

LOVE BIG, LIVE BLESSED

Final Week of the Series, "7 Habits of Highly Transformational People"

Feb. 17, 2021

Rev. Richard Rogers

INTRODUCTION

Rev. Richard Rogers: Hello! I'm Richard Rogers, and this is Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center. And I am so glad that you're with us tonight! I am so excited about concluding a multi-week series of talks that I've done based on "The 7 Habits of Highly Transformational People." Highly transformational people are people that you know – people in our world – that are transforming one issue in their life after another. Who are creating greater levels of love, peace and joy, and transforming the world that they experience into higher and higher levels of good. So we're going to conclude that tonight by talking about loving big, living blessed.

So let's move into our time of prayer.

OPENING PRAYER

I want you to open your mind, your heart, your soul right now. And I want you to feel the power of your heart to love big. That your heart has this infinite capacity to express the love of God. And we just open our heart all the way to be a channel of God's infinite love. And as we give – as we love – we are blessed in greater and greater ways. There is no limit to the amount of blessings that God has for each and every one of us. That we are each created in the image and likeness of God. Each one of us is God's beloved. So we say thank you, God, for the power of love in our life to transform our lives and our world. And thank you, God, for all the blessings. And so it is. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

So we begin a new program at Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center that I am so excited about! That we've made a commitment to dismantle racism. We've made a commitment, as a ministry, to stand for racial equity. And I'm so excited about all that we're going to do. There's more information available on the website. But the idea is that we're going to gather together in Zoom meetings. We're going to have Zoom meetings for people of color, black people; and we're going to have Zoom meetings for white people. That's the first part of the program. And then we're going to gather afterwards and talk about what we've learned, what we've experienced, what we know. And this is really a powerful way – this is a program that was developed at Unity of San Diego – to really take on racism head-on. And, you know, as a ministry, we stand for a world that works for all. So we'd like you to prayerfully consider being a part of this first five-week program. You have to attend all the activities. We ask that you read the material that you're given – watch the videos that you're given – so that we can really make a difference in the world. If this excites you – if you believe that we can create a world that works for all – we invite you to go on the website, sign up for the program, and let's begin the transformation right here, right now, that will make a difference in so many lives.

SOLO

Guest artist Todd Herzog sings, "Love is the Answer"

Color spreads across the sky, a new day is coming
But none of the questions have changed
Life moves too quickly, we're never quite settled
Circumstance changes but the fears stay the same

Love, love, love is the answer
For hands that are reaching and hearts bruised with life
There's hope for the weary, the broken and weak
'Cause love, love, love is the answer we need

All we are, are empty cups waiting for filling
We seek out acceptance and love
We're reaching for the better things but all that we're reaching
Is the feeling we never can get quite enough

Love, love, love is the answer
For hands that are reaching and hearts bruised with life
There's hope for the weary, the broken and weak
'Cause love, love, love is the answer we need

So come as you are, come to the water
Come and be thirsty no more

'Cause love, love, love is the answer
For hands that are reaching and hearts bruised with life
There's hope for the weary, the broken and weak
'Cause love, love, love is the answer we need

MESSAGES

Rev. Richard Rogers: So do you believe you can transform your life? Or do you believe that life just is the way it is, and you just kind of have to suck it up? Right?

I think there's places in all of our lives where we've noticed that we've transformed it; where we've made our life look better, look different. That we've created a higher level of good. And I think that there's also places in our lives where, sometimes, we feel stuck. That it doesn't ever seem to change. It doesn't seem to change at the level we want it to. We don't seem to really experience all the desires that we have in our life. To really own the life that we want.

And so, I wanted to do this – begin this year – with a series on those people that are highly transformational. Those people that seem to take situations – life as it is – accept life as it is. But then they transform it to a higher level. And I wanted to really look at: What are those habits – what are those qualities – that these individuals live that seems to make the greatest difference in their life.

So we began with this idea that highly transformational people transform the situation that is right in front of them. And that might seem obvious! Well, how could you transform something that's not right in front of you? But sometimes, when life presents itself to us, we feel victimized by that. We go into our thought that it shouldn't be this way; this isn't right. And we actually don't actually get our arms around the situation that is right in front of us.

But those individuals that are highly transformational: they actually embrace what's right in front of them, and take it up a notch. And so, if we're going to be highly transformational – if we're going to really take on life – we have to start with exactly where we are. I know that some of us would like to start *[laughs]* in some other place than where we are right now. Right? *"Well, I'd rather be there; I'd rather be there; I'd rather be 30 pounds lighter; I'd rather have, you know, a million more dollars in my bank account than I do."* But the reality is that we always have to start right where we are. And you can't move from where you are until you transform where you are. So these individuals that are highly transformational actually just begin with where they are.

