

THE RIGHT USE OF WILL

Week #3 of the 3-Week Series, "From Impediment to Empowerment"

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Question, question, question: Have you ever in your life faced an obstacle? [Congregation laughs] Nope? Okay; good! Jeanie, you can go home then, because you don't need to be here. [Laughs] Here's another question; you don't have to actually answer this one out loud. Anybody facing an obstacle right now? A challenge? An issue? Relationship; health; financial; work? Concern over bigger things ... not, I mean, not like our personal things. Outer things. I won't say the government; I won't say that, but maybe that's on somebody's mind.

We might be facing obstacles right now. And let me tell you, my friends, even if you have never faced an obstacle in your life, which is probably not true, or you're not facing one now, which may be true, YOU WILL. Because obstacles are a part of life! It's part of this human experience. We have things in front of us that look like bumps in the road that look like challenges. Some are little pebbles; some are like mega-boulders.

This series that we've been doing -- for this last, now this one makes three weeks -- is about changing and turning those obstacles into something else. Because here's something that's important for us to know: Whenever we are facing an obstacle in life, we always have a choice. Let me say that again: We always have a choice. Third time's the charm: We always have a choice of how we're going to approach it. We can either let it block us and stop us; take us to our knees. And sometimes we don't want to get up and sometimes we don't get up. That can happen. But we could also say:

"There's an obstacle in front of me. It's a stepping stone to creating more and experiencing more of my inherent, innate and divinely implanted greatness in higher ways that would not have been here had the obstacle not been in front of us."

And those are key words there at the end.

"To express our innate, our inherent greatness - divine greatness -- in ways higher than we would have expressed had the obstacle not been put in front of us."

And so that's what we've been talking about these last couple of weeks. And we will tonight! We're using this book; it's called *The Obstacle is the Way* by Ryan Holiday. Juicy, juicy book! So in *The Obstacle is the Way*, we look at ways in which to turn impediments into chances for empowerment. To turn obstacles into opportunities for greater expression of who we are in, as and through God. Obstacles and misfortunes into good -- hmmm; I might even say great -- fortunes.

And according to Holiday, there are three ways to do that. Three words that are interconnected and related. And we've taken two of them in the last two weeks; we'll take the last one tonight.

So this is a tiny little test. There are no rewards for the answers, but I like to ask questions anyway. Does anybody remember what the word of Week #1 was? What was the word of Week #1? [Congregant yells out] PERCEPTION! I heard it; good job! Nicely done! Perception! The first week we talked about perception. And we have a choice of how we perceive what's happening.

And just as a tiny, tiny review for those who weren't here that night -- but if you want to get the whole thing, listen to the talk, because they're on YouTube and you can get them from the Unity of Phoenix website.

But in this book, Ryan Holiday gives a great example of sports psychologists who did a study of elite athletes who had gotten injured. Significantly injured. And what they discovered among this group that

they studied was that, initially -- and understandably -- these seriously injured athletes felt isolated; they felt emotional disruption; and they had doubts about their athletic abilities and their future ... their ability to do what they did. That's how they felt initially, and that is certainly understandable. But after a time, each of them reported gaining a greater realization of their own strengths. And this is what Holiday wrote about that:

"In other words, every fear and doubt they felt during the injury turned into greater abilities in those exact areas. It is a beautiful idea. Psychologists call it adversarial growth ..."

Never heard that term before! Now we have a new term: adversarial growth.

"The struggle against an obstacle inevitably propels [us] to a new level of functioning ... The obstacles is an advantage, not an adversity."

And there's the perception: the shift in perception. That is my talk two Wednesdays ago in a nutshell. The obstacle is an advantage, not an adversity.

So that was the first word. Perception. Anybody remember the second one? It was just last week. [Congregants yell out] Action! Thank you! It was action. And not just any action, but **INSPIRED ACTION**. And inspired action is action that comes from a higher place within us -- in other words, a place of love. And inspired action is action taken that is consistent and in service with our greater life. In other words, what are our values? What's our true north? And is the action we're about to take in line with that? And the third idea of inspired action is: It is part of "The Process." And "The Process" says that there's a journey in this unfolding of what's happening in your life. And you don't look at the end result; just what's the next step to take. What's the next step on the stairway? That's the inspired action.

Alright; so that's a nutshell review of our last two weeks. Today we get to the third one. The third word is **WILL**. Will. W-I-L-L; will.

And I think will -- our will, like will power -- has gotten a little bit of a bad rap in that, you know, it's about force; it's about making it happen; it's about sticking it out; gritting it out; all that kind of stuff. That's not what we're talking about tonight.

We're talking tonight -- I'm going to add a few words to the one word of "will." And the words I want to add are **THE RIGHT USE OF WILL**. And when I say "right," I don't mean, like, good or, you know, you're wrong and I'm right. It's not that. It's right in that it's the way will work. [Laughs] The wrong use of our will won't work! The right use of our will will work. So that's what we're going to talk about tonight.

And I want to share with you a passage from *The Science of Mind*, which is written by Dr. Ernest Holmes, the founder of Religious Science, which -- you've heard me say this a million times -- is my spiritual lineage. And I love this passage about will. And for those of you who are familiar with the writings of Ernest Holmes, you will know that it can be a little bit ... hmmm. What's the word that I want to use that would be nice? Convoluted and hard to understand? Would that be an accurate statement? From my Science of Mind friends? And so this is a bit of a mouthful, but I want you to hear it and then we're going to unpack it. Okay? We're going to unpack it. Because it's so good, and I just want you to hear these words. So here we go. So this is about the right use of will. Ernest Holmes writes:

"Will is the conscious, directive power of the intellect and, as such, has a very important place in the creative order, but in no case is it to be used as though it could force things to happen. Any idea of using the will to influence people ..."

