

## EXPAND

Week #4 of a the 7-Week Series, "7 Habits of Highly Transformational People"

Feb. 3, 2021

Rev. Richard Rogers

### INTRODUCTION

**Rev. Richard Rogers:** Hello! I'm Richard Rogers, and this is Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center! This is the Wednesday night service ... and, yes! It is a Wednesday night service! And even though there's still nobody in the room, we are doing this service to support you spiritually! That you may feel the presence and power of God in your life, and that you may be living your greatest life!

So let's begin with a time of prayer.

### OPENING PRAYER

I want you to open your mind, your heart, to all the good that God has for you. I want you to say, "Yes!" to that. I want you to say, "Yes!" to the power of God in you that wants to bless you in greater and greater ways. There's no limit to the amount of good that God has for you. So we just say, "Yes! Yes, God! Yes! Yes!" to all the possibilities. "Yes!" to all the abundance of love, of truth, of blessings, of joy, of peace. We say, "Yes!" So we dedicate this service and everything in it to God. Thank you, God! And so it is. Amen.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alright! There's a couple of announcements I want to call your attention to. The first one is our "Circles of Joy" that begin on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17. They are from 8 to 10 congregants; they're going to be on Zoom and on other social media platforms. This is going to be our Lenten season, and it's all dedicated to the power of joy. And I'm telling you, if there's ever been a time in our life where we really need to expand the joy in our life, it is right now. So join together with other Unity people in the community; we actually have people from around the country who participate. So be a part of this!

Also, we have some Zoom classes coming up, as well! Rev. Maraj is teaching two new classes: "Prayer Basics" and "Unity Basics." Both of these are online. As well as his class, "The Power of Letting Go." And so, if you want to know more about our classes, please go online to [unityphx.org](http://unityphx.org). See all of our past services, all of our upcoming classes; everything we're about is on our website. Again, it's [unityphx.org](http://unityphx.org).

Alright! That's all the announcements that I have for you. Rusty's going to lead us into our talk, and he has a great song for us today.

### SOLO

**Guest artist Rusty Ferracane sings, "A Piece of Sky"**

Tell me where  
Where is it written  
What is it I meant to be?  
That I can't dare...

It all began the day I found..  
That from my window I could only see  
A piece of sky.  
I stepped outside and looked around.

I never dreamed it was so wide  
Or even half as high.

The time had come  
To try my wings  
And even thought it seemed at any moment I could fall,  
I felt the most amazing things,  
The things you can't imagine  
if you've never flown at all.

Though it's safer to stay on the ground,  
Sometimes where danger lies  
There the sweetest of pleasures are found.

No matter where I go,  
There'll be memories that tug at my sleeve,  
But there will also be  
More to question, yet more to believe..

Oh tell me where?  
Where is the someone who will turn and look at me?  
And want to share  
My ev'ry sweet-imagined possibility?

The more I live - the more I learn.  
The more I learn - the more I realize  
The less I know.  
Each step I take -  
Each page I turn -  
Each mile I travel only means  
The more I have to go.  
What's wrong with wanting more?  
If you can fly - then soar!  
With all there is - why settle for  
just a piece of sky?

Listen and you'll hear me...  
Watch and you will see me...  
Look up to the sky  
and watch how high I'll fly.

## MESSAGE

**Rev. Richard Rogers:** Okay, so we've been doing this series on the "7 Habits of Highly Transformational People." And the question that I want to place before you today is: Have you ever heard of a spiritual principle and, when you heard it for the first time, you thought, "*That cannot be right!*" [Laughs] Right? It just seemed so counter-intuitive! There is no way that could be a real spiritual principle! It's like some old guy somewhere made something up, and people keep believing it! But it can't be really a spiritual principle!

And a couple of the ones I'm thinking about is: when you heard for the first time, "Give and it will be given unto you." Did you believe that?!? I mean, for me, you know... I was a young man; I didn't believe that! I didn't believe that if I gave that I'd actually get more in return... That it would actually come back

to me 10-, 100-, 1,000-fold! I didn't believe that! I thought the more that I held on to, the more that I would have! And the greedier that I was, right?

And it was such a deep transformational process for me to realize that, if I was going to be stingy with life, life was going to be stingy with me! If I was going to hold back my love, my joy, my abundance, my offerings, then life was going to respond to me that way! That I couldn't get a life to be bigger than I was willing to be on the inside. That I had to be willing to really have the courage and the faith to give of myself. To give into the moment. To give into the situation. To give from my abundance. To give from my desires. And that I began to learn that, as I would give in greater and greater ways, it absolutely came back to me in ways that were staggering!