Then the second habit we talked about is that they have a vision for their life and for their world. Highly transformational people have a vision of where they're going. They don't get up every morning and make it up where they're going that day. They don't decide: *"Well, this day I'm going this way, and the next day I'm going over here. Then I'm going to go over here ..."* They have a vision of their life that actually empowers them to move forward. They have a sense, every day, how today's activities lead to a bigger vision in their life. They're not going all over the place. They are focused, and then they become laser-focused on their vision and the world that they want to live in.

Then we looked at principle three. We looked at the idea that those individuals that are transforming the world don't get stuck in the details. They focus on the infinite. They focus on the possibilities. They don't just always focus on the problem. They don't get lost in all the details and how ugly or wrong it is. They are always looking up and seeing a higher possibility, and calling forth that higher level of good into every situation.

And then we looked at the idea of the capacity of the soul to expand. Number four: that these individuals expand into the situation to become greater than the moment. Greater than the experience. They unleash the full power of their soul to expand – in any moment – to overcome any situation.

And then the fifth one: we talked about that there's a – see cooperation. That these individuals that are truly committed to transforming their life and their world are always looking for the people around them to join together with others to seek cooperation. To seek alignment. To create prayer partnerships. To create work allies – vision allies – on the life that they want to live. And I really want you to begin to look for those people in your life who 100% will support you. And then, as we work together with other like-minded individuals, it actually makes the jobs that we're doing – it makes the work that we're doing; it makes the vision that we hold – so much more possible, because we're working together.

And now, tonight, we're going to focus on the last two. And number six is: they love big. You know *[laughs]*: they just do! Highly transformational people have the ability to love in a bigger way, because love is the power that transforms situations in moments and people in the greatest possible way. When you think of the people that have made the biggest difference in your life – maybe I need to say the biggest positive difference in your life ... The people that have made the biggest positive difference in your life I guarantee you: you felt loved. That they believed in you. They understood who you were. They encouraged you, because they just loved you. That love is the greatest power that we have to be transformed.

And yet, these individuals who are transforming the world in the greatest possible way love in a way that is bigger than most of us play. Now, what I believe to be true is that most of us are being asked, over and over, to love in a bigger way, and we're in resistance to that. I think most of us have a person in our life that the Universe is calling us to love *[laughs]*, and we just say, *"No! I don't want to love that person! They don't deserve my love!"* Right? And, from a human point of view, we have free will, and we get to say, *"No!"* to the life, or say, *"No!"* to the moment as much as we want to.

But I want you to see that, over and over again, I believe the Universe is working to really open your heart to more love: to be a greater channel for love than you've ever been before. And you get to decide if you want to play.

One of my favorite Scriptures about love is from 1 John. 1 John 4: *"There is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment. And whoever fears has not reached perfection in love."*

So this is so fascinating: especially right now, during this pandemic and the economy and everything that's going on. I want you to see how much time and energy you're spending in fear. Right? And it makes human sense to be in fear about, you know, the pandemic or about the economy ... about your

finances, your loved ones. It makes perfect sense to be in fear. But what I want you to see is that love – what Scripture says – is when we are perfected in love, we absolutely do not need to spend a lot of time in fear. Because what it says is: the perfect casts out fear. And that doesn't happen outside of us; that actually happens inside of us. That the fear is cast out from within.

So when we're afraid – when we're living in fear; when we're spending all night anxious about this or about that – what I want you to see is that you are not operating from enough love in that moment. And it's not about loving anybody else in that moment; it's about loving the places within you that have felt wounded. That are afraid. That feel empty. That feel broken. Like, in those moments, the way that we are perfected is that we turn that infinite love that God has for us, and we allow ourselves to drink it in. We allow that infinite love into our mind, our heart and, mostly, our soul, so that we get to be filled to overflowing.

Because when we're full of love – when we're overflowing in the infinite love that God has for us – there's literally nothing to be afraid of! We know that it's the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom! And so, when we're full with love – when we're absolutely filled to overflowing with the infinite love of God – we don't spend very much time at all being afraid. We just know that we're going to move into that blessed relationship that God has promised all of us.

So then it goes on and says in Verse 19: *"We love because he loved us first."* See, here's where it gets interesting, right? That, once you've been perfected in love – once you're full with love; once that love is just overflowing within you – then we're called to give it away! Then we're called to love the people who need our love: the people that don't really feel lovable. The people that don't feel like they're enough. We're actually called, then, to share it, because God has loved us that much. That our job is now to be that vehicle – that vessel of love – for others in the world.

