

How exactly do we stay centered?

One of the primary teachings of Unity is that each person is born with inner powers to be developed throughout a lifetime. As we learn what these powers are and how we can use them, we grow spiritually and experience peace.

Unity cofounder Charles Fillmore, who conceived this system of 12 innate powers, believed they are attributes of God that we can access anytime. If we are made in the image of God, he reasoned, then we share those divine qualities, at least in potential. This booklet offers essays and prayers for each of the 12 powers Fillmore named. (You might think of others.)

Our joyful awareness is that we are fully equipped from the day we are born to live as spiritual beings and express God on the earth. We have the inner resources to meet whatever comes. Being aware of our divine qualities, exploring them, and bringing them forth as needed—like tools from a toolbox—supports us throughout life. Our powers are God in action in our lives.

We are happy to be joined by a new group of writers for this booklet from the Universal Foundation for Better Living, a sister organization to Unity within the New Thought spiritual movement. They wrote most of the prayers that accompany each power.

We hope you will find new ways in this booklet to think about your own spiritual identity and new inspiration for staying centered, no matter what.

Your Friends in Unity



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Makes a Difference
Generous donations from friends like you allow us to make Unity literature available to those most in need of spiritual encouragement. You may give at unity.org/donatenow.







My faith assures me that every event in my life has meaning and brings gifts.

"Everything happens for a reason" has been tossed around so much that it has nearly become a meaningless cliché.

But think about it. If you chose to look for the reason in things you'd prefer were not happening, imagine all you could learn. How would that shift the way you move through challenges? How would life change?

We find what we seek. If we look for lessons and possibilities, life takes on purpose and evolution, no matter what comes. Everything about our journey is transformed if we *let go and let God*—another well-worn aphorism that is also incredibly powerful when truly embodied.

For me, that defines practical spirituality.

The year 2019 began bright and new with our annual White Stone service at church, a meditation in which we allow a guiding word for the year to come to us from intuition, guides, God—call it what you will, it's a way to claim my yearly intention.

The word that came for me was *purpose*. I remember thinking that I always try to live "on purpose" and found it interesting that I would need reminding.

And then ...

Within weeks, my daughter, a mother of two young children, shattered the bones in her leg simply by stepping off a curb. After her major surgery but before life showed any semblance of a return to normalcy, my husband had emergency quadruple bypass heart surgery.

I engaged my survival mode. *Do what's next on the list. Don't look too far ahead.* Breathe. Pray. Stop. Go. Work. Eat. Sleep. Repeat.

Then the real horror erupted, one lesion at a time. A rare and deadly infection, a cousin to tuberculosis and leprosy, developed under my husband's healing wound. It took months of hospitalizations, multiple surgeries, and near-lethal doses of antibiotics before they would say he might survive ... maybe.

And the bills must be paid. And the family has needs. And we live in South Florida, and here comes a hurricane.

And ... everything happens for a reason. Does it? Really? Do I truly believe that?

Turns out I do. I had to claim my truth and remember my Source, digging deep into my well of faith to *let go and let God* in ways I never thought I could. But I did. And what did I find?

Meaning. Purpose. Love. So much love. That people truly are how God gets around. That my husband is some sort of superhuman superhero. That nurses are angels on earth. That my family is far stronger than I ever knew, and naps are glorious gifts. That my Unity community is amazingly generous and supportive and loving and grounding. That Facebook can be a lifeline. That attitude actually can be everything, and life really is a gift. That

clichés become clichés because they are true. That acceptance is evolutionary, and even a one-minute meditation can work if it's all you have time for. Just for starters.

Because I claimed my faith, it was there for me to claim. I found meaning because I insisted upon it. I processed feelings as they came and relied on my support system. At my core, I believed I could make it, so I did. It was incredibly simple and beyond complex at the same time.

For 2020, the word for my white stone was *sync*. Medical journeys continued for my daughter and husband, and yearly themes about clarity of vision abounded—20/20 being perfect vision. Then came COVID-19. What is it we collectively needed to see?

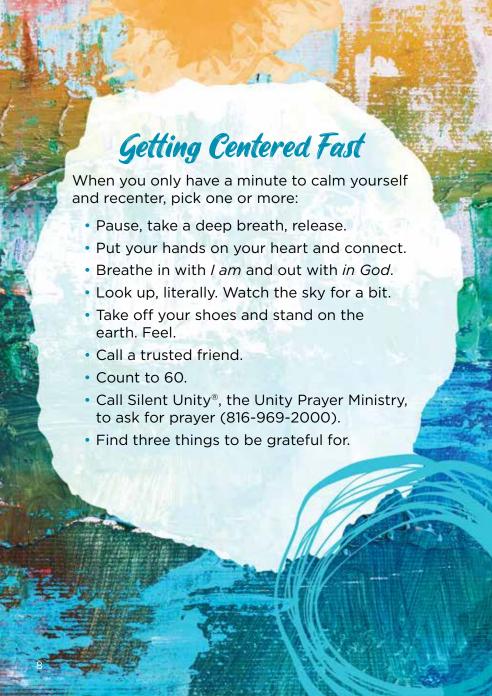
Center. Pause. Care. Breathe. Pray. Seek and ye shall find. You will find what you believe you will—good or bad.

Knock, and the door shall open. It will, no matter which door you knock on—hope or despair.

I can't explain it in words—it's beyond words. I can feel it though. I let myself be still and know. I am God. You are God. It's all God.

Do you believe that? Really? Because if you do, no matter what you face, you will find the God-ness within it. The reason and purpose will be there for you to claim. And it won't take a crisis or pandemic for you to realize how powerful your faith can be.

Trish Yancey is a licensed Unity teacher and associate spiritual leader at Unity of the Palm Beaches, Florida.





A Prayer of Faith

I look upon the world of circumstance and declare: *Infinite possibilities are now available to me!*

Thank you in advance for all the blessings of today and every day hereafter! I am alive at the greatest time in history, and I am privileged to witness this amazing day of creation.

Give me the wisdom to make each moment today matter. May I use this fresh supply of 24 hours as if it's the most precious gift in the world.

My heart now fills with unshakable faith, and I go forth in a spirit of joy, expectancy, and enthusiasm!

—Rev. Sherri JamesInglewood, California





I express the strength and vitality of God.

A treasured gift from my congregation is a silver bracelet inscribed with a verse from Philippians: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (4:13 NKJV).

This scripture about strength is particularly meaningful to me. Years earlier before I became a minister, I randomly chose Andrew, who symbolizes strength, as the apostle I would represent in a two-year discipleship program at my home church.

Did choosing Andrew, I wondered at the time, mean I had strength or needed strength?