When I began to tithe for the first time -- I think most of you know this -- I was a year's salary in debt. And I didn't believe that if I gave more... But that's what I began to practice. I began to tithe. And it was the scariest thing ever! And within a year, I was completely out of debt. It literally changed my life!

Or this idea that our inner life creates our outer experience. That just seemed wacky! I mean, really?!? Right? Or the idea that we are supposed to go the extra mile. Or as I forgive, I am forgiven. I mean, some of these spiritual ideas, when we hear them for the first time, it's like, "No. *That just can't be true.*" Right? Like, we're a big, "No!"

And so today what I want to focus on is one of those ideas that, the first time we hear it, it sounds wrong. Right? It just sounds wrong! And the idea that I want to focus on today is this idea of expansion ... but in a very particular way. Like, the idea that I want to focus on is that **NO ONE OR NOTHING IS AGAINST YOU.**

You know, we've been looking at this ideas of highly transformational people: "The 7 Habits of Highly Transformational People." And the first premise -- the first habit -- is that transformational people ... that whatever is in front of them is for them. This idea that life is not out of control; it is absolutely intentional. And what is in front of me is for me. And the moment we make peace that, whatever is going on in your life at this moment is exactly for you -- it is for your good; it is for you to transform it right there.

The second one we looked at is: highly transformational people have a vision for their life and their world that they're working on. That they're not moving in one direction one day and another direction another day. They don't have goals one day to go this way and another day go that way. They have a vision for their life that they are in the process of executing.

And then the third thing we focused on last week is this idea of shifting to the infinite. That in every situation -- every moment -- we have the opportunity to shift from the limited to the unlimited. To shift from lack to abundance. To shift from hatred to love. That we have this incredible ability to shift the focus of our intention, and that we can always look up and see a higher possibility. And if we're looking down -- if we're looking at the limitations; if we're just focusing on the problem; if we're just focusing on what's wrong or what's broken -- we really need to lift our gaze higher to see the infinite possibility.

So Week #4. Week #4 is this habit that highly transformational people have that, in any situation in their life, they are willing to **EXPAND**. They are willing to expand in the moment to be more than they think they could be. And that's why this statement... And the first time I heard this statement was in *The Eye of the Storm*. It's a book by Gary Simmons. Gary Simmons is a Unity author; has a ministry. Just retired from a ministry in Spokane, Washington.

And on page 15 it says -- his spiritual teacher is talking to him -- and it says this: "*No one is against you. You have no adversary in your life. There is nothing in the universe that is against you or your purpose. This is what is meant by an awakened future. You must leave this room knowing only one thing: that nothing stands against you.*"

Right? Now ... [Laughs] If you look at your life, right? You can probably find some people -- some situations, some moments -- that look like they were standing against you. Right? That looked like they were trying to take your good. Or they were trying to undermine you. Or they dumped you. Or they fired you. Or whatever it is, right? I believe that most of us have a list of all the people and all the situations that we're holding a grudge or resentment about. That we believe have been against us.

You know, it may have started really early! [Laughs] We might have a brother or a sister that we believe that was against us. We might have a parent that we believe was against us. And then we get into a relationship; we might have an "ex" that we absolutely know was against us: that dirty dog was trying to take us down. Right? [Laugh]

Most of us live in this mindset -- in this experience -- that literally about half the world is for us. Maybe not even half the world! Maybe we've got one or two people that are for us, and the other billions, trillions of people on the planet really [laughs] are either neutral or are actively working against us! You know, the person that steals our parking spot. Or the waiter or the waitress that doesn't help us. Or, you know, whatever it is! Right? We run around in this big victim mindset, because we believe that the world, at best, is neutral and, at worst, is against us.

And what if you hear me say tonight that NO ONE AND NOTHING IS AGAINST YOU? [Laughs] I can hear you! I can hear your mind going, "Richard [laughs], really [laughs], baloney!" Right? "Baloney; that's baloney! I can give you a list of all the people that have been against me!" And what if, today, I can provide spiritual evidence that -- whether they intended to be for you or not -- they were for you. Whether they were actually for your good or not, spiritually they were for your highest good. That some of our greatest adversaries -- some of our greatest challenges; some of our greatest problems -- were actually designed to be right in our life so that, in those moments, we got to make a decision between expansion and contraction.

