

UNITY PRINCIPLE #3: “OUR THOUGHTS CREATE OUR EXPERIENCE”

Week #2 of a 4-Week Series, “The 5 Unity Principles”

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We’re talking about the third Unity principle. Do you remember what the first one was? Rev. Beci’s here to take notes as to whether you remember the principles that she spoke about last week.

What were they? How about: There’s One Power, One Presence: God-- Good, Omnipotence. That’s our first Unity principle, right? I know there’s an LUT sitting here and, if she doesn’t know, I’m going to ... anyway; never mind.

And the second Unity principle? Ahhh. It’s amazing how quiet this place can get. It is: the divinity is within each one of us. The divinity – God -- is in us. We don’t have to ask it to come in; it’s already there. By whatever name you call it, the Divine is within you.

Tonight, we’re talking about the third Unity principle. And we’ll get to that in just a few minutes ... or a minute. You know, nowadays everything’s a minute. It may take 15 of those, but it’s a minute.

So, [shouts] *“The sky is falling down! The sky is falling down! The sky is falling down!”* That was Chicken Little or Henny Penny. Have you heard that story? It’s a story that has been passed down since about 1400 in many different forms.

Henny Penny happened to have an acorn fall on her head, and that’s what she decided: *“The sky is falling down! The sky is falling down!”* And she went out and she gathered up all of her friends. There was Turkey -- oh goodness -- turkey Lurkey. See! There is people there that have heard it! And Goosey Lucy, I think.

Henny Penny was the Chicken Little, actually. But she gathered up all of her friends, and she told them, *“The sky is falling in! The sky is falling in!”* And what happened? They all panicked. And, in some stories, they all got eaten or dispersed with at the end of the story. But I don’t remember that version. I just remember it being a happy ending.

But we can be like Henny Penny, can’t we? Running around because of thoughts that we have. We all have this thing called historical data in us. It’s where -- from the time that we were born -- we get all this data coming into our brain. And so, we think that’s the truth.

You know, Henny Penny has a very little brain. We have eight chickens at my house. Believe me, chickens have very small brains, in their very small heads. [Congregants laugh] So, we can’t blame too much on a chicken.

But we could be like those chickens -- or that chicken, in particular. Just taking in. If we spend a lot of time on listening to the news, we can start going, *“Oh, my; oh, my; the whole world is just coming ... oooh!”* Or, you know, I get on social media and everybody there, of course, agrees with me that everything’s going wrong. You know, this new administration or that old one or whatever; everything’s going wrong.

Or we start listening to gossip. I had two different people come up to me on last Sunday and tell me why I was leaving. [Congregants laugh] I thought, *“This is really interesting. It’s a whole new story!”* Some people even think I’m retired. You know that retirement is when they put new tires on a vehicle? I’ve been retired.

But so ... Listening to what other people say can bring you into that place that, *"Oh, my goodness; everything's going wrong!"* And it's not; not for me, for sure. I am just so grateful that I get to speak like this. I have a class coming up. Some of you know that I'm an expert on change, and this class that I'm going to be having soon -- you can look for it in the announcements -- is about change. I've had change in my life; have you?

You know, change is ... Life is ... It's all about change, isn't it? If you don't have change going on in your life, you're asleep at the wheel, or maybe you're already planted in the ground ... Or whatever. Because change happens.

In the last 10 years, I've had my beloved husband make his transition, both my parents and a brother. You know, change happened big time in my life, and I keep moving. I think I'm in the last place. My daughter decided that I was old enough -- God help us all! -- anyway, that I had to just ... this ought to be my last move, which was in with her and my beloved son-in-love. You know?

So, change: change is a normal part of our life. And you either accept it or you fight against it. Tell me how much fighting against change really works. You know, we get more gray hair and a few more wrinkles, but not much else happens as we fight against change.

It's better to just be a witness to it: *"Isn't this interesting? Isn't this interesting that this is what's going on in my life?"*

Henny Penny didn't like that acorn falling on her head. She thought the whole world was ending. We can take a look at our lives and decide everything's ending. I could have said that when my spouse made his transition: *"Okay, I'm done."* I could just hear him -- if he was in a grave -- roll over and roll his eyes. (He's actually over the Grand Canyon if you want to go looking for his ashes.)