"Both," my minister affirmed.

As I reviewed events in my life, I concluded that, yes, I had been strong in many situations. But the strength I would need in the coming years, I couldn't begin to imagine.

Strength is the "ability to endure, stay the course, last, be persistent, persevere, and be stable," according to Rev. Paul Hasselbeck, D.D.S., and Rev. Cher Holton, Ph.D., in *PowerUP* (Holton Consulting Group, 2010), a book about the 12 powers.

Hearing a doctor pronounce, "You have breast cancer," is enough to send almost anyone reeling, and I was no exception. *How would I have the strength to get through this?*

As a student of Unity, the use of affirmations resonated with me. Affirmations are not to make something come about but to deepen our conscious awareness of what is already true about us as expressions of God's divine presence.

So I affirmed: I rest in the knowledge that God is my strength.

And rest I did. I never lost a night's sleep after that diagnosis. "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15).

Another aspect of strength is dependability or, as Charles Fillmore says in *Keep a True Lent* (Unity Books, 1953), "It is the force or power to do, capacity to accomplish."

When we are dependable, we use our spiritual strength to do what we commit to. We follow the course we've set for ourselves, and spiritual strength allows us to do so with clarity, focus, ease, and grace.

Using our power of strength for spiritual awareness, we choose to focus our attention and thought energy on the possibility of positive outcomes in our own lives, the lives of others, and the world.

One way to face challenges that call for strength or courage is to be aware of ways we've demonstrated strength in the past. What have you believed you could never do that you not only found the strength to face it, but afterward knew you had grown spiritually as a result of? Focusing on such situations and writing about them can offer you a deeper appreciation of your own strength.

A little boy was trying very hard to lift a heavy stone. His father said to him, "Are you using all your strength?" "Yes, I am," the boy exclaimed impatiently. "No," the father replied, "you are not. You haven't asked me to help."

Being spiritually strong doesn't mean that we have to go it alone, without assistance from others, or can't benefit from the upliftment we receive from those who are ready and willing to help.

In meditation and prayer, especially this month, recall anew your successful use of your power of strength. Envision yourself filled with God's unlimited strength, able to stand firm, to be courageous and still in the midst of chaos, to be resilient and endure, to be persistent and steadfast.

In difficult times, remind yourself that no matter the situation, God is ever present.

It may also help to remain centered by identifying situations that increase your anxiety, stress, or worry, and to the greatest extent possible, avoid or limit your exposure to them.

Remember that strength is not something you have but what you are as an expression God's divine presence. Consider frequently using affirmations of strength, such as *God's presence within guides me and lifts me up. I am an expression of the strength and vitality of God.*

In every decision you are called to make, in every challenge you face, your power of strength carries you through, radiating from God's presence within you.

Rev. Margo Ford is minister at Unity Spiritual Center of Waco, Texas.

A Prayer of Strength

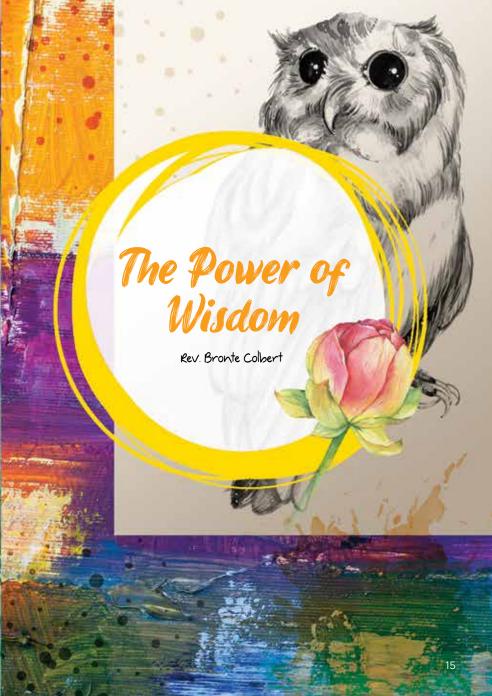
I am strength. I am the energy of God in action.

My strength originates in God, and I am fully equipped to handle any life experience. I can accomplish all things through my awareness of the Christ in me. I stand firmly on my awareness that God in me directs my life.

My spiritual gift of strength allows me to keep my mind firmly on my good. I dismiss distractions and temptations, and I think and act in alignment with the purpose God has placed in my soul. I trust my intuition and mentally hold on to what is revealed to me in moments of meditation and inspiration.

—Rev. Gaylon McDowell Chicago, Illinois





I can handle any circumstance by tapping into the wisdom within me and all around me.

A while back, I allowed an interaction with another person to upset me. Their comments felt harsh, criticism of me unnecessary, and opinions biased.

The incident seemed caught in replay mode in my mind. I couldn't shake it off. I felt distracted and caught up by negative emotion.

I prayed and asked for guidance to move forward. But if it came, I couldn't hear it as my mind busily chewed on replays and defensiveness.

Where was my usual calm nature? My centeredness? Why was my brain replaying something I did not like nor want? What if the Law of Attraction brought me more of the same? Eek!

Where was wisdom in all this? I wanted its serenity, clarity, and certainty. I needed to call on that spiritual faculty to access discernment, right judgment, and intuitive knowledge. I wanted to stand in my power and leave anything unwanted behind.

In his book *The Twelve Powers of Man* (Unity Books, 1930), Charles Fillmore said that to call on one of our spiritual faculties is "mentally to recognize that [power]," to identify with it, align with it.

Wisdom is all around us.

Rereading his words helped open my consciousness to the wisdom right around me, including a famed quote from Paramahansa Yogananda: "Steer the ship of concentration calmly to the shores of blessedness."

Stuck on my mirror was a card from teacher Edwene Gaines: "I act on the guidance, intuition, good impulses, and inspiration I receive."

And in H. Emilie Cady's book *Lessons in Truth* (Unity Books, 1903): "God is in everything that happens to you. There are no 'second causes." As I sat with these truths, dwelled upon them, I repeated: *Every life experience blesses me*. I felt a shift, a welcome letting-go.

Wisdom is in the midst of us.

I asked, Who do I know who demonstrates calm, unwavering wisdom despite circumstances? What does that look like?

One of my mentors, author Jean Brannon, came to mind. She is steadfast in her centeredness and in the way she views life as a sacred experience. If someone mentions any seeming drama, her response is nonreactive, calming, and based on the truth that all paths are sacred and good is in everything. Her wisdom is quiet and deep.

Wisdom is within us.

In meditation, we find peace and realize our constant connection to Source. We remember our alignment, and as we do, we may feel a shift in ourselves at our core.

