

## THE CREATIVE POWER OF FEELINGS

Week #3 of a 4-Week Series, "Know the Truth"

Nov. 21, 2021

Rev. Richard Maraj

**Rev. Richard Maraj:** So Adam was sitting in the Garden of Eden chatting with God, and he said, "God, I feel really lonely. I feel kind of down."

And God said, you know, "What's the matter?"

He said, "Well, you've given me all this stuff; I feel so blessed. But, you know, I really don't have anyone to talk to -- anyone to do stuff with. Do you think we could do something about it?"

And God said, "Yeah! I'll make you a partner, and her name will be Eve. And this beautiful woman will gather food for you and cook for you. And when you discover clothes, she'll wash them for you."

**[Congregation laughs]** "She will always agree with every decision you make, and she will never nag you. She will always be the first to admit that she was wrong when you have a disagreement. She will praise you. She will adore you. And she will hang on every word you speak. She will bear your children, and never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them. She will never have a headache, and will freely give you love and passion whenever you need it."

And Adam said, "Wow! So what's a woman like this going to cost me?"

And God said, "An arm and a leg." **[Congregation laughs]**

And Adam said, "So what can I get for a rib?" **[Drummer does rim shot drumroll] [Congregation laughs]**

That's a bad one ... **[Laughs]** Okay.

It's old; it's corny and silly. But I love it! And the reason I like these Creation jokes is because it reminds us of the truth that we have been created in the image and likeness of God. We have been created by the Creator, which means that we are Creators, and we are here to create.

You know, in Genesis it says we have been given dominion and authority over all things. That we are here to be fruitful and multiply. We are here to bring forth more light, more love, more goodness in this world for ourselves, as well as for others. We are creators!

"I am a creator." Let's say that together! **[With congregation]:** "I am a creator."

And that's the truth! You're not weak. You're not helpless. You're not a victim. You are a creator. In fact, you are a powerful creator!

"I am a powerful creator." Together: **[with congregation]** "I am a powerful creator."

Take a deep breath and own that. Now half voice again: **[with congregation]** "I am a powerful creator."

Deep breath. One more time, full voice: **[with congregation]** "I am a powerful creator."

Turn to the person to your left and your right and say, "YOU are a powerful creator." **[Congregation]:** YOU are a powerful creator."

So, my powerful creators, what do you think are the most creative gifts, tools, powers and resources that God has given to us. I'll give you a few! Seeking. Asking. Desiring. Having a vision. Having an intention. Having a plan. Taking action steps. Thinking. Affirming. Being persistent. Hard-working and determined. You know, there are books that have been written about setting goals. One of them says you should write down your goals, and they should be smart. They should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. They have all these things to help us achieve our goals: to create the kind of lives we want. Yet, studies show only 8% of people who set New Year's resolutions achieve them. And it's not that much higher for people who set goals in life.

So my question is: why? Why is it, when we're such powerful creating beings that we aren't creating the lives that we want as effectively as we want? And we have all these tools?

And I would suggest there's one tool that is powerful -- that's an important part of this set -- that we don't use at all, and sometimes don't even think about it. And that is the creative power of our feelings.

I can hear how excited you all are about today's topic. [Congregation laughs] I can feel it! And I'm not surprised, because we don't often think of feelings as being creative. We think about feelings as being reactive: something happens, that's how you feel. But the fact is: our feelings are creative! They have an attracting, generating, manifesting, creative power in them. Yet we don't always use it, or consciously use it.

Lynn Grabhorn -- in her fabulous book, *Excuse Me, Your Life is Waiting* -- tells a story about this little pint-sized baseball player named Jesse. And he was a bit of a phenom, because he was tiny, and he hit the most home runs. And so her friend, whose son was playing in the game, said to Lynn, "Come on, let's go and watch." And this little guy got up, and he would just hit home runs. He had four home runs in the game. She couldn't believe it! He was like a little rock star of the Little League.

So she went up to him afterward and she said, "Well, how do you do that?"

"I don't know."

She said, "No, no; well, think about it! What do you do?"

He said, "Well, I get up there, and I just feel what it would be like to make contact with the ball. I just feel what it would be like to hit a home run. And it happens." [Congregation murmurs]

What we feel has a creative, attracting force. Lynn Grabhorn says, "You don't get what you want in life; you get what you feel."

You know, we've all heard, "As a man thinketh, so is he." Have you heard that? [Congregants]: "Yes."

