

FROZEN

Final Week of a 3-Week Series, "Metaphysical Movie Fun"

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Welcome back to my summer series, "Metaphysical Movie Fun." Today I want to look at a few ideas here: how embracing our gifts allow us to use our power for good; why our own inner healing is our responsibility; and how fear can keep us small while love sets us free. And we'll be doing that with the blockbuster -- using this blockbuster Disney animated film-- "Frozen" as the backdrop to these spiritual lessons today that we'll be exploring.

So, the movie "Frozen": it came out in 2013. It's made over 1.3 billion dollars. I know. What is that even? That's a lot of money, everybody. That's how popular this movie has been. It's based on the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, "The Snow Queen." Actually, it was at Disney for 70 years. It took 70 years for them to get this finally produced and released in 2013. It's been translated and dubbed into 41 different languages. It has been nominated for numerous awards worldwide and, of course, received a Golden Globe Award for Best Animated Film. And the song, "Let It Go," won an Academy Award for Best Original Song.

What I love about this one, everyone, is that it's probably the first Disney animated film where the focus is really -- the emphasis is really -- on that importance of sister love. Sibling love instead of a romantic love. So, we're really going to be looking at that even more this morning, as well.

So, if you haven't seen the movie in a while, or at all, here is our movie recap. We have Elsa. Elsa is the princess of Arendelle. She's voiced by Idina Menzel, who played on "Wicked" on Broadway. She's born with magical powers -- Elsa is -- that allow her to create ice and snow. And, as children, she and her younger sister, Anna, who is voiced by Kristen Bell, they're very, very close. They play when they can't sleep at night. They play all the time.

Well, one time, Elsa accidentally strikes Anna while they're playing with her magic, and she's injured. So, their parents, the king and queen, take Anna to the trolls who live in the forest. And the troll king says this. He says, *"The heart isn't too easily changed, but the head can be persuaded."*

So, he then heals Anna and erases -- unfortunately -- erases then all of her memories of Elsa and her powers. Their parents are frightened about what might happen; what she might do. So they isolate Elsa from everyone, including her sister Anna, and close the castle gates.

Elsa grows up, and as she's growing up just in her room by herself, she's realizing -- she's starting to believe anyway -- that her powers are something to fear and hide. And that fear and separation just creates more and more distance between her and Anna. Well, in good Disney fashion, their parents die. [Congregants laugh] Like, *"Why, Disney? Why?"* So, now the two sisters are alone in this castle, but they don't really see each other because Elsa is isolated.

Well, now it's years later. She turns 18, so she's going to be the queen. Elsa's coronation finally opens the castle gates to the kingdom. Anna is thrilled because there's actually going to be some people around. And, of course, in that first afternoon, she quickly falls in love with Prince Hans. They get engaged. When Elsa objects to Anna's impulsive engagement, Anna pushes her to reveal why is it that she's been so distant. And Elsa loses control of her emotions, and accidentally reveals her ice and snow powers by freezing everything around her.

Terrified, she flees to the mountains where she creates a magnificent ice palace for herself and decides that she's finally free. She changes her hair, her outfit. She's living it up there on her ice castle.

But Elsa doesn't realize that her fear plunged the entire country of Arendelle into an endless winter. So, Anna sets out to find Elsa and bring her back home. And along the way, she meets Kristoff -- who's an ice

harvester; he's almost out of a job here; his reindeer, Sven; and Olaf, who's a cheerful, funny little snowman/magical creature who actually was created by Elsa during their childhood and has now come to life.

Anna finds Elsa in her ice castle and tells her what has happened to Arendelle, but Elsa's fear still causes her powers to hurt Anna once again, this time freezing her heart. Elsa sends Anna away in order to protect her while Anna slowly begins to freeze. Kristoff now takes her to the trolls. And this time the troll king explains that, because it was her heart that was frozen, only an act of true love can save Anna.

Well, everyone -- even those of us watching at this point -- assume that means a romantic kiss. So, Kristoff takes Anna back toward the kingdom and Prince Hans ... you know, the guy she got engaged to in an afternoon. What happens here, though, is that Hans reveals that he never loved Anna. He intended to marry her just to take the throne. He captures Elsa and leaves Anna to die.

But eventually, Anna escapes with the help of our snowman friend, Olaf, and she sees at that moment that Hans is about to kill Elsa. So instead of saving herself, Anna throws herself in between them. She freezes solid, sacrificing herself to save her sister.

But as Elsa embraces her frozen sister in grief, Anna begins to thaw. In other words, Anna's choice to shield Elsa was an act of true love, and it saved them both. Elsa finally realizes that it's love, not fear, that's the key to controlling her powers, and she uses her powers now to end the winter, thank goodness; restore Arendelle. And she's no longer afraid of her own powers. The sisters reconcile, and the kingdom accepts Elsa as their queen.

And now Elsa, again, uses her power to create beauty and joy. She's starting to create little winter festivals for all the kids in the country. And she promises that the castle gates will never again be closed.