All the "outer" fades as we stay in the moment, focusing on our breath. We drop into our heart space, our innate divinity, that Christ, Spirit, God-light within us.

Take a breath right now, if you will, hold it, and let it go. Breathe in the recognition of all that you are: wise, discerning, balanced, filled with the light of the Divine.

Know that what you are is wonderful. Within you are the resources, powers, capabilities, wisdom, and more to live a vibrant life, to handle any circumstance, and to shine. You make a beautiful difference in this world.

Rev. Bronte Colbert is minister at Unity Athens, Georgia.



When things around us feel overwhelming, when we feel out of sync with wisdom, here are some ways to remember its presence within us:

- Create time for prayer and meditation to restore a feeling of alignment.
- Practice mindfulness—be in the moment.
- Breathe in the knowing that all is truly well in your life.
- Intentionally call on the faculty of wisdom, which is part of your divine nature.
- Know that you are wise and powerful.
- Ask for guidance and be open to nudges.
- Reflect on your accomplishments, your achievements, small and large.
- Practice self-appreciation and step away from self-judgment.



A Prayer of Wisdom

In this moment of stillness, I pray and declare my decisions this day will be tempered with wisdom, faith, and most of all love.

I am gratefully reminded there is within my being the spiritual faculty of wisdom that can guide my decisions and steer me away from snap judgments regarding the occurrences throughout my day.

I know that the presence of God is always available, and I take this time to consciously choose to open my mind and heart to the guidance that is always for my highest good.

Thank you, God, for unfailing wisdom.

—Rev. Alberta Ware Chicago, Illinois





An inexhaustible stream of divine love pours through me, blessing others and myself.

In Unity, the 12 powers are referred to as 12 faculties of mind. All are important, but I believe the power of love is foundational.

As written in 1 Corinthians 13:1 (NLT), "If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

This power of love resides in a place of great wisdom: our heart. Unity cofounder Charles Fillmore, who created the 12 powers system, said love is the power that binds together the whole human family. Even further, he said in *The Revealing Word* (Unity Books, 1959), "In Divine Mind, love is the power that ... binds in divine harmony the universe and everything in it; the great harmonizing principle known to man."

Can we think of what life would be like without expressing love? As humans, I don't believe it is possible for us to repress the power of love from coming forth.

Most often, we associate love with something we receive from another person. We received love from a mother or father (although not all parents express love). Or maybe we associate love with a romantic relationship.

Probably we all have been in relationships where romantic love has ended and we felt destitute. But love from another is a secondary source. The primary source of love comes from within. God is love, and we are expressions of love.

Think about love. It comes from our inner self and is an inexhaustible supply. We can love our friends, family, romantic lovers, nature, animals, art, poetry, music, singing, volunteering, or just watching the ocean!

Love is a gift we activate within ourselves. When we give love, we actually receive love in that very moment because to love means we are expressing it. When we express it, we feel it!

If we want more love in our lives, the spiritual prescription is to love more. You may not like me, but that doesn't mean I cannot love you. How great is that!

"I am so small I can barely be seen. How can this great love be inside me?

"Look at your eyes. They are small, but they see enormous things."

—Jalaluddin Rumi, *The Essential Rumi* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1995)

When asked about the greatest commandment, Jesus responded, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40 NIV).

Personally, I have concluded that loving God is much easier than loving myself. Can I truly love myself when I have erred? Can I love myself when I've experienced financial setbacks that I judge myself for not having anticipated? Can I love myself when I face health challenges, especially if I regret not taking better care of my physical self?

Regret, judgment, and condemnation can feel overwhelming at times. How can I use the power of love during these times to center me in the Truth? How can I activate the power of love to enable me to love myself as much as I love God and my neighbor?

As a reminder of that inward versus outward focus during challenging times, I created an affirmation that may sound familiar but with a twist. I cannot tell you how often it has helped me to remember that the power of love comes from within and to know the importance of fully loving myself, warts and all, in order to fully express the loving being that God has sent me—and each of us—to be in this life.

I Vow to LOVE myself
For Better or Worse
For Richer or Poorer
In Sickness and in Health
From this day Forward.

We have to love ourselves to truly love everyone else. The power of love is enormous. But it is up to us to put it into expression.

I send you my love.

Rev. Bill Englehart is an author, speaker, and teacher based in California.

A Prayer of Love

The love of God is a grand love. It is allembracing and freely given.

Let us take a moment to dwell on this truth. Let us fill our minds with the understanding that God's love is always available to us.

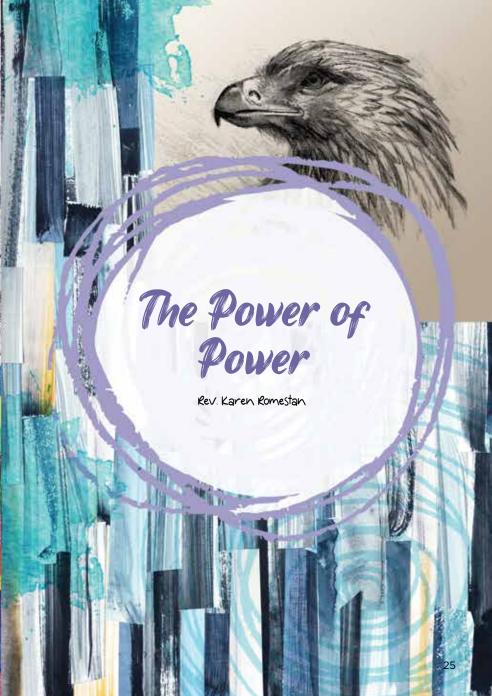
Heavenly Father, I thank you that you are love itself, and you have created me out of love to express your love in the world. Your love fills me, and its healing power touches every area of my body temple, restoring and revitalizing it.

In this moment, I open up my mind to you so that my consciousness may become saturated with the beauty of your love that forgives all, harmonizes all, and blesses me to experience oneness with you.

I am one with God. I am one with love. I am love.

—Rev. Claudia GibbsDiego Martin, Trinidad





The power of my thoughts and words moves me ever closer to the Truth of my being.

"Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."—Genesis 1:26 (NIV)

These are the words of God as he spoke creation into existence. We as humans have been endowed with the power of dominion over all that lives upon the earth.

What that means from a metaphysical perspective is that each of us has power over our thoughts. The fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, as well as the animals and creatures that move along the ground, represent the many phases of development and evolution of our thinking.

I needn't be bound to any particular thought, regardless of how frequently it appears in the landscape of my mind. Like a good gardener, I tend to my thoughts, remove those that obstruct growth, and nourish the thoughts that bring me closer to the truth of my being.