But that's incomplete! That's what we hear, but here's what it says: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." And that's, "As a man thinketh" -- it's a thought. "In his heart" - feeling. "So is he" - the outcome. I call that **the Creation Equation: Thought + Feeling = Outcome**.

I'll give you another example. Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." "Whatever you ask" -- a thought; a thing. "Believe you've received it" -- feel like you have it. "And it will be yours" -- it will be the outcome.

There's a huge difference between wanting something and believing and feeling like it's yours. Believing and feeling like you have it.

I want you to think about something you want in your life right now. And what would it feel like if you had it right now? Can you feel what that would feel like? To have the very thing that you want in your life right now? How would it feel?

In the prosperity class, we use this a lot. We practice this a lot. One of them we practice is feeling prosperous. So how about let's do that? If you had your prosperous -- most prosperous -- life, what would prosperity feel like for you? What would a prosperous life feel like for you?

It's okay if this feels awkward, because we are so unaccustomed to actually training ourselves to use the power of our feelings. Now the thing is: this is powerful for prosperity and for all kinds of good things. But it also works in areas of poverty and lack and the not so good things we want.

Let me give you an example. In the Book of Job, Job used these words. He said, "The thing that I have feared has come upon me." "The thing" -- the thought. "That I have feared" -- the feeling. "Has come upon me" -- is the outcome.

You know, there are all kinds of things that we end up attracting to ourselves that we don't want. I remember when I was a kid in school, and I didn't do my reading for my English class. And the next day

the teacher said, "Can someone summarize last night's reading?" And all these keener kids would have their hands in the air. I wouldn't put my hand up, and I would think, "Oh, God, please don't pick me; please don't pick me; please don't pick me!" **[Congregation laughs]** Well guess what? The thing that I feared came upon me! And she picked me! **[Congregation laughs]**

But we have all things that we put out in fear: that I'll get hurt. Fear that I'll make a mistake. Fear that this investment will go south. We put a lot of energies out there. And the thought plus the feeling will bring us outcomes.

And so, to me, one of the important things for us to realize is that we need to be more intentional about the feelings that we have. We need to be more intentional and consistent about what it is that we put out there.

I read an interesting study. And here's what it said: The heart creates the largest electro-magnetic field in the body. The electric field of the heart produces 60 times greater in amplitude than brain waves. The heart -- the feeling nature -- creates a higher amplitude than thinking: our brain waves. Our feeling nature really is more creative than we realize. And when we use it consciously -- and when we use it intentionally and consistently -- it can transform the things we attract, manifest, and what we create in our lives.

Today we're talking about "The Creative Power of Our Feelings" as we enter the third of our four weeks in our series called, "Know the Truth." Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." And so we're looking at four spiritual truths for better living.

The first week was the spiritual truth of having a willing mind. That doesn't sound that inspiring, but let me tell you the opposite, which is to have an unwilling mind. When we have a mind that is rigid and stubborn and resistant and closed off, we tend to not be as happy, as peaceful and as successful. That, when we have a willing mind, we're more open and receptive. When we're willing to change. Willing to let go. Willing to forgive. Willing to see things in a new way. Willing to be open to possibilities. Having a willing mind is one of the greatest resources for living an amazing life.

Now, the second one was to believe in yourself. Once again, let's go to the opposite. When you don't believe in yourself, you tend not to be as confident. You tend not to feel as worthy. You don't risk or try. You don't dream as big. You tend to give up sooner, because you don't believe in yourself. And then, when we do, it's the exact opposite. We tend to more daring, dynamic. We tend to dream bigger. We tend to live fuller. And we're more persistent, because we believe in ourselves: that we will make it.

So today, the third spiritual truth is the creative power of our feelings.

The first thing that we want to do to take advantage of that is to **PRACTICE FEELING GOOD**. I saw a book and it was entitled, *The Art of Feeling Good*. And it is an art! Because we don't always feel good. Sometimes in life, we're a little sad or upset or disappointed, or feel the blues. Feel a little cranky, we get in a little funk. Sometimes we're going through a little grief or loss or hurt or disappointment, or feel betrayed.

Now, it's important to not pretend or avoid that we don't have these. But the other side is to not get stuck and dwell in them, either. Because what happens when we get stuck in these negative patterns: they create habitual feelings and thoughts that are there with us all the time. It becomes our normal state to feel sad. Our normal state to feel down when we keep getting hooked. And we start feeling like we can't change our feelings -- that our feelings have power over us. And, you know, I'll tell you: just saying positive words and not feeling it inside doesn't help. That actually undermines. And the more we feel feelings like, "Life is unfair" or we get cheated or we get hurt, we tend to attract more of that kind of stuff.

