

BUILDING YOUR TEAM

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Rev. Richard Rogers

Okay; you ready?

So I have this very deep, profound philosophical question for you tonight. It's one of those age-old questions that has been asked throughout time that really challenges us to look at the nature of our life and the world. And the question is: How many people did it take to put Humpty Dumpty back together again? [Congregation laughs]

So how many want to guess it took five people to put Humpty Dumpty back together again? How many want to guess it took 10 people to put Humpty Dumpty back together again? How many want to guess it took 100 people to put Humpty Dumpty back together? How many of you want to vote that it took all the kings' horses and all the kings' men to put Humpty Dumpty back together? Wrong! [Congregation laughs]

Let's say it together: [with congregation] *"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall; Humpty Dumpty had a great fall; All the kings' horses and all the kings' men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again."* Right?

This is an important philosophical question! So I believe that each and every one of us is called to do great things in life. And I believe, as we are climbing the wall in our service to God and our service to our family and our service to our community ... As we are climbing the wall, and the wall gets higher and higher, we need more support. Because sometimes we are going to fall. And I want us to be intentional about what our support system looks like so that, when we fall, we are not out of the game.

Because I promise you from time to time you are going to fall. And if you don't have a support structure in place; if you don't have people around you who love you and believe in you and help pick you pack up again, you're going to stay smack dab on the floor for way too long.

How many of you have ever had that experience -- where you've had a big disappointment; a big failure; where you've had a big fall, and you thought you were going to lay on the floor forever, and there was no way you were ever going to get up again? Has everybody had that experience? So that's not unheard of! It's not out of the question! That Humpty Dumpty ... Now, do you love that? Just saying Humpty Dumpty is fun! You can't say Humpty Dumpty without grinning, right? Humpty Dumpty teaches us about support. Because did Humpty Dumpty pick the people that he wanted to support him? No! The king sent all of his men and all of his horses and said, *"Do the best you can!"* And then he just laid there all yolky and messy ... [Congregation laughs] Right? And it was a big old mess!

So I want you to be intentional about what it looks like -- what you need -- to be supported. Because I know there may be a time in the not-too-distant future where you fall down. You know, because there are many, many, many great people who fell.

President Abraham Lincoln in his youth went off to war. He went off to war as a captain. He came back as a private. Right? Do you see the problem? You go to war as a captain. During the war, you're actually supposed to get promoted to a higher office. He actually came back from war at the lowest position you can be in. He lost 26 campaigns for public office before he ran for the presidency. [Laughs] He lost 26 public campaigns. How many of you could lose 26 times -- that your neighbors knew you lost 26 times -- and would think one morning, *"Oh! It's a good idea! I'm going to run for the presidency."* Like, that takes so much inner strength to get knocked down that many times and still think it's a good idea to go for it all!

Singer Fred Astaire. In his very first screen test, the director wrote about Fred Astaire: "*Can't act. Can't sing. Slightly bald. Not handsome. Can dance a little.*" [Congregation moans and laughs] Right? [Laughs] Somehow he got a copy of that director's note from his first screenplay, posted it in his office at home. And it was right at the front of the door so that, any time he went in and out of his office, he saw that. And he realized that, if he could get that kind of feedback, there was nothing he couldn't do.

Director Steven Spielberg was [laughs] ... Applied to USC film school three times. All three times he was not accepted. So then he was accepted to my alma mater, Long Beach State. Dropped out after two semesters. Came back 35 years later and graduated from Long Beach State with a BA degree in the arts.

Vincent Van Gogh. Because how many paintings did Vincent Van Gogh sell in his lifetime? One! He sold it to a friend who barely paid anything for it. He sold one painting. Now his 800 paintings are worth millions of dollars.

Oprah Winfrey got fired from her first job in TV.

Michael Jordan failed more times than he likes to acknowledge. This is a quote from Michael Jordan: "*I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost 300 games. On 26 occasions, I was entrusted to take the final shot of the game, and I missed. I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that's why I succeed.*"

Right? Failure is never the problem. The problem is when we don't have the support system to get us back up! That we actually need our tribe; our people; our system; our support to get back up when we fall so that we can keep climbing higher.

So there's four things I want you to look at tonight as we talk about building your team. There are four aspects of your building your team that I think are just absolutely fundamental.

And the first one is: Your team has to have **PEOPLE THAT LOVE YOU NO MATTER WHAT**. That love you in your mistakes; that love you in your weaknesses; that love you in your imperfections; that love you just the way you are. That love you in your humanity.