When I practice the power of dominion, I am free to choose at any time the thoughts I allow to remain. I tune in often and discern the vibration of my thoughts. I ask myself whether they are uplifting, inspiring, and true. I also ask whether my thoughts are depleting, demoralizing, or false. Recognizing the quality of my thoughts, I then choose which thoughts I invite to stay and which thoughts I release.

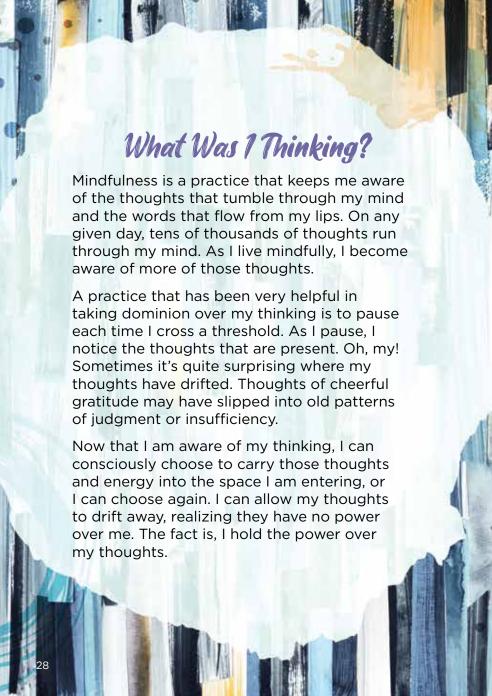
As I develop my power and ability of dominion, I allow thoughts to move through the spaces of my mind. I only invite thoughts of Truth, peace, harmony, and love to linger.

I allow those thoughts that do not uplift my spirit, entice joy, or move me toward my Truth to return to the nothingness from which they originated. In time, and with consistent practice, I clear my mind more quickly of thoughts that do not serve my spiritual life.

Dominion of our thoughts translates to dominion of our words. The creative and formative power of our words rests in our ability to call forth dominion over them. As we speak, our words bring our life into manifestation.

Our words possess the ability to make messes and to manifest beauty. Our words create an environment of safety, love, and security, or their opposites. Living with conscious awareness of the impact our words hold and with a life practice of mindful speaking, we cocreate our world with intention and on purpose.







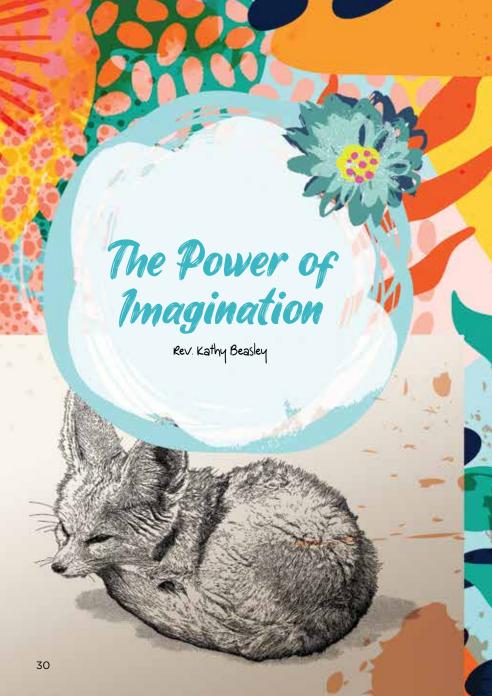
A Prayer of Power

Divine Spirit, grant that I may rest in the sweet assurance of your presence now. Let me feel the peace and power of your love as I turn my awareness away from the outer and into the stillness within me.

I listen intently for divine instructions to direct my choices and words so they may vibrate with love and life. Let any remnant of fear, anger, or control transform into the nothingness of God-ideas, so that I may take hold of the creativity and spiritual awareness I need to live an inspired life no matter what.

I lay claim on the all-good quality of Spirit that is mine right now, and I speak with the power and authority that has been given to me into the world and affairs of myself and all others, affirming all is well.

> —Shakira Taylor Miami, Florida





My imagination brings possibilities to life.

My mind travels back to my second-grade art class and the very first time I remember hearing the word *imagination*.

The invitation to close my eyes, open my mind, and take hold of whatever appeared was life-changing. Putting my imagination to work was the beginning of a lifelong journey of great discovery and quiet escape.

As a child my imagination became a world of possibility, hope, and wholeness. I have come a long way from knowing blankets and pillows as a fort, lawn chairs and refrigerator boxes as a castle, and declaring the playground slide to be the mountain I must ascend and conquer.

As I grew older, my imagination became the focus of my sense of self and the start of every step forward. I attribute the ability to overcome some of the most challenging moments and situations to the power of imagination as an unfolding principle in my life.

Imagination is the doorway to dreams for me. It has been the vehicle of creativity and the momentum of exploration. It must have taken a lifetime for me to learn that imagination was never my escape from something, it was my invitation into so much more.

There are so many ways to put the power of imagination to work in our lives, but perhaps an unconventional use is spiritual practice. There are many things to which we quickly and freely dedicate time and energy. Why not to the rediscovery of imagination active in our lives, homes, ministries, and the world?

The use of imagination is as much an activity for the sage as it is for the young. Some would say imagining something new is a lot of work, and I would agree. It is the sketch pad of concise strategy, the canvas of the visionary, and the magnum opus of the compassionate aficionado. Therein is the opportunity to examine up close that which is presumed impossible.

I invite you to find tools among your everyday possessions that remind you to step into the energy of the imagination. For me, those tools are crayons, acrylic paint, colored string, blocks, rocks, and stacks of brightly colored note cards. I know when people enter my office for the very first time, they are not quite sure what I do for a living. The truth is, some days I'm not so sure either, yet still I make myself at home.

Recently, while rearranging my collection of books, I discovered a small notebook that had slipped between the shelves. One of the early entries was dated April 1994, which was just after I had returned home from being stationed overseas. The title scribbled

atop the page was "Second Wind," and to that occasion, I wrote these words:

"It is only the imagination that can change the heart of humanity and lift the soul of the world beyond its many attachments. Our capacity to embrace possibility is linked to our ability to imagine something other than what is before us. Sometimes our journeys of life take us back to places that we have long since departed, and other times, it takes us closer to the moments and ideas that were never fully realized. Some would call this a second chance; I take a deep breath and call it a second wind."

I felt as if I were reading a letter written to my future self for a time such as this. I quietly returned the notebook to its home until the next time my heart needs its light of truth.

I tell you these stories so that you may find the will and the way to live in the vision your soul has already seen to fruition. I have gladly traded my blanket fort for a team meeting, my lawn chair castle for a strategy session, and my playground mountain for admission to the space where the soul designs destiny.

