how you live your life; how you create your relationships; your level of happiness and peace and success. It's not about them, it's about you. And you have the power.

I saw a sign that sums up the message in this series and this book and it says, *"Never blame others for the road you are on. It's your own asphalt."* [Congregants laugh]

Never blame others for the road that you're on! It's your asphalt! It's your road; you're the king of your own road! You're the queen of your own road! You get to pave it the way you want. You get to move it in whatever direction you want it to move in.

You know, there's one relationship that underpins all of our relationships: and that's our relationship with ourselves. We are the one person we are absolutely guaranteed to spend the rest of our lives with. [Congregants laugh] You know, we are the common denominator in every single relationship!

And so, the question is: What kind of relationship do you have with yourself? And in what ways do you need to heal and improve your relationship with yourself? Let me prioritize myself and my happiness. Let me pursue my dreams with passion. Let me set boundaries that will protect my peace. Let me recognize that the love, respect, and care I give to myself is what sets the standard for every other relationship in my life.

This book is about the relationship with others, but it's really about our relationship with ourselves. And to realize that we are here to take control of the power that we have over ourselves. So let us all choose to prioritize our power by prioritizing ourselves. God bless you all!