You know this is one of my hot buttons. This is one of the things: I have a whole seminar about this! This idea that your soul only does two things: either it expands, or it contracts. And, you know, I work with my coaching clients on this. You know, I'm developing, actually, a new seminar for this. Because I believe so deeply that we have to help people learn that their soul only does two things: it either expands or it contracts. And people who are transforming their life in the greatest way, they are in the process that -- no matter what is happening to them -- they are in the process of expanding. That, over and over again, we have a choice in every moment: are you going to expand, or are you going to contract?

Now, I'm not saying that sometimes it's not easier to expand in conditions of love or joy or abundance. Like, in those moments where we feel profoundly loved, we naturally expand. And in moments of conflict or pain or grief or anger or sadness, what I want you to see is how much your soul contracts.

Now, when we move into conscious awareness, we get to actually decide. So let me just give you an example. Right? Say somebody steals your car, right? Or you get fired from a job, or somebody breaks up with you. Or somebody that was close to you passes away. Right? Can you see, in most of the time, the way that we react to what we call "negative situations" is to contract? Right? And the more painful -- the more negative, the more ugly -- the more we tend to contract. You know, for most of us, in the moment where we feel like we have failed, or are failing, we tend to contract.

Now, there's a part of us in this mindset that, when we're failing and we're contracting, we actually think that's the safest, most appropriate response to life. Like, in the presence of a big failure -- whether it's a failure in a relationship or maybe it's a bankruptcy or it's a failure at work or failure on a project that you've been working on -- you know, we feel so bad about our failures, or our mistakes, that we tend to contract.

Now, it seems logical -- at some level -- to contract! But the reality is: when you're contracted, the amount of good -- your ability to solve or overcome any situation -- is limited! You can't solve life's

problems from a contracted place! Like, if you have a big failure... You know, I've had some! Right? Big, public failures! Right? *[Laughs]* And your tendency is -- in the presence of big, public failures -- is to want to contract. To go find a dark corner and just roll up and die. Right? That's how most of us were taught to respond to failure! Is to contract, to roll up and die. And then when we don't die -- like, we're so disappointed that we didn't die in the midst of our shame of our failure -- that we just slowly begin to ink our way out. And finally, we kind of -- hopefully, if everything works -- we kind of rebuild ourselves, and we expand back out again.

But what if -- in the presence of your failure -- you actually expand to become bigger than that moment so that you can actually call forth the blessings of God to heal it. To transform it. To make it right quickly and easily, instead of contracting and living months or days or even years in a contracted state? I bet you can think of one area in your life that was so embarrassing to you -- such a big failure, such a big problem, right? -- that maybe you've never gotten over it. That you, in that moment, decided that you were so embarrassed about what happened that you contracted to the place where you've never allowed yourself to expand beyond it.

Highly transformational people are in the habit of expansion! They are committed to expansion! Not just when it's working, but even when it's not working! In fact, highly transformational people are even more committed to expansion when they want to mentally and emotionally do it the least! And, as we begin to develop the habit of expansion, no matter what happens to us, we choose to expand.

Where in your life right now would it become better if you were willing to expand into that moment? Into that situation? Into that opportunity? And where are you making it worse -- much, much worse -- because, in the place where you need to expand the most, you've chosen to contract the most? *"Well, Richard, I'm embarrassed."* Or, *"Richard, it looks bad."* Or, *"Richard, I'm not winning."* Get over it!!! *[Laughs]* Literally, get over it!!!

You are not here to support your ego! The purpose of life is not to let your ego run away and hide when you're not winning. You're here for your soul, and the work of your soul. And you are here to hold the fullness of God. And we cannot do that from a contracted state.

Highly transformational people -- people who are the most successful -- no matter what's going on in their life, they have made the decision to expand beyond it. To be bigger than this moment. To be bigger than the opportunities.

So here's a couple of things I want you to look at.

Number one: We're either going to deal with life from a conscious place or an unconscious place. We're either going to respond out of our habits -- whether those are positive or negative -- or we're going to respond just from an unconscious awareness. So I'm going to invite you to choose -- literally choose -- your reaction to life. To choose your reaction to this moment. That you're either going to be a victim in this moment, or you're going to choose to react from a place of power and possibilities.