I am always in the presence of possibility that is brought to life courtesy of the power of imagination.

Rev. Kathy Beasley is senior minister at the Central Florida Center for Spiritual Living in Winter Park, Florida.

A Prayer of Imagination

I am grateful that the gift of imagination has been awakened in me.

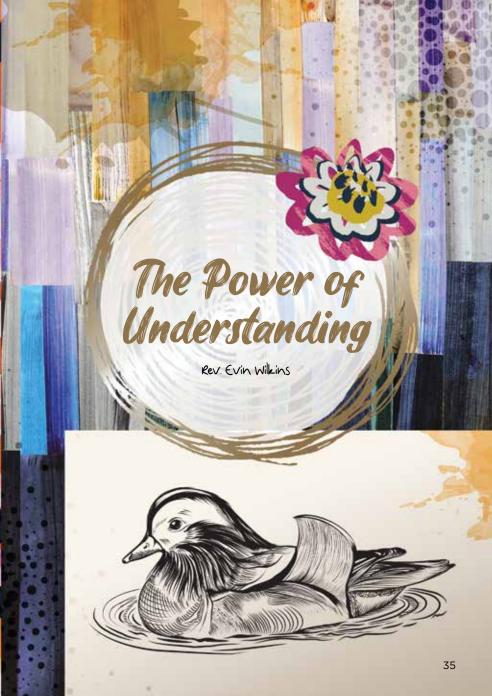
I am grateful that with the gift of awakened imagination, I can see what no eyes have seen, I can hear what no ears have heard, and I can imagine what no mind has imagined.

I am grateful that I am grounded in the awareness of a way beyond my current experience.

Centered in this, I know everything is working for the greater good of all. This centeredness allows me to let go, to surrender, and to trust that, no matter what, all is well.

—Rev. Charles M. Taylor Miami, Florida





with spiritual understanding, I know everything is unfolding for my highest good.

Understanding. Seems so simple.

For instance, I either understand that 2+2=4 or I don't. We understand the sky is blue and that we need oxygen to survive. Right? Yes and no.

While this makes sense in the physical world, it may not always be so cut-and-dried in the spiritual realm.

Understanding sometimes requires us to have faith and know that our highest good is unfolding despite what we may experience with our physical senses. It's trusting the light will once again be found, even in what may appear to be the darkest of tunnels.

Growing up, I remember hearing the infamous words, "Life isn't meant to be fair." As an adult, I realize that statement isn't at all accurate. Life is, instead, more of an understanding. It is more of a knowing that all is unfolding for our highest good.

My first career often left me drained. Working a corporate job had me staring at my cubicle walls, wondering how quickly the day would end. I'd stare out the window wishing I were somewhere, anywhere, other than there.

It wasn't my idea of fun, and I somehow always knew it wasn't where I was meant to spend my time. I often felt frustrated because my attempts to leave the corporate world never seemed to quite work out.

I remember praying a great deal, but it seemed as if those prayers were just meaningless thoughts, feelings, and words because nothing appeared to be changing.

I remember discussing my frustrations with my mother, who reminded me of Proverbs 3:5 (KJV): "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

I had no idea my prayers—despite physical appearances—were being answered beyond anything I could begin to imagine!

Fast-forward a few years, and it all began to unfold in an amazing, beautiful way. Spirit guided me to Unity. What feelings of zeal, joy, and enthusiasm I felt the first time I walked through those doors!

I began to understand what others meant when they used the expression "coming home." I began to feel Spirit was guiding me to something much greater than I had ever imagined. I wasn't sure how at the time, but I knew that Unity was going to play a very large role in my life.

That verse from Proverbs 3:5 came back into my mind, and I knew deep in the core of my being that I somehow needed to trust and to know. I needed to lean not into my own understanding.

That was almost 10 years ago, and here I am sitting in my very own church office. I was ordained a Unity minister in June 2019, and now I'm the senior minister at Unity of Madison in Wisconsin.

I didn't understand for a long time why it seemed Spirit was ignoring my prayers, but looking back, it makes perfect sense. I wasn't yet ready for what Spirit had in mind. I had to learn, to expand and grow. I had to walk a spiritual path I would not have been ready for when I first decided I didn't want to remain in corporate America.

The corporate world and those gray cubicle walls are now behind me, and I am able to remember them fondly with love and gratitude. I didn't know it at the time, but they were as much a part of my higher good as Unity would one day become. If not for that experience, I likely would not be where I am today.

You see, spiritual understanding isn't always the same as understanding that the sky is blue or two plus two equals four. It's knowing and trusting that your highest good is unfolding despite outer circumstances. It's knowing and trusting that the path before you will lead you to a destination far more beautiful than you ever dared to imagine.

Rev. Evin Wilkins is senior minister at Unity of Madison, Wisconsin.

A Prayer of Understanding

In this moment, I understand there is a divine flow to my life. At all times, God is with me. I am never alone, even when I feel lonely.

My understanding empowers me to believe in myself and my desires, *no matter what*.

When my desires are "ripe" they bear fruit in abundance and beyond my wildest imaginings. This is why delays do not scare me and fear does not stop me.

In the silence of prayer, understanding reveals that my own comes to me in divine ways that are a blessing to me and to others—always!

—Rev. Sheila McKeithen, J.D. Kingston, Jamaica







I use my power of will to choose, to commit, and to be willing.

As someone who has studied and taught about the 12 powers for several years, I have heard many students say they steer away from the power of will.

It's easy to confuse the power of will with willpower (which often fails—just think about your New Year's resolutions), or to believe that will is imposed by God, which means it is unwelcome and hard. Neither of these understandings inspire the practice of spiritual will, and neither explain the potential of our great, innate power of will.

Will is the spiritual capacity to choose, to commit, and to be willing. Although choice involves effort, to choose is not to force. There seems to be a sweet spot in the balance between effort and allowing, where will becomes powerful. The power of will is less about exerting control over what is happening and more about choosing our response to what is happening.

A common message in Unity is: God's will for you is prosperity, or joy, or love, or health. Let's work with health as an example. What does it mean to say that God's will for you is health?

It helps to interpret God metaphysically. What do we mean by *God*? In popular translation of the Lord's Prayer, we read, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." God is the heavenly or ideal. In relation to health, God is the ideal state of wholeness and wellbeing, the principle of health.

Charles Fillmore taught that our I AM or Christ nature is linked to divine mind, and therefore it is possible for us to manifest "on earth as it is in heaven." Fillmore wrote:

"The simple statement, 'I will to be well,' gathers the forces of mind and body about the central idea of wholeness, and the will holds the center just as long as the *I AM* continues its affirmation."