You know, the thing is: when we get to that place of believing we have no power over our feelings, we're absolutely wrong. Because we really can change our feelings. We've done these exercises before; it's one of my favorites. We use it in class all the time. Let's do it now!

So I want you to feel, right now: I want you to feel tired. I want you to feel lazy, lethargic. Feel your eyebrows are so heavy; they feel so tired. You're low energy. Feel how that feels: to feel tired.

Now I want you to feel energized. I want you to feel powerful and confident. Can you get there? Energized? Powerful? Confident?

Okay, now let's go to calm and relaxed and peaceful. Can you get there?

And how about let's go to happy, joyful and playful. Can you get there?

I bet every single one of us -- even if didn't do it perfectly -- had the control to go to those different types. And we have that power! We have the power to change and choose how we feel. Why? Because you are a powerful creator! That is the absolute truth!

I would suggest that feeling good -- and you practicing feeling good -- is one of the top priorities in your life. For yourself and for the people in your life, and for the difference you're here to make.

You ever kind of felt the blues? Or felt down or in a funk, and you didn't know why? Nothing was wrong? I've had a few times where I was at home; I'm feeling in a little funk. I'm feeling the blues. I'm thinking, *"Nothing's wrong! I'm safe in my house! Everything's fine!"* So I must have a choice to be able to choose to feel differently than this funk I'm feeling right now.

So then I would start practicing little things to help me get out of my funk. I did these by myself, because they're really embarrassing to do in front of people. **[Congregation laughs]** But here's one of them:

One of them I would just make myself smile. **[Shows big, fake smile - congregation laughs]** And sit up. Or stand up straight. Because I have heard that a smile releases endorphins that make you feel happier and reduce pain, and actually reduces your level of stress. And the one I do sometimes is look at myself in the mirror and smile. And it'll feel mechanical at first -- oh, yes, it will! **[Congregation laughs]** But, uh ... Eventually you'll actually feel a little bit better. So just using your smile, alone, can help you feel a little better.

Sometimes remembering a happy experience. You know, something that went really well. You know, a game that you won, or your team won. I remember when I was a kid in high school, I was a high jumper. And the first time I jumped over my own height was one of the most exhilarating memories. I can go right to that place of how good I felt about that. Maybe some achievement: something you've done that made you feel good.

Something else? I love laughing. And, you know, so trying to remember a good joke ... usually not one I have told. **[Congregation laughs]** Or ... And one of the things I do a lot is: I like certain comedians, and I will YouTube them, and then watch five minutes. The guy I saw yesterday and the day before that is a guy named Greg Hahn: one of the funniest guys that I've ever heard in my whole life. He's actually coming to Mesa in a couple of weeks. I want to go see him. But I listen, and I just howl. And you cannot help but feel a little better just when you laugh.

Sometimes looking at old pictures. I've got a picture of my mom in my living room. I see her beautiful smile and face, and I feel happier. I feel good. There's a picture of me and Mohammad Ali on my fridge, and that makes me feel happy. It could be watching the sunset and the stars, the moon.

My question for you is: what is a list that you would make for you to help you feel a little better in moments where you're feeling the blues or in a funk? Because it absolutely makes a difference. And here's the deal: you don't focus on the event as much as you focus on the feeling. Because it's all about the feeling that you have! The feeling that you want! The feeling that you can have!

You know, in life -- most of the time -- it's only waiting for our permission to give ourselves to be happy that we're really waiting on. It's really not the event. We just give ourselves permission, because the event -- that means we can take charge of it ourselves. Was it Eleanor Roosevelt who once said, *"Most people are about as happy as they choose to be"*? So how happy are you choosing to be?

And one of the things we are trying to do is create a habit of being happy. Just create a habit by doing this on a regular basis. I'll tell you one of the most liberating things in the world is to learn how to change and choose how you feel. It is liberating. It is empowering. And it is one of the examples that we are a powerful creator, and that we need to practice feeling good.

So the next thing about our feelings is to **USE OUR FEELINGS WITH INTENTION**. I would suggest that every single goal that you have in your life -- have ever had and will ever had -- actually comes down to a feeling that you want to feel. You might think it's about the money or the finances; you might think it's about the relationship; you might think it's about the career. Or you might think it's about spiritual growth; or you might think it's about healing and harmony in the family. But I would suggest that there's an underlying feeling that is what our motivation is about. We might get dazzled by the thing, but it's not just the thing. It's the way we actually want to feel.