It is a fantastic movie! How many of you have seen this movie? Yeah, almost everyone. Well, \$1.3 billion. I would think a couple of us have seen it, yeah.

So, so many great spiritual reminders for us in this movie: stop running from your own unique strengths and embrace who you are; the importance of doing our own inner healing work; and the reminder, my friends, that love is a verb. It's that kind of love -- love in action -- that saves us.

So, let's dive into that first lesson: don't let your fear and insecurities limit you. **EMBRACE YOUR UNIQUE POWER AND YOUR STRENGTHS AND USE THEM FOR GOOD.**

Each one of us has strengths, interests, talents, and those are how we each uniquely express the Divine -- express God in the world. And I believe that it's the strengths/the interests that were specifically given to us -- that it's then up to us to express them in the world as part of the divine order of the universe. We're where we are with our gifts, talents, in order to share it with that part of the world. It's part of the divine order that God has created for all of us.

Myrtle Fillmore, Unity's co-founder, wrote this. She said, *"You need to think of God as being already within you -- in every part of your mind, heart, and body."* If God life is already within every part of you, it means that it's up to you to express it. And yet, so often what happens is we hold back from sharing ourselves and our talents. Because we might think, *"Well, I'm not good enough,"* or *"Well, other people do that, too, and they're better than I am."* Or we're afraid of what maybe other people will say. Or maybe it's even other people's opinions or beliefs about that skill or talent that holds us back.

But the very qualities that make us who we are -- the traits that make us us -- are also what make us powerful and beautiful. And they're ours to express in the world.

So Elsa -- our snow queen -- is afraid of her powers after she injures her sister. And her parents hide her. They hide her; they hide her powers. And it's similar to those times when we all let fear limit us. She doesn't want anyone to see who she really is. She hides her powers, usually with gloves. She's afraid of her own power. Yet we're here in this lifetime to harness our spiritual powers/our unique

characteristics, and share them with other people to create more good in the world; more beauty in the world.

So, once she lets go of what others have told her to do -- which is hide and conceal her powers and her feelings -- after creating, then, something beautiful -- her ice castle -- she frees herself to be herself. She sings, *"The perfect girl is gone."* She isn't going to live up to anyone else's expectations or the limits and their fears that they've placed on her. She's all done with that. She no longer is going to follow the "be the good girl you always have to be" philosophy, which really meant to hide and play small. But, instead, she claims, *"This is who I am; now they know."* She is literally letting go of all the limits, all the fears, and embracing who she really is.

And the troll king, again, has said to her ... That very first time when they took Anna to the troll king, he says to Elsa, *"Your powers will only grow. There is beauty in it, but also great danger. Learn to control it. Fear will be your enemy."*

And what if someone said that to you? *"Your powers will only grow. There is beauty in it. But fear will be your enemy."*

Here's what we take from his wisdom. That, if you don't use your spiritual qualities -- your human strengths -- for good; if you don't consciously apply them to your life and let go of fear getting in the way ... Because the fear is what can also be dangerous. It then becomes the questions of: Are you going to live consciously? Will you live on autopilot or guide your skills in meaningful ways? Will you lead with fear or lead with love? What's going to lead your life? Let fear lead or let love lead?

And when I say *"let love lead,"* I'm including yourself in that. Will you allow love for your own self to embrace your own self in love?

I like this part, too, in this section, which is that Elsa first creates her ice castle. And she sings that infamous song, "Let It Go," and she declares, *"Let the storm rage on; the snow never bothered me anyway."*

And the storms of life may rage around us, but we can move through them when we remember the power and the strength that is within us. To harness our power for good and create beauty with it.

So, the first lesson's call to action is to, as an expression of the Divine, as an expression of God, embrace exactly who you are. Don't let fear limit you; limit your expression of your true self. Let go of all self-imposed limitations and insecurities. Harness that divine essence that's within your soul, and that is your inner strength. Use the skills, the strengths that you are given, because that's how God is expressing through you to make a positive difference in your world.

So, once Elsa stops hiding who she is and isn't afraid of who she is anymore, she creates beauty, warmth, and joy for everyone to enjoy. Embrace who you are. Create joy.

Our second lesson that we gain from this movie is to **DO YOUR INNER HEALING WORK.**

Now, I know probably many of you who have been a part of or are currently a part of AA, the 12-step program, probably know this quite well: that we must heal our inner child, your younger self, by facing the old wounds and trauma that we've carried. Because the traits and habits that once protected you from pain may no longer serve you. So, when we're willing to look at those old hurts, wounds, mistakes; feel them; process them; heal them, then we can let go of the pain. We can let go of the fear.

But I always like to say those heavy, buried emotions are like a beach ball. And you try to keep that beach ball underwater. But you can only hold it down for so long, and eventually it's going to come blasting up, and it's going to spray you and everyone around you.