—Christian Healing (Unity Books, 1909)

Jean, diagnosed with several autoimmune disorders, experiences chronic symptoms such as joint inflammation, fatigue, mental fog, and body pain. Getting out of bed each morning requires monumental effort, and relentless symptoms scream for her full attention. A student of Unity, Jean has been cultivating her innate power of spiritual will to transform her experience of daily living.

Before rising from bed each day, Jean devotes a few minutes to spiritual and mental activation of will. Affirming, *I will to be well*, Jean chooses to anchor her attention on the principle of wholeness and well-being. She recognizes signs of divine life in her body and mind, appreciating that even with the physical limitations of her current circumstances, she is capable of living fully.

Activating the power of will physically, Jean promises herself—makes a commitment—to demonstrate wholeness and well-being in one particular way and to do it daily. Understanding that some

days she feels better than others, she selects a practice that is reasonable and definite, that can be done in 15 minutes per day, and that proves her true wholeness and well-being.

For several weeks, Jean committed to *pranayama*, yoga breathing exercises, to stimulate circulation and healthful body chemistry. At other times, Jean committed to mindfulness meditation, conversations with supportive friends, reading about the principle of wholeness and well-being, or journal writing about all that is going well in her life.

Jean finds that committing to one practice each day is not only possible, it is the sustaining power of will. It is the I AM continuing its affirmation.

Sometimes honoring her commitment is the last thing Jean wants to do. At such times, Jean draws upon the aspect of will that says: *Even though I'd rather not, I am nevertheless willing.*

Notice that Jean focuses on fulfilling her will to be well rather than trying to control her symptoms. Will is at its best when directed toward our inner spiritual capacity to fulfill the principle rather than fixated on the circumstances and conditions appearing in any moment. This focus "gathers the forces of mind and body" that transform us and our circumstances.

Rev. Linda Martella-Whitsett is vice president of Unity Prayer Ministry.

A Prayer of Will

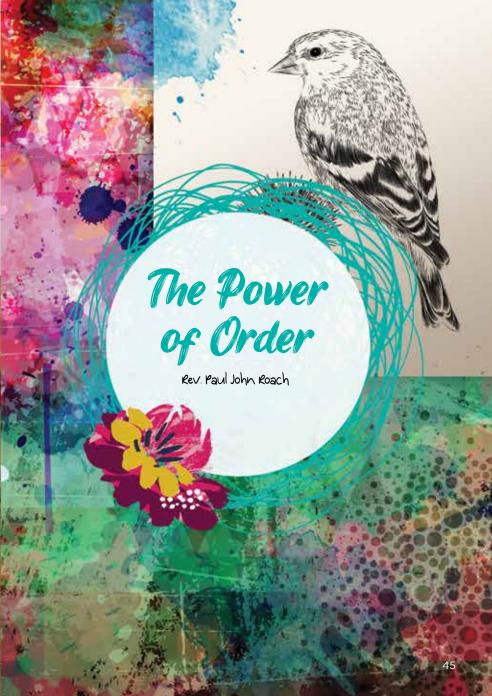
Holy Spirit, we believe in and submit to your will, knowing it is the perfect plan for our lives.

As spiritual beings, we know we do not function or exert our will independently, but rather act in partnership and perpetual connection with you. When we venture outside of this covenant and opt to do our own thing, we become willful—having or showing a stubborn, determined intention to do as we want.

Having no desire to be out of alignment, we commit to staying aligned with your amazing grace and limitless love. We stand in the truth that your will for us is always our highest good!

—Fabian M. Thomas Kingston, Jamaica





Understanding divine order, I can embrace paradox and navigate chaos while keeping my balance.

I was hitchhiking through Germany back in the 1970s and was picked up by a man about 10 years older than me who was a professor at a college in Munich. He very kindly took me to his home for lunch before returning me to the autobahn to continue my travels.

As we ate, I noticed a statement that had been inscribed on the kitchen wall. It read, "Chaos is an order we do not yet understand."

I was a young man in my early 20s and right at the beginning of my spiritual journey. The statement intrigued me because it spoke not only to the limitations of human knowledge and understanding but to the idea that even what seems arbitrary and chaotic could be part of a greater, universal order and harmony.

The universe, and humankind's understanding of it, is constantly unfolding. Newtonian physics, in its elegance and surety, became the foundation of our understanding for two centuries.

Then the apparently chaotic and contradictory landscape of quantum physics was posited, which shifted our adventure in knowledge to new levels. The outwardly crazy dance of subatomic

particles and their refusal to be pinned down in time and nature can initially confuse us but is ultimately exhilarating.

Particle or wave, Spirit or matter, order or chaos? In our new understanding, we do not have

to choose one or the other. Both nest together like the Taoist symbol of yin-yang or the Hindu marriage of Shiva-Shakti—undifferentiated potential and manifested energy.

Charles Fillmore, cofounder of Unity, was keenly aware of this interplay of substance and form, of idea and manifestation, and it is a cornerstone of his teaching.

One of my very favorite psalms, Psalm 139:11-12, speaks to this marriage when the psalmist says, speaking of God:

"If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,' even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you."

In practical spirituality, this means, for me, that the light, the order, the wisdom of the Divine permeates all things. The presence of God is available even in the most chaotic and challenging times. The possibility for transformation is always here.

Having said that, I think it is important to avoid easy answers to difficult and heartrending problems. This is sometimes called "cheap grace" or "spiritual bypassing." This is when we blithely affirm or declare that "All is in divine order" or "God doesn't give us something we can't handle" without engaging at the human level.



For those dealing with grief or deep sadness, or trying to understand why atrocities happen, these statements, however intrinsically true, sound cruel and insensitive. Chaos seems like chaos when we are in the middle of it, and no platitude or benevolence from others will suffice.

There is a story of a woman who came to the Indian teacher H.W.L. Poonja, distraught and in tears, because a close friend of hers had just been killed in a tragic situation. She was inconsolable.

Poonja simply came toward her and held her gently in silence, allowing her to cry and rail against the injustice of the world.

Then, after a long time, he looked her in the eyes and said, quietly, "This is *samsara*—the world of time and change." She could hear the words because he had allowed space for her grief. He did not try to deny her feelings but responded to them with loving action and compassion.

As a minister of 34 years, I know how difficult it is to minister to others in this way, avoiding pat answers, extending love, while at the same time conveying a message that is helpful and grounded in principle.

Whether you are a minister or not—and we all minister to each other in some way—I have found only one way to do this successfully. It is to embody in your own being the reconciliation of apparent opposites—chaos and order, light and dark, horror and compassion, anger and imperturbable joy.