So if it's a financial situation, what you really might want to feel is security. Or freedom. Or having options and choices, or feeling respected or admired. Or a level of status for the amount of wealth that you have. If it's in a relationship, maybe what you really want to feel is to feel a sense of companionship. To feel cared for. To feel needed. To feel cherished. You know, to feel that bond and love.

You know, in a career maybe it's to feel successful. Maybe it's to feel a sense of accomplishment. Maybe it's to feel a sense of purpose or meaning for one's life. For spiritual growth, maybe it's to feel inner peace. Maybe it's to feel a spiritual connection or a greater awareness. To feel more aware, more grounded.

Here are some ways that we could use our feelings with greater intention. And the first one: with our goals. If we looked at our old goals right now, I bet you could figure out what is the feeling behind it that I really want to feel. And we could begin to cultivate those feelings.

I would go as far as saying: before you ever set goals again, first you've got to do this. What are the feelings I want to have? Because sometimes, when we get connected with a feeling, sometimes we get connected with the thing. And we get the thing, and we don't feel so good. But when you go right to the feeling -- this is what I want to feel in my career, in my relationship -- then things will attract to you that are more in line with the feeling and not just the thing. Does that make sense? I hope it does, because that's all I have. **[Congregation laughs]** That's the message. **[Laughs]**

And so use your feeling with intention. What is it that you want to feel in your life? And then begin to set goals to support the kind of feelings that you want to experience and the kind of life you want to have.

Another one is: like, I really notice in sports, because I'm a big fan. Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan ... all these guys: they have a way of controlling their feelings and their emotions to get "game ready." Whatever is going on in their personal life: they know how to shut it out and get focused, get energized, get excited about the game. And they go and perform well in the game.

Could you imagine if we did that in our game of life? Like, if you had a meeting or a presentation or something, you'd think: what do I need to get "game ready" for? What are the feelings I need to feel calm or confident or powerful or compassionate? Whatever you'd need for that specific situation, you would cultivate it and bring it forth and connect with it. Because you have that power. In the same way someone could do it in sports to get "game ready" for their emotions with the game, why couldn't we do it for whatever situation that we are having in our lives, whether it's a meeting. Whether it's talking to a family member, or whatever it might be.

Because, if the kingdom of God is within us, we can connect with it when we want, and how often we want, and for whatever we want.

And the final one is to use our feeling with intention about the kind of person that we want to be. So what are the kind of qualities you want to be remembered for? you know, would you like to be known

for being joyful? And kind? And positive? Then cultivate feelings of being joyful and kind and positive. Is it to be honest or caring or generous? Whatever it is, we can cultivate consciously.

And I know this sounds awkward. Like, if I were to say, "Go practice that skill," you'd say, "Yeah! Got it; that makes sense." But if I say, "Go practice that feeling," that sounds weird. And you know why I think it's weird? Because A: we don't think about it. But B: because, you know, "as a man thinketh in his heart," it means: go a little deeper. It means be a little more vulnerable. Be a little more open. Be a little more receptive. And sometimes we don't want to go there, but that's a powerful thing. Feelings have a creative power if we're willing to let ourselves feel and consciously cultivate those feelings.

The last one is to **FEEL GRATEFUL**. Allow yourself to live in a state of gratitude. I would say, other than love, I would say gratitude is the next highest vibrational frequency that we can create and connect with.

You know, Meister Eckhart, the Dominican monk, once said, "If the only prayer you ever prayed was 'thank you,' it would suffice." That's a pretty powerful thing to say. The only prayer you ever prayed was thank you? That's pretty powerful!

Feeling grateful does four things for us. Number one: it helps us focus on the good. It helps us remember how blessed we are. Sometimes we take a lot of things for granted. But there is so much to be thankful for! And it's always there, but gratitude helps us actually acknowledge how blessed we are and how much good is in our lives.

Now the second thing is that it helps us acknowledge God, the very Source from which all this good comes. It's one thing to be grateful for the thing; it's a higher level of gratitude to be grateful for the thing that makes it possible. From the Source out of which it all comes. That's a high level of gratitude and awareness.

The third thing about feeling grateful is it helps us in appreciating and enjoying what we have. It's one thing to have something; it's a whole different thing to enjoy it. To appreciate it. To use it. Appreciating and enjoying who you are! Appreciating and enjoying what you do! Appreciating and enjoying what you have. Appreciating and enjoying the people that are with you. I would say the highest sign of a prosperous life is not how much you have; it's how much you enjoy and appreciate what you have.