But you can't be that vessel of love for others when you're walking around empty. If you're walking around a few quarts low of full [*laughs*], you get cranky. You're irritable, right? You're just ... you know how we get! Don't you sometimes feel that? Where you just get cranky? And it's like, *"What's wrong?" "Nothin's wrong."* The only thing that's really wrong is you're not full! Is you haven't taken the time necessary to make sure that your heart and soul are filled with the fullness of God so that you can be a presence for others: an overflowing presence for others. Because God loves you! And when you hold that – when you let that anchor in your soul – then you get to be a vessel of love for others!

And then it goes on. Verse 20 says this: *"For those who say, 'I love you,' but hate their brothers or their sisters, they're liars! For those who do not love their brothers or their sisters whom they've seen cannot possibly love God, who they have not seen. The commandment we have for us is this: That those who God loves must love their brothers and their sisters."*

If you know that God loves you – if you're experiencing the overflowing love that God has for you – you have to be willing to share that. Because it's overflowing! There's so much love coming into your experience! There's so much love that's coming into your life that it becomes easier and easier to love the people around you. Because it's overflowing! You're not giving out of the last little bit that you have.

Like, some of us have tried to do relationships trying to give the last little bit of love that we have to somebody. And we get – everything gets a little "Grinchy." It gets a little tough. But when you're overflowing with love – when that infinite love of God just fills your mind, your heart, your soul to overflowing – then we can love the people around us, and be gracious and generous and abundant. Because now we're full!

Like, I want you to really see: who is the person in your life that you're being asked right now to love in a bigger way? Maybe the person you don't want to love! Maybe the person you say, *"Well, they don't deserve my love. They haven't acted appropriately. They're not right. They're not kind. They're not good. I don't want to love them!"* And what I'd suggest to you today is that [*laughs*] that is the person that God

wants you to be loving right now! That, as you get full – really filled with the infinite love of God – it's going to be easier and easier to love, even in the presence of their neediness. Or in their crankiness or their brokenness. Because it doesn't suck the love out of you; you're actually filled to overflowing so that you can give that love in a greater way.

And so take a deep breath. Right now, whatever's going on in your life, take a deep breath and see if you can expand to hold more and more of the love that God has for you. And then when you're feeling full, don't just instantly give it away, but allow that love to just fill your soul. And when you're really feeling full, then I want you to just send a little bit of love to somebody that's been hard for you to love. Send a little bit of love to that person that maybe you don't always like to love. Maybe they're not always act right, or they don't always say things right. Or, you know, they're just a little ... There's been a little bit of tension in that relationship. Tonight, I want you to send them love, and just feel the difference. And how that difference really makes you feel. That, when you're full, it become so much easier to love the people around you.

And when we're full, then we move into the final habit. And the final habit is about living blessed. And I love this idea of living blessed, right? That it's a mindset. It's an expectation. That we're not operating out of the past. For many of us, our dominant way of being in the world is operating out of past experience. We are operating out of the expectation about how the past has gone. And part of moving into being fully blessed is that we let go of yesterday's experiences. We let go of how life has happened before, and we are willing to relate to life in a brand new way in this moment.

And, to begin with, we really have to begin to focus on the good. We have to focus on all the things that are actually working – what I believe is about 97% of our life that is wonderful – instead of the 3% that's not quite right.

Scripture says it this way in Philippians 4: *“Finally, my brethren, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. For whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put into practice in your life.”*

Today I want you to lift up your vision. I want you to see all the blessings. I want you to see all the good. I want you to put on the mindset of being positive. I want you to live from an assurance that knows that all things are working together for your highest good. That the Universe is really conspiring moment after moment to bless you. That we live in a time where the more grateful – the more time we spend giving thanks – the more it changes our life. Over and over again, as we give thanks, we begin to notice more and more the blessings that are all around us.

And, you know, part of living blessed is really taking advantage of our spiritual birthright. That each and every one of us was born with a spiritual birthright. That we were given the kingdom; we were given all the good that God is. And, as we assume that life is going to work for us – as we assume that we are going to be blessed in greater and greater ways, and that life is going to work for us in greater and greater ways – we actually lay hold of all the good that God has for us. That, as we love big and live blessed, we actually enjoy life at higher and higher levels.

You know, there is so much that the world needs right now. That your ability to love and to live a fully blessed life really transforms everything.

There's a story that was told to me by a gentleman who served in the Vietnam War. And he – in his church group – on a yearly basis would go back to Vietnam, and they would feed the kids in the orphanage. They had these large camps of orphanages, and he would go back and he would feed the kids in these orphanages. And they would get up very early, and they would make one meal for each one of these camps. And these kids would get one large meal every day, and they would get another smaller meal. And that's all they really had to eat every day. So he would go. And they would get up

early. And they would make the food and they'd put it in the truck, and then they'd go to these camps to feed these kids.