So think about one area in your life that you've unconsciously just contracted out of shame, out of guilt, out of embarrassment, out of a sense of insecurity. A place where you've contracted in that moment. What if, today, you made the conscious decision that you were going to expand anyway? Like, what would it look like if you just took a breath and allowed your soul to expand to be bigger than the problem? To be bigger than the challenge? To be bigger than the shame or the embarrassment of the moment, and allowed yourself to expand? Can you imagine, from your expanded place -- from your expanded soul -- if you could not hold more good, hold more blessings, hold more God -- that would absolutely allow you to transform any situation? So, the first one: I want you to decide: are you going to do life consciously or unconsciously? If you're going to do it consciously, then you get to choose how you're responding to any moment.

Two. I'm going to ask you: Is becoming smaller ever beneficial? Does it ever make sense for you to become smaller in any situation? *"Well, I guess if I become smaller, it's easier for life to kick me down the road."* [Laughs] Well, maybe! But that's about the only blessing! You becoming smaller doesn't mean that you're safer. And it's contrary to the truth! If you become smaller, you're not safer! You're actually safest when you're at your largest, most powerful self! Right? So today, are you going to choose to become larger? Smaller or greater?

Three: Can you imagine transforming any situation in a higher, better way from a smaller sense of you? Does anything truly get easier when you're living from your smallness?

And four: Can you imagine that, whatever you want to create in this moment, actually has to fit in your soul? Now, what I want you to see is that, sometimes when people want to create a greater life, they actually believe that what they want to create is bigger than they are. And what I'd like to suggest tonight is: that's never the case. That, if you want to create a greater life, you actually have to expand your soul to hold the greatness of this moment. To hold the possibilities of this moment, your soul actually has to expand to hold any goal or desire that you have.

Over and over again, your expansion is the requirement of a greater future. If you can't expand, you can never hold a greater future, because it doesn't fit within you! That, whatever you desire most -- loving relationship, greater abundance, greater work, greater peace of mind -- whatever you desire actually has to fit inside of your soul! That your soul has this unlimited capacity to hold God: to hold the infinite possibilities. But it actually has to fit! You can't have a life that's bigger than you're being! You can't have a life that's bigger than who you are on the inside! We have to expand over and over again!

Jesus said, *"In the world there's tribulation; but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world."* No matter what was happening to him -- even when people wanted to take him out! -- he expanded in that moment to become bigger than the moment! To become bigger than the situation! Even in his crucifixion, he became so big that he transformed the world forever!

That no matter what is going on in your life, it is there by divine appointment to get you to expand your soul to your next greatest level of potential. To your next level of good! That, over and over again, whatever is in front of you -- whoever is there -- it is not here to take you out; it is here to call you up! To call you into a more expanded version of yourself.

In Genesis 50:20, Joseph said this: *"You meant it for harm, but God intended it for good."* And I trust that there have been people in your life that meant it for harm. But they weren't against you! It looked like it, and we can take it personal. And they hurt our feelings, and our little ego can get bruised. And we can want to run away and hide. But the reality is that, even in that moment, God meant it for good! Because, even in that moment, you were called to be more than you've ever been before! And successful people -- highly transformational people -- don't get diminished by life. They expand beyond it. They become greater!

Michael Jordan. High school. He was cut from his sophomore basketball team. [Laughs] Now, [laughs] he was cut from his sophomore basketball team! Now, how many of us -- in the formative high school years, being cut from the team that we wanted to be on most -- would just run away in shame and never pick up a basketball again? And it would be part of our new story. It would be part of the place where we feel the most like a victim. *"I was cut from my high school basketball team. And I've never gotten over it. It's defined the rest of my life; it was an awful situation."* Right?

For Michael Jordan, it actually made him work harder! He actually expanded because of that situation to become a better ball player! In his book, he says this: *"I have missed over 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions, I've been entrusted to take the final shot of the game, and missed it. I have failed over and over again, and that's why I succeed."* It is a powerful individual that -- in

their moments of failure -- know that that's their call to expand. It is a powerful individual that knows that failure does not define them, but it is their process of expanding into success!

Wherever you have limited yourself, I want you to see how much your ego has cost you. How much contraction has cost you in your life. That your shame and your contraction has actually cost you living in the fullness of God.

Tiffany Haddish -- the Emmy-award-winning actress, author of the book, *The Last Black Unicorn* -- grew up in foster care. Separated from her siblings, assaulted, homeless, divorced. She overcame it all! She's now a best-selling author. She's won an Emmy award. She's been on more movies, more TV shows... You know, she started doing stand-up comedy when she was living out of her car! Do you realize how much faith it takes when you're living out of your car? But somewhere deep inside of you, you know you were born for success. That her life has been about expansion! Right?

When we look at successful people, we look at them and we see their success, but we don't see all the times when their soul had to choose to expand to be greater than the failure of the moment.