I thank the young professor for his hospitality that day long ago and for the wisdom I found written on his kitchen wall.

Rev. Paul John Roach is a writer and host of *World Spirituality* on Unity Online Radio. He lives in Fort Worth, Texas.

A Prayer of Order

There is an established order in the universe.

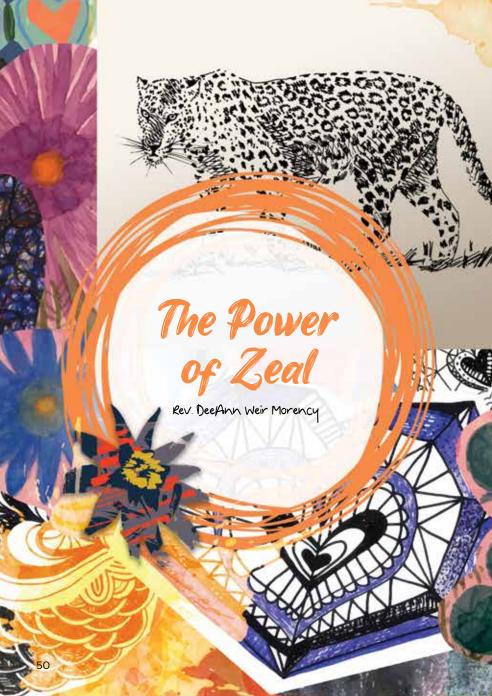
It is because of order, not chance, that the earth orbits the sun in a precise rhythm and why there is a pattern in nature. Even my physical development from fetus to adulthood unfolded sequentially according to the divine pattern.

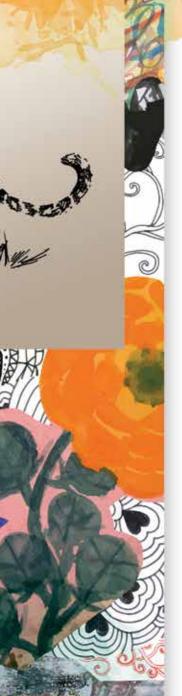
I am not here by chance. There can be no random events in my life. I claim divine order in the midst of circumstances that appear chaotic.

Aligned with the divine pattern of perfection at the center of my being, divine adjustment occurs in a harmonious way at the circumference of my life.

—Rev. Claudia Fletcher Kingston, Jamaica







I ignite my zeal by focusing on what brings me joy.

Zeal is the engine that drives us. It is our getup-and-go. It expresses as a rush of energy at the start of something new and exciting, the energized enthusiasm that gets us out of bed humming with expectancy, and the quiet intensity that keeps us moving forward.

It is our passion for life. In *The Revealing Word*, Unity cofounder Charles Fillmore called it "the inward fire of the soul that urges [humankind] onward."

Zeal is a power that has always resonated with me. Yes, I am generally one of those energetic, enthusiastic, bouncy people who loves new ideas and forward momentum. I welcome new beginnings and feel most alive when I am deeply committed, passionately engaged, and purposefully driven. For a long time, zeal came naturally to me.

Until it didn't. Until I lost my zeal.

I had no mojo, no joy, no energy. I felt as if my life were on hold. Nothing interested me anymore.

I couldn't move forward. I couldn't get traction. I had no forward momentum—or did I? As I sat in what I now call the "blahs,"

I slowly began to realize that the real forward momentum was, and had always been, within myself.

Zeal can be shiny and bright and exuberant out in the world. It can also be a quiet intensity burning from within. It can be big and explosive, and it can be subtle, shifting your inner landscape.

How do you consciously activate it? I have found it begins with noticing what in your life supports joy. Perhaps that is quietly sitting in the Silence with deep commitment and willingness or running a 5K no matter what the weather is like outside—or both!

When I "lost" my zeal, what I really lost was an understanding of what brought me joy. I look back now and see how I used my zeal, all that activity, as a way to escape myself. I was avoiding the inner dissatisfaction that I was feeling.

I see now that any loss of zeal is an early warning system, letting me know it is time to reevaluate how I am showing up in my life. I began by listening anew. What was important to me?

I noticed shifts in my value system—new things were important to me. What would happen if I lived into those new values?

As I experimented, I paid attention to anything, no matter how small, that brought me joy. I looked beyond what I was "good at" and focused on what felt fun and freeing.

I took up piano and tried writing songs—honestly, not much joy there! But singing? That brought me so much joy. Painting? I may not really "paint," but I discovered I loved painting.

Walking the hills and riding my bike opened my heart. Being of service at my spiritual center was like a breath of fresh air. Baking bread didn't really do it for me, but having friends over for sixcourse meals every few months did.

With each spark, I would breathe more life into it. I joined the church choir so I could sing and serve at the same time. I saved my money—expectantly and yes, with zeal—to buy a new bike that was a joy to ride.

Each day I found myself looking forward, first as I saved the money, then later as I biked to work. As one spark was ignited, another followed, and another and another.

As I rediscovered my zeal, I was able to channel it toward areas that were more challenging, less joy-inducing on their own. I struggled less with tedium by recognizing the less joyful tasks as important to the larger picture of my now much more joyful life. Working longer days for a project? That meant more time off for a meditation retreat later that year.

Igniting your zeal is about listening to what makes your heart sing, even if it's a very quiet song to start. When I find myself tiring, feeling low on energy and enthusiasm, the first thing I do now is listen. What do I need to realign? What have I forgotten? What do I need to discover anew that will bring me joy?

Rev. DeeAnn Weir Morency is associate minister at Unity San Francisco, California.

A Prayer of Zeal

As I turn within for prayer, I cannot always locate the joy and enthusiasm I know are part of my divine nature. Sometimes my light seems low.

But I know the Truth of me: My core essence is Spirit.

In prayer, I consciously turn up my inner light, little by little. I notice the small things at first. I am breathing. I am alive another day. I notice the beauty around me—colors, nature. I think of someone I love or remember something amusing. Life continually provides me with opportunities to engage if I but notice.

Best of all, I am never outside the presence of God. I can draw from a limitless source of energy and joy.

With zeal rekindled, I go forth to shine God's light upon the earth.

—Rev. Ellen DebenportUnity Village, Missouri





Whatever I release will bless me.

Sometimes it takes a struggle to really understand a spiritual teaching.

We find ourselves, like Jacob in the Hebrew scriptures, wrestling for a long time then insisting, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me" (Genesis 32:26). We want to let go. We may even need to let go, yet we can't until we truly understand the lesson.

Sometimes the very teaching we need to grasp is that letting go is the very best thing for us.

I see in Jacob's command a recognition that he has reached the turning point. His moment of frustration and defiance shake up the pattern he is caught in, so the energy can shift. While he won't let go of his foe, he has let go of continuing to do the same thing. He let go so he could let go.