And the final thing that feeling grateful does: it attracts more good. It's like a magnet, this gratitude thing. You know, the more grateful we are, the more things we'll attract into our lives to be grateful for.

So my question for you is: what makes you feel grateful? How often do you feel grateful?

Like every human being, we get distracted all the time. But we can get to a place where we feel grateful more frequently. So here are some ways I think we could help ourselves feel grateful more often.

The first one I should say is to start your day and end your day feeling grateful. Like, before you get out of bed, feel grateful you woke up! Feel grateful you get to live this day! Feel grateful you get to do what you do. Feel grateful you get to learn and love. And you have people in your life that are with you. And then, at the end of the day, give thanks for the day: what you learned and for the unexpected gifts and blessings and things that happened. Start your day in gratitude; end your day in gratitude. A powerful way to feel more grateful.

Now if that's a little much for you, maybe do it once a week. **[Congregation laughs]** And look back at your week. Like, oh, my God, it's like gratitude overload for you. But once a week look back and think, "What are the good things that happened to me this week?"

I'll tell you one. I went to Atlanta for two days for a basketball game. First thing I was grateful for is a friend of mine picked me up before 5 a.m. A "before-5-a.m." airport ride is a whole lot of things to be grateful for. You've got a friend that cares about you that much!

And then the other thing: I went to Atlanta, and I flew on Southwest. I haven't been on a Southwest flight for three years! I used to love flying all the time. And I literally closed my eyes on the plane and gave thanks to God for the joy of being able to fly. Because I really am grateful for that experience.

I'm grateful that I got to go to the game. I have a goal of watching an NBA game in every NBA city. There are 30 of them. And Atlanta was my 18th NBA city of doing that. **[Congregation applauds]** And I haven't been able to do that in three years! So it was really cool. And then my buddy, Mike -- my friend from North Carolina -- he met me there. And so I haven't seen Mike in three years, and so that was a great experience.

And so, I mean: I was grateful to go to Atlanta. I'd never been to Atlanta before. It's a beautiful place. I went to the Olympic Park and the aquarium and the CNN Center and, of course, the game. It was really, really a cool, cool experience.

I was grateful for the great food we ate. I had Australian lobster. I had Korean beef. I had this shrimp dish. Chicken wings. Roast beef. I mean, I went to town on the food! **[Congregation laughs]** It was really, really, really good.

One of the things I noticed is: you ever lose or not be able to do something for a while, then get it back? And you appreciate it almost even more than you did before? And that's what it was like to see my friend, to do the basketball thing, to get back on a plane.

But my question is: what about your week? What are the things you're grateful that happened in the last week? What are the things that touched you and made you feel loved and supported? What are the things that were new? What were some of the things that you got back to do that you haven't done in a while? There are so many things to be thankful for!

The final one is to start your prayers and end your prayers with gratitude. Eric Butterworth said it doesn't matter what you pray for; it's where you pray from. And to pray from a place of -- not just lack, but to give thanks. Like, that's what Jesus did with the loaves and fishes. There wasn't enough food. The first thing he did: he took it, and he gave thanks. We should look ... Before you pray -- no matter what you want -- think about the good things that are going on in your life. What are the blessings? And then give thanks at the end -- give thanks in advance that you're going to have a great week. Give thanks for the wonderful life that you get to live.

You know, somebody said that -- I think it was Eric Butterworth -- said, *"Thanksgiving is not just a review; it's a preview of coming attractions."* Give thanks in advance! Use gratitude in all those ways, because it absolutely makes a difference.

YOU are a powerful creator! That's just the truth! You're not weak; you're not helpless; you're not a victim. And God has given you incredible tools, incredible resources and incredible abilities to create the kind of life that you want. Thought + Feeling = Outcome. It is the Creation Equation.

So this week I want you to practice feeling good. Come up with your list or your smiles, or whatever else will make you feel good. And use them in those moments where you feel a little bit in a funk. Use your feelings with intention. For your goals: for those meetings and moments, and especially for how you want to feel and be known as in the world. And, finally, feel grateful. Feel grateful in the morning; feel grateful in the evening. Feel grateful before you pray, at the beginning of your prayer, at the end of your prayers. Because the truth is: the spiritual principle for better living in truth is to use your creative power of feeling. It really is amazing.

God bless you all! **[Congregation applauds]**

Copyright 2021 Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center/Rev. Richard Maraj