Michael Oher, who many have heard of him through the movie, *The Blind Side*. He was raised one of 13 children. Grew up in the tough projects of Tennessee. As a teenager, bounced around. Overcame foster homes and a life on the streets. Overcame the addiction of poverty and addiction and hopelessness. He's written a new book.

Over and over again, what I want you to see today: that whatever you think defines you and makes you smaller, no one is against you! Nothing can stand between the expansion of your soul!

So here's your homework for this week. I want you to take a serious inventory of the things that have caused you to contract in your life. The things that have made you smaller. The things that have called you back into shame and contracting into your life. And I want you to decide today that life no longer gets to define whether you expand or contract. That your shame and your ego no longer get to make you small. That your commitment -- as a spiritual being created in the image and likeness of God -- is to use your soul to its fullest by expanding. That highly transformational people expand no matter what. Expand! When their ego tells them to contract, they expand anyway.

We are not designed to contract; we are designed to expand into the glory of God. And highly transformational people -- the most successful people in our world today -- have made a personal commitment to be about expansion.

I want you to begin to look at those areas in your life where you knowingly, willingly chose to contract into a greater level of smallness. And I want you to make a new choice today. I want you to be more than you've ever been before. I want you to really put your soul to the test and see if you can expand beyond your smallness, beyond your failures, beyond your drama, beyond your stories to become the fullness of what God created you to be: an ever-expanding expression of the Divine.

Let's take that into our time of meditation.

## **MEDITATION**

I want you to feel the presence of God that's within you. And that presence and power of God within you wants to do only one thing: to fully manifest right where you are. To be the living expression of who you are. So we just say "Yes!" today! We say "Yes!" to the power of God within us. We say "Yes!" to expansion. And feel your ego's desire to contract you. Feel the habit that you've developed of contracting in situations. And today we make a new choice: I will expand! I will expand! I will expand beyond my stories. I will expand beyond my drama. I will expand beyond my failures. I will expand!

Take another deep breath. Expand! Become greater than this! And in the next moment, become greater than this! And in the next moment, become greater than this! I will expand!

No matter what life brings me, I will expand. No matter whether I fail or succeed, I will expand. I will hold more and more good; more and more God; more and more joy; more and more peace; more and more abundance. I will expand. There is no limit to who I can be. There is no limit to how much God I can hold. I will expand. I will expand!

Expansion is my birthright. And every person -- every situation -- that is placed in front of me, I realize they're here to ask me to expand to become bigger than the moment. To become bigger than the problem. To become bigger than the challenge. To become bigger than the failures of the past. I will expand. It is my new habit. It is my new commitment. I will expand beyond this moment; I will expand beyond my story; I will expand beyond my parents and the generations that have come before me: their stories. I will be all that God created me to be. I was designed for God. I was designed to hold the Infinite within me. And so it is. In the name and through the power of the living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

## **COLLECTION**

Okay; So I want you to take these spiritual ideas that we talked about today, and I really want you to feel your soul's ability to expand beyond any of the things that are going on in your life. That you're not here to live a small, little life; you're here to live in the fullness of God ... to expand your soul to hold more good than you've ever known before.

So let's move into our offering. And I just want to thank you again for your continued support of our ministry. Whether you drop a check in the mail or you give online electronically, thank you, thank you, thank you for your generous support of our ministry during this time!

And our offering blessing is: *"Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I give, all that" ...* No! Let me try this again; I know this one! *"Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I have, all that I give, and all that I receive."* One more time: *"Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I have, all that I give, and all that I receive."* So we dedicate this gifts to the will and the work of God moving in and through this ministry of light. In all things we look to God, and in all things we give thanks. We know that our gifts come back to us 10-, 100-, 1,000-fold. So we say thank you, God; thank you, God; thank you, God! And so it is. Amen.

## **CLOSING**

Alright; I want you to have a great week! We're going to close with our Prayer for Protection and then our Peace Song. So let's do that together:

The light of God surrounds us;  
The love of God enfolds us;  
The power of God protects us;  
And the presence of God watches over us.  
Wherever we are, God is.

God bless you, friend! Have a great week!

***Unity of Phoenix Choir sings:***

Let there be peace on earth  
and let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on earth;  
the peace that was meant to be.

With God as Creator,  
family all are we.  
Let us walk with each other  
in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me;  
let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take,  
Let this be my joyous vow:

To take each moment  
and live each moment  
in peace eternally!

Let there be peace on earth  
and let it begin with me!

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