It would be nice if we always got the blessing before we released, but it actually works better the other way when we engage the power of faith. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). We don't have to keep fighting until the favor is received. Dropping the struggle is the gift itself.

The first time I recall really understanding the power of release was years ago when I was telling my friend, a licensed Unity teacher, how irritated I was with something that didn't work in my life. She matter-of-factly said to me, "Well, you know elimination is one of the 12 powers."

Lightning flash. As I had never understood before, I saw that I could let it go. It never had occurred to me I had a choice. I don't actually recall how the outer situation was resolved. My transformation was in the moment I realized I had the answer.

It was a rudimentary understanding of how release works, but it was a start. I know now that letting go starts with my consciousness and then moves into physical expression. I also know that I am playing a part in creating the drama I don't like.

Life's struggles come and go and are forgotten in time, but moments of awakening stay with us. Yet the struggle is what causes it to happen.

Thanks to that exchange, I was given a powerful affirmation that has become my go-to response when I notice a challenge: *Well, you know elimination is one of the 12 powers*.

It is just step one of resolution, but it serves to bring my observerself online. I'm talking to myself and stating a fact, so I've already shifted the energy. There is love and humor in it, so I begin to soften.

Once I've said the affirmation, I ask myself, *What do I want to create from this?* This serves to move me out of victim consciousness into verity consciousness.

Let's use this power of letting go and creating anew. Your name may not change from Jacob to Israel, but you will be mightily blessed.

Rev. Elizabeth Mora is senior minister at Unity Northwest Church in Des Plaines, Illinois.

A Prayer of Release

I call forth my power of elimination. I set the intention to release resistance and to surrender any seeming struggle.

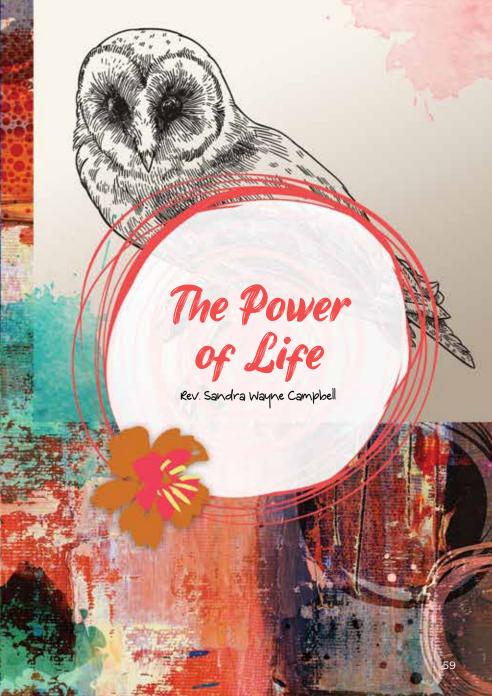
In this moment, I stand firm in my power and make a conscious choice to allow my alignment. When I become silent and turn within, my higher self reveals the people, patterns of thought, and behaviors that are not promoting my purpose.

My faith is fortified, and I am easily guided to take inspired action to experience expansion and true freedom.

I boldly say hello to my new harvest and farewell to what is finished. It is done!

—Veronica Walker-Douglas Chicago, Illinois







Life is the infinite endowment of God, and eternal life is happening now.

My dear friend Carol answers everyone who asks how she is doing with a smile and five simple words: "I'm blessed no matter what!"

I have known Carol for nearly 40 years. She recently celebrated 80 years, and like for most people, those years have been marked by joy and sorrow.

At one time, she was a single parent with five children, working two jobs to give them the best life she could. Carol put herself through cosmetology school and became a master in the trade. I know because I'm one of many who benefit from her amazing talent.

She met and married the love of her life, and Emmet turned heaven and earth to give Carol and her children the best he could.

Carol and her mother had a special bond, and they could pass for twins. When Carol's mother made her transition, Carol was devastated. Not long after, Emmet lost his life in a one-car accident. Carol sees to it that she and her children, their spouses, grandchildren, and extended family are all very close. She and the family experienced another shocking blow when the son of her oldest daughter suddenly passed away.

Before her husband passed, Carol and he had been working on plans for her to retire. That all changed because of the economy so, to my delight, Carol continues to take care of those of us who rely on her magic to make us beautiful.

My friend Carol has a positive outlook on life. That is why she can affirm with certainty, *I'm blessed no matter what!*

Each of us has our own concept of life. Whether it is good or bad is all about perspective.

As Rev. David Williamson, D.Min., explains in *Twelve Powers in You* (Health Communications, 2000), one person may believe life

is limited, death is the end of life, and sickness and disease are natural occurrences that we must suffer through. Yet another may see life as infinite and ongoing, health as natural, and life to be celebrated.

We can choose the perspective from which we view life.

In John 10:10, Jesus explains these different perspectives: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

I believe the thief represents our negative, limited thoughts and beliefs that steal our joy, kill our faith, and destroy our zest for life. Those who cling to such ideas believe life is limited and measured in years, comes from the body, which gets old, wears out, gets sick, and dies.

The second part of the scripture reminds us that life is good and we can stay centered on our abundance of good no matter what.

That is the more constructive view of our life power—that life is an endless power and an infinite endowment of God, that the body comes from life, that death is a transition from one phase of life expression to another (a change of cosmic address), and that eternal life is always—here and now.

The forms of life may change, but our connection with life is ageless, no matter what.

In the words of Unity poet laureate James Dillet Freeman, "Our life did not begin with birth, it is not of the earth; and this that we call death, it is no more than the opening and closing of a door ..."

We all have the power to live life abundantly. You may not be able to control the "no matter what's," but you do have the power to stay centered on the truth that life is good and you are blessed, no matter what!

You have a choice every single day.

I choose to feel blessed.
I choose to feel grateful.
I choose to be excited.
I choose to be thankful.
I choose to be happy.

—Amber Housley

Rev. Sandra Wayne Campbell is associate minister at Unity Temple on the Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri, and executive director of the Unity Urban Ministerial School.





A Prayer of Life

I invite life as wholeness, energy, and vitality to flow through me. Life is the very breath I breathe.

I pray affirming that this divine flow of unlimited life-energy and wholeness is doing its perfect work in me.

I am unstoppable in my desire to express God. I do not allow feelings of defeat to linger in my mind. I quickly affirm my innate divinity.

My thoughts of being an overcomer always center me and take firm hold in my mind and life experiences.

God's life flows through my mind, body, and soul, enabling me to overcome all obstacles.

—Blanche Kimble-Wilson Chicago, Illinois

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