And it's the same thing here. Elsa gets so upset and angry that she freezes the entire country. If we hold our feelings in, like Elsa -- who repeats, "Conceal it, don't feel it; conceal it, don't feel it" -- then

eventually the pain, the shame, the anger, the resentment, it will pour out from us, freezing everyone around us.

In other words, what I like to say is, *"Please don't emotionally vomit your unhealed trauma all over me."* [Congregants laugh] Take responsibility to uncover it; to look it in the eye; to feel it; and to heal it.

And Kristoff says to Elsa ... There's groups of soldiers coming after her in her ice castle, and Kristoff says to her, *"Don't be the monster they think you are."* In other words, don't act from fear. Don't act from your shame and pain. When we act from our unhealed, fearful selves, not only do we hurt ourselves, but we hurt everyone around us.

And so, honestly, that's probably when we can all understand when Kristoff says, *"Reindeer are better than people."* Reindeers, dogs, most animals ... because they don't hold on to all the stuff.

We hold on to all the stuff. Return to love. Acknowledge and honor the wounds of the past, and know that those wounds do not define you. Mistakes do not define you. They simply mean return to love. Acknowledge and honor the wounds of the past, and know you can move forward.

So, the troll king says, *"The heart is not too easily changed. The head can be persuaded."* Start with your head! Acknowledge that there's past wounds, old traumas, mistakes that need to be healed and freed so you don't feel the need to hold on to that beach ball of emotions underwater anymore or freeze out everyone in your vicinity. And then go to the heart. Allow yourself to love that earlier version of you. Offer yourself grace, understanding, compassion.

All three of our characters here -- Elsa, Anna and Kristoff -- they've come to terms with who they are and the room that they still have for growth -- the areas of growth they still have. I love it. It's captured really well in the song, "He's a Bit of a Fixer-Upper." We're all little bits of fixer-uppers, aren't we? And that's okay! Because, by accepting themselves -- by us accepting ourselves, including our imperfections -- they and we become freer to be who we truly are. To share the gifts and the strengths and the love they already carry within them. And now they can share it with others.

So, the second spiritual lesson reminds us: doing the challenging inner healing work is our responsibility in order to experience more peace within us, around us, and in our relationships. When we fully accept ourselves and actively participate in our own healing, then we -- like Elsa -- can add to the warmth, the beauty, and the joy in the world.

And then our last spiritual takeaway from the movie, "Frozen": **LOVE IS A VERB; IT'S AN ACTION.** And it's that kind of love that saves us.

So, after Anna comes looking for and finds Elsa on the mountaintop, and Elsa's fear and anger once again freeze Anna's heart, Kristoff takes her to the trolls. And the trolls tell Kristoff and Olaf that, *"Only an act of true love can unfreeze a heart."* Only an act of true love can unfreeze a heart.

Now the characters -- and, again, probably all of us -- are thinking it means true love's kiss. That romantic, fantasy-land, performative love. But the act of true love actually happens when Prince Hans is trying to take Elsa's life, and it's Anna who saves Elsa by stepping in in between them and shielding Elsa. It's this that's the act of true love; that unfreezes and saves Anna and her heart and her sister.

Love is a verb. Love saves us, because it's that feeling combined with action that allows love to heal and transform us.

There's this great quote by Marvin Ashton. He wrote, *"The world is filled with too many of us who are inclined to indicate our love with an announcement or a declaration. True love is a process. True love requires personal action."* And it doesn't have to be big action. It can be a small action. It could be as simple as smiling to a stranger; opening a door when someone has their hands full.

Another reminder from this story: don't let your heart become frozen. To protect ourselves, we tend to close our hearts towards others. And yet, it just harms us. We have to hold that intention to keep our hearts open, not frozen by fear and hurt and disappointment.

Because when we reach out and be the love we want to experience -- when we take action to be loving awareness, be loving presence -- then we defrost the cold around us and within our hearts. Our hearts are powered by love. And love -- when we come from our divine essence -- is healing and transformative.

So, this ultimate lesson from "Frozen" is to embrace our power, harness it for good, and then express it as love in action.

So, at its heart, "Frozen" is this story of two sisters learning that fear causes us to hide and to become separate from each other, while love allows us to become truly who we are and to use our gifts to improve our world; to improve our lives.

So, the invitation for us, my friends, is to release the fear. Instead of hiding, embracing and really stepping into your extraordinary power that is within you -- your unique gifts. Embrace them to make the world a better place; to make your world a better place.

The other invitation is for us to do our own healing. Because when we heal ourselves, we help heal our relationships and the situations that are around us. And that allows more freedom and peace within us.

And the third invitation: express love through courageous acts. Because love isn't just something we say or feel. Love is something we do. And that's how we collectively unfreeze hearts.

So, all of your insecurities, fears, self-limiting beliefs -- anything that's keeping you small: let it go and choose love; choose joy, instead.

That concludes our summer movie series. Thank you, everyone. Blessings!