And the story he told me just got me! You know, they're on the back of this truck. They've got all this food. What happened is: they'd pull into camp, and all these kids would get in a line to be fed. And there was this little girl, and she was running to get in line, and she fell. She skinned her knee; she bruised her elbow. And he jumped off the truck, picked her up, held her, brushed her off. And – as he was just hugging her; she was crying – what happens is: these kids got out of line for the food and created a line to get hugged!

Now, like ... food was something that was very important in these camps! And having food, and getting their big meal of the day – very, very important! But the idea that somebody stopped and hugged them caused them to get out of the food line and to create a line where they would just get hugged. And I've never forgotten that story! That story just touches my heart in every imaginable way!

And I see the time that we're in as so similar to that! That every one of us right now is working the best way we can to try to keep ourselves safe and healthy. To try to keep our families safe and healthy. Try to keep food on our table. We're doing everything we know how to do to keep everything moving. Like, this has been a scary time for so many of us! And the problem is that we can't always even hug each other at the way that we used to be. We can't always connect with each other. And that's why your love right now is even more important to be a blessing to yourself and to the people around you! Like, we're hungry for hugs! We're hungry for connections! We're hungry to know that we are loved.

And transformational people actually are doing the good work of loving in the best way they know how! To make a difference in people's lives! To connect with people when they're struggling. When they're concerned. When they're afraid.

And what I want you to do tonight – what your homework is tonight – is: I want you to see how transformational your love is. To the people that you love – to the people that you reach out to – your love makes a difference! It is no small thing! And the Scripture teaches us that, as we give, so shall we receive. That you have this capacity – especially now – to love in a way that is transformative! That makes a difference!

And sometimes we get so busy doing the details of our lives – making sure we have food on the table – that we forget to do our spiritual work. We forget to love. And allow – as we give that love – to let those blessings come back to us 10-, 100-, 1,000-fold.

So your homework this week is to love. I want you to pick the person in your life that you know that you've been called to love in a greater way. I want you to look at your family, your friends, and say, *"Is there a way that I can love them more? Is there a way I can demonstrate my love for them more? Is there a way that I can be kinder or more generous? More loving? And know that, as I give, that that's going to come back to me in every imaginable way."*

I want you to be transforming your life. I want you to transform every limitation in your life. And the way that we do that best is to love. Love and to be loved! To move our life into a world that works for all.

Alright. Let's move into our time of meditation.

MEDITATION

I want you to take a deep breath. And I want you to feel the power of love right where you are. Take another deep breath. And I'm going to invite you, tonight, to allow love to be the center and focus of your life. To be the transformational power. To allow love to create your life from the inside out. To have love create and restore your finances. To allow love to bless your health and your body. To allow

love to transform all your relationships. To allow love to do a mighty work right where you are. That love is the greatest power.

Scripture says that God is love. And that we are called to love each other at the level that God loves us. Today, allow love to be the power of your life. Pure love. Divine love. God love. Healing every relationship. Transforming every situation. And, as you send love – as you feel love within yourself – and as you send love out to every other individual on this planet, that you're going to be blessed in greater and greater ways. As you give, so shall you receive.

And so, today, we love. We love at the level that God loves us. We hold nothing back. We allow our heart to open and expand to be a channel for infinite love into our world. For family and friends, we just whisper to their soul: *"I love you. I love you!"* That maybe somebody that we've been in conflict with – have been upset with -- we whisper to their soul, *"I love you. I send you love today."* That we allow love to go before us: to heal our past; to bless our future; to transform our life.

Love is the only power. Thank you, God; thank you, God; thank you, God! And so it is. Amen.

COLLECTION

Alright. So I hope you enjoyed tonight's talk. I hope you can really feel the power – the capacity that you have – to love in bigger ways and to live a fully blessed life!

We also want to thank you for your generous support! So our offering blessing tonight is: *"Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I have, all that I give, and all that I receive."* Let's affirm that together: *"Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I have, all that I give, and all that I receive."* So we give thanks for every gift and every giver. We dedicate everything that we receive to the working of God in and through this ministry, that this ministry can do the work that God has given us to do in the greatest possible way. So we give thanks, we rejoice and we acknowledge every gift and every giver, that they may be blessed 10-, 100-, 1,000-fold in return for their gifts. And so it is. Amen.

CLOSING

Alright; let's close with our affirming of our Prayer for Protection:

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 I am, God is!

God bless you, friends! We're going to sing out with our "Peace Song" from our Choir. And, again, God bless you, and 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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