You know, I think ... I look at my world from the idea -- and Richard's talked about this; I've talked about it. I look at it from red, yellow and greens. And the greens are the people in my life that, no matter what happens, are the people that just unconditionally love me. And I want to be surrounded by greens, because the greens are the people that can look me in the eye and say, "*Richard, that was really a big mess-up.*" [Congregation laughs] "*You really stunk that one up. And I absolutely love you.*" Right?

Our greens -- we can hold both! We can acknowledge that we messed up; that we fell short; that we failed; that it was an ugly train wreck. And yet, love is not going to be withheld from us. And that's what our greens do for us! And we all need a handful of greens. We don't need thousands; we need two or three people -- four or five people -- in our life that we can call at four o'clock in the morning and say, "*I just messed up. Do you still love me?*" And once they wake up, they say, "*Yes!*" [Congregation laughs] Yes! That will take your call at four o'clock in the morning and say, "*Yes! I still believe in you!*"

Then the yellows are the people in our life that are inconsistent. That sometimes they love us and sometimes they judge us. And we just never know what we're going to get. Or the other category for yellows are the people who we don't know well enough to know if they're a red or a green. And so the yellows in our life: we kind of never know what we're going to get.

And the reds are people that nine times out of 10 will just judge us. And we want their love so much! Because we think their love somehow -- if we can get their love -- it really means something. So they withhold it; they make it difficult; they judge us. And we love that! We suck that up like crazy, and we'll

do all kinds of craziness to get their love and approval. Because somehow they're smarter than the whole world, and they know that our love -- that we don't really deserve it.

And so I want you to really begin to look at who are the true greens in your life. Who are the people that will just love you no matter what? That they just offer it as a free gift?

There was a time in my life where the six most important people in my life were all reds. They were all reds! And I was working so hard to get their approval, and it was exhausting. And now I have greens around me, and it's better!

So the first thing I want you to look at it when building your team of support is: Don't pick the reds! Pick people that can actually unconditionally love you! And know that their love is actually good love! Reds don't have "better" love; they just make you earn it and work harder for it. The greens just give it over easily, unconditionally. And they just love you no matter what you do!

The second thing I want you to look for your in your team is **PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN YOU**. People that can look you right in the eye and say, "*Richard, I believe in you! I believe in you!*" The number one thing they found in high-achieving kids in school -- on all levels of academics that crossed economic lines -- is all they need is one person that believes in them.

We all need at least one person who can look us in the eye and say, "*I believe in you!*" And when we hear it, sometimes we don't believe it for ourselves. Sometimes we don't believe in ourselves that much. But when somebody is just consistently in our life saying, "*I believe in you!*" it begins to wear down our self-doubt. Because you can't hold self-doubt in the presence of true belief. So having people around you who just can say over and over again, "*I believe in you!*"

Ken Poirot said this: "*There's no greater power and support you can give someone than to look them in the eye, and sincerely with conviction say, 'I believe in you.'*" It takes our breath away! It truly takes us and goes after that most wounded place within our soul.

Three. The third thing I want you to be looking for in your team is **PEOPLE WHO WILL USE THEIR WORDS TO AFFIRM YOU**. We all want to be affirmed. We all want to be people that use their words to help build us up. Because in our mind, we know all the mistakes that we've made. We know every time we've fallen. We know all of our shortcomings. We know who we are! But when somebody uses their words over and over again to say, "*Not only do I love you and believe in you, but I use my words to build you up,*" it makes a huge difference.

According to Riitta King, "*Sometimes people appear in our life unexpectedly to give us a gift from the universe that you didn't even know you needed, or that you silently called them to you. They appear when you needed them the most to life you up, to educate you, to wake you up, to shine their light upon your path.*"

"*When you believe in someone*" ... This is from Jason Versey. "*When you believe in someone you profoundly increase their ability to have faith in themselves and to achieve. When you love someone you imprint upon their heart something so powerful that it changes the trajectory of their life. When you do both, you set in motion a gift to the world, because you have believed in them. You have loved them. You have understood them. And a beautiful legacy and the absolute duty of paying it forward to others.*"

And the fourth thing is **PEOPLE WHO WILL PRAY WITH YOU**. Now, you wouldn't think that would be a big surprise in a church, right? To have people that pray with you. But there's a difference between saying, "*I'll pray with you*" and actually praying for someone. You know, our chaplains actually pray with you. They actually hold a high spiritual intention for you.

In James 5:16 we read, *"Therefore, confess your sins to one another."* Now, if you feel called to confess your sins, would you want to confess your sins to a red or to a green? [Congregation laughs] Like, which feels safer? To admit to another human being who you have a probability that's just going to love you there, or to confess your sins to a red, who's going to judge you and tell you how ashamed you should be of yourself? How many want to vote for the green? Right?