But, you know, change happens. And we get to either resist it or accept it. I love being alive don't you? And that's what happens during life: is things change. Take a look at your picture from 10 years ago. Any changes, you see? Any changes over a 20-year period? Goodness, I look back and I can't believe that I was ever that young!

But that's a normal part of our lives. What can we do? What can we do? Well, because we have this data going on up here, we can look at it and we can say, *"How awful! How awful that this is all changing."* Or we can take a breath. Take a breath. When something's going on in your life, and your first instinct is to react -- just like when the doctor hits your knee with one of those little hammers, you know; that's reacting. And that's a healthy thing for most people. But you know, we can choose to react when things are going on.

I remember things going on in in my home with someone that I loved so much. And it built up this data in my head. It built up this data that I was afraid. I was afraid, because this man that I loved so much had PTSD -- although they didn't call it that when he came home from World War II. He had PTSD. And to add to that, he would be drinking alcohol and he would get so angry. You know, you could almost feel the walls of our house shudder when he was ... when he was in one of his tirades.

And I became so afraid that that anger was going to be toward me that I lived in this quiet little shell. Now, most of you that know me ... Sorry, my mouth's very dry, so I'm going to take a drink. This is water. [Congregants laugh]

But I would I would get so afraid that he would turn on me -- as he often did my older brother -- that I became very still. I was the peacemaker in the family. Yeah; the peacemaker that always wanted everything to be okay. Those were my thoughts.

"Thoughts held in mind recreate after their kind." The fear grew. And if we concentrate -- put our focus on anything -- what does it do? It reproduces! It brings more about.

And I am grateful for years of counseling, years of spiritual work that has brought me to the place where I don't react like I once did. Most of the time. You know, I still have skin on, just like y'all. And so, sometimes I do react.

But the better thing is response: to respond to what is going on.

How do we respond? How do we change that? How do we keep from that knee-jerk experience. We just have to stop it. And it takes practice. Part of that is having a spiritual life; having a spiritual practice that helps us to change the things that are going on. To change our thoughts, so the thoughts that we're holding are much different.

The affirmations that we say on Sundays; the affirmation that we said with this talk; the affirmations that affirm the truth in our lives -- that's one way. And being able to be aware that you have that going on. Aware of how something triggers you, you know. Being aware that we can do things differently. We can think about things differently.

Our thoughts reproduce after their kind.

So, when we stop, instead of giving a reaction -- you know, telling somebody off or throwing something, or whatever we might be tempted to do -- we can stop and say *"Wow, this is interesting. This is what's going on."*

What has gone on in my life is that instantaneous wanting to react. A better way is to respond; to breathe. It only takes a few moments, and especially if you start practicing it, you can ask questions in the moment: Is this what I really want to do? Is this the highest and best for me? Is this the way that I want to treat others?

To become aware and to listen. To listen. To really hear the other person, but to listen to that still, small voice that's in me; that's in you. And ask questions. What is mine to do? What is mine to be in this instant? To continue to breathe and ask questions. A response will come. A response will come! Maybe we're hearing the other person differently. Maybe our perspective is very small, but if we take time to breathe and ask questions, our perspective may grow so that we can get a better picture of where the other person is coming from. That we can respond.

And the best response is love. It's love. One thing I like about Unity: we don't have a lot of laws, you know? I came from a totally different background in 1994. I'd been a preacher's wife for 25 years, and it wasn't Unity. But we had a bunch of laws ... at least I took them as laws: read your Bible every day; pray every day; don't drink alcohol; don't smoke; don't dance. You know those were like our five commandments added to the other 10.

But I like Unity, because ours are suggestions for how to live your life in a way that is pleasing to you; that causes spiritual growth within you; and has caused spiritual growth in me. I am not the same person I was when I came to Unity 31 years ago. Gosh! Does that seem like a long time! Thirty-one years, you know!