And so what I want you to hear in this Scripture: *"Therefore, confess your sins to one another."* And the idea is that, when you confess your sins, you're supposed to be lifted up and alleviated from the shame of what happened, not to have the shame multiplied and expanded because one more person judged the heck out of you.

It is really a spiritual benefit to confess your mistakes so that you can be unconditionally loved. Because in the presence of our mistakes, most of us have a hard time loving ourselves.

James 5:16: *"Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. For the prayer of the righteous man has great power in its effect."*

So here's what we're going to do tonight. I want you to really look honestly if you're living your best life. Like, our theme for this Wednesday night service as we move through this year is "Living an Audacious Life." And I want you to see the importance of being truly spiritually supported. Not in a meek, little, casual way. But people in your life that will come right up beside you and affirm you; will love you; will believe in you; will speak the word. That you can share whatever is going on in your life and you know that there's a high probability that they will love you right there. I believe that's the role of spiritual community!

The role of spiritual community is that we're to love each other at the level that God loves us! That we're here to lighten one another's load. To make it easier to get through every day and to do amazing things because we have a support system around us that allows to be amazing.

There are too many people in our world today that aren't living their best life just because they don't have their circle around them that allows them to excel. They don't have enough support in their life to be the best version of themselves, so they play small from a place of being too timid.

When you look at your life, can you already see people in your life -- whether you believe it or not -- that just love you? That just believe in you? That use their words to lift you up? That can look in your eyes and say, "Yes! I believe in you!"?

I want you to allow those people to come closer to you. To share more with them. To allow them to lift you higher so that you can lift them higher. Because Jesus said, *"As any one of us is lifted higher, we draw all people unto us."*

Like, in the world today, we have this opportunity either to break free into a higher level of living or stay stuck in the craziness of the present. And so I'm going to challenge you tonight: Can you tell yourself the truth?

-Do I have enough support in my life to be the best version of me?

-Do I have enough support in my life -- do I have enough love?

-Do I have enough people who believe in me?

-Do I have enough people who affirm me?

-Do I have enough people who are actually praying for me to be the best version of me?

And if you do, then I want you to go and be as amazing as you came to be. But if you don't, I want the next step in your spiritual journey is to cultivate your team. And again, I'm talking about two or three or

four people that will take your call at two o'clock in the morning and say, "*Richard, you're adorable!*" [Congregation laughs] Right? That can acknowledge I messed up, but still find it adorable. Right?

How many of you feel like you really need more people to shame you? [Congregation laughs] Right? I don't see a lot of hands poppin' up here! How many of you could see that having somebody that would just love you and tell you you're adorable -- even if you mess up! -- that that could be a good thing for your soul? That's what I want for you. I want you to live your best life and I want it to be as easy as possible.

Now, last week I talked about wolves just a little bit. PBS special: they did a whole thing on wolves and the impact that wolves have had on Yellowstone. And bringing wolves back to Yellowstone. And they made a case that, really, every level of the ecosphere in Yellowstone is healthier because they brought wolves back. It's changed the animals; it's even changed the rivers. It's changed the grass. It's changed everything because they brought the wolves back.

And then I made this point, kind of at the end of this thing, that there's a lot of talk about the "lone wolf." But they say in nature, the only lone wolf is a sick and dying wolf. And in spiritual circles, we have this belief that we're supposed to be the lone wolf. Well, that's the sick and the dying. That's not what I want for you!

I want you to have your pack around you. I want you to be on the run with people that want to run as fast as you want to run. And want to live as good a life as you want to live. I want you to have people around you that believe in you and want to spend time with you. And want to lift you higher. Because when we have our tribe; when we have our pack; when we have our people around us, there's no limit to our life. And when we do it by ourselves, the first time we knocked down, sometimes it takes us months and years to get back up.

Tonight, I want you to have two or three or four or five people that, no matter what happens to you, can look you in the eye and say, "I love you; I believe in you; and you are greater than this."

Will you pray with me?

I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul tonight and I want you to call forth the next level of support for yourself. People that deeply, profoundly care about you. Who love you in ways that sometimes we don't even understand. That believe in us. That are praying for us. That want only good for us. And all the people that are just being limited and negative and hateful, we just kind of let them just kind of ease out of our life. And we surround ourselves with people who are our true believers. That see the good in us; that see the possibilities; that love us. And for all of those, we give thanks. In the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks for all the support of God. And so it is. Amen.

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