Because I have let go of a lot of the data that had been accumulating in my head. A lot of the data that said, *"You're unworthy. You're not good enough."* Those voices that want to reinforce that I don't fit in; that I deserve to have whatever happens to me.

My friends, we have choice. We don't have to live a life of being a victim: a victim of other people and what their thoughts are about us. We don't have to live lives always afraid of what is going to happen.

Because we have principles. Because we have a God who is within each one of us that is not a punishing God; is not judging us. We have the God within us that leads, guides and directs us every step of the way as we listen; as we decide that's where I want to come from.

So, I left my notes at home, aren't you glad? [Laughs] The last time I spoke, my notes were all here on the floor, and I didn't get on my hands and knees to read them to you.

And you know, it's okay. It's okay, because these are my truths. These are the things that I have found over 31 years that have caused me to grow and to be a different person than I was, even 19 years ago when I met Rev. Kim. Nineteen ... well, actually, before that, because it would have been 20 years ago that I met you, because that's 21.

Anyway, when I started at Unity Village -- at Unity Institute -- I can remember going up to Jimmie Scott -- who has been one of our associates here -- going up to him and saying, *"Jimmie, I don't think I belong here. I think they made a mistake when they did the interviews with me."*

And he's like, *"Sandy, I think you need to realize that that piece of paper is the truth. We invited you to come. We invited you to come."*

And, of course, my beloved husband thought I was crazy. I mean we had made a whole, we had moved our whole home and everything back to Missouri.

But the truth was -- the truth is -- that I am a beautiful child of God created in the likeness of God, as are each one of you. You are beautiful children. You are a child of God. And that's what's important.

As we make our decisions; as we choose -- because we do choose; nobody's there pulling our strings, even God. Nah, God's not. God is up there, but God is everywhere. Used to be, I'd always: God, you know. But God is right here, right now and God is not interested in pulling your strings. God loves you. God is love; it said so in the 1 John in that holy book that I used to read all the time.

God is love. And how can love want to punish us? Want to see us as less than? How could God -- who is Love -- want anything but the best for each one of us? We're not victims. We don't have anybody waiting to punish us or judge us. We choose. We choose life. We choose the life that lets us know who we are and that we are love. We are loved.

And if you're feeling less than that -- and sometimes I have felt that way -- we have prayer chaplains that are ready and willing to pray with you about that. So, you don't have to leave here feeling down that life is hard. Because we know in Unity that there is One Power, One Presence: God. And that God is within each one of us.

We also know those thoughts that want to overtake us. What do they do? What have we been saying? *They create after their kind.*

So, if you're sitting in a corner sucking your thumb and thinking, *"Woe is me! I'm just going to eat dirt!"* Honey, you're just going to create some more dirt, I hate to tell you. But if we make the decision -- *if we make the decision* -- to choose love; if we make the decision that we are love; if we make the decision that our lives are worth living, and that we have people we can influence and be with because we are important ... you are important. You don't have to stand up here in order to share that.

The people next to you -- the people next to you -- are here and can use your support and your love. Our congregation can use your support and your love. It's setting aside all that need to just react to what's going on in the world, in our city, or even in our church. Just want you to know: I know the truth, and so do you. So do you: that we are a loving community. That we are loved.

We can choose; we can respond; we can ask questions. You know, if somebody comes and says something to you that you don't particularly like it -- you'd like to get mad -- maybe ask more questions. Or go to somebody that might have a better answer or a different answer.

We can choose our thoughts. That's what I'm really getting to: we can choose our thoughts. We don't have to be a machine that answers in the same way all the time. We don't have to go from our historical data that's all lodged up in here [points to head]. We can think new thoughts. We can choose new thoughts. And we can create a better life for ourselves and for those we come in contact with. We can create a better world by our thoughts.

Thoughts held in mind recreate after their kind. What you sow, you reap. If your mind beholds negativity, then all you'll see is negativity. But if your mind -- your thoughts -- see positive things; see love see; see love in expression; see things in our world that are that are lighting up our world like sunshine ... Be that light; be that love; think those thoughts that are only ones you want to create. You'll create a better life. I'll create a better life. We will all have a better life.

Thoughts held in mind recreate after their kind. And so it is.

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