And I'm going to add: "to influence anything!"

"...is a mistake. The temporary effects of [this type of] will power continue only as long as the will forces them to. They have no real life within themselves and must disintegrate as soon as the unnatural force is withdrawn. Moreover, the use of will power contradicts the main foundation upon which all true mental science is built ..."

Here's a key phrase coming up; listen up!

"... That we use a Creative Power which does not need to be urged or forced into action ... The will holds our attention to the mental viewpoint until the Creative Power has time to work through the law of unfoldment."

Whew! It's a good thing I didn't try to do that in one breath; that would have been a lot!

So what in the world did that all mean? I'm expecting you've pulled a couple -- gleaned a couple -- of pieces out of it. Yes; because you're a smart bunch. But I still want to break it down a little bit.

So the first idea that's in there is: Will is a very important piece of the Creative Process. The Creative Process is how God works; how God creates. How God creates as us. So will has an important place in it, so it's not to be discredited. But it's also not to be misused.

And the misused -- or the wrong use -- comes when we try to force an outcome. Anyone ever try to force an outcome? [Congregation laughs] How'd that go? [Congregation laughs; congregant says, "I broke it." "I broke it?" [Laughs] Yeah; I broke it! Right! Yeah; forcing outcomes doesn't usually work out all that well. And even if it seems to work out okay, according to Ernest Holmes, it will only be temporary, at best. Because we have forced it.

But the correct use of will -- and now I'm going to put our words that we've been using in this series ... The correct use of will is to keep us steady and focused on the perceptions that we have decided serve us, and on taking the actions that we've been inspired to take ... so that the Creative Process (meaning God, Infinite Intelligence, Power of Love, Infinite Beauty, etc., etc. -- can unfold in perfect time. [Breathes out deeply] That's the right use of will!

I want to add to that a little bit, and then I'm going to give you a really powerful example.

And the adding of that kind of complements what Ernest Holmes said and adds to it. And it is a brief -- much briefer -- quote from this book. Ryan Holiday said:

"We often think of will of how much we want something. Actually, the will has a lot more to do with surrender than with strength. True will is quiet humility, resilience and flexibility; the other kind of will is really weakness disguised as bluster and ambition. See which lasts longer under the hardest of obstacles."

So I want to share a story -- a true story -- and in it you're going to see four elements in those two quotes. So I'm going to tell you the elements you're going to see because, you know, that's the way you give a talk: You tell them what you're going to tell them; you tell them; and then you tell them what you told them. [Congregants laughed] That's what I learned! Isn't that right? Isn't that right? [Laughs]

So I'm going to tell you what they are. Then I'm going to tell you the story. Then I'll tell you again what they were ... just in case you forgot. So here they are!

First, you'll see the ability on the person in this story to hold steady to a perception that many would say was insane. Okay? So you'll see someone using their will to hold a perception that others might think was crazy.

Number two: You will see humility, resilience and flexibility.

Third, you will see inspired action.

And fourth: Although you won't see it overtly, underneath you will see the divine Creative Process. You will see God's handiwork in what is happening.

So the story is about a guy that you may have heard of. I suspect every single person in this room has heard of this man named Thomas Edison. Yes? Anybody not heard ... No, don't raise your hand if you haven't, because you need to get back to school! I don't want to know if you have not heard of Thomas Edison!

So Thomas Edison was 67 years old, and he had a big laboratory and lots of people working for him. And buildings; he had a whole complex of buildings as he worked on many, many more inventions. And had scientists working on these inventions for him.

One day he went home from the lab like he did every night -- you know, probably after inventing 20 new amazing things. Sitting down to dinner, and all of a sudden someone came running up to the door, knocking on his door, and said, *"A fire has broken out at your lab -- at your research campus; you've got to get there!"*

Fire engines from eight towns descended upon his campus; rushed to the scene to contain the blaze. But they couldn't. They couldn't. it was fueled by some strange chemicals in the building. And in that strange chemical combination, there was green flames and bright yellow flames up six, seven stories high, ultimately destroying everything in that facility. Everything!

Edison calmly, but quickly, made his way to the fire. And through the hundreds of onlookers and the employees -- devastated employees -- standing there, he's trying to find his son. His adult son. And he finally found him. And with childlike enthusiasm, he says to his son, *"Go get your mother and her friends, because they'll never see a fire like this again!"* [Congregation laughs]

His son thought, *"Dad's brain is on fire!"* You know? Something is seriously wrong! And he said, *"What? You want me to do what?"* And again, (Edison) said, *"It's alright! Go get your mother and her friends; they will never see a fire like this again! And besides, we've just gotten rid of a lot of rubbish in there!"*

[Congregants: "Wow."]

Yeah; wow! Now, there was definitely a lot more than a lot of rubbish in that building. In fact, years and years of priceless records; prototypes; and research. All were turned to ash in a matter of a few hours.

the building was supposed made of fireproofed concrete. And so it was supposedly made of fireproofed concrete, Edison and his investors cut a little bit of a corner with insurance, and they did not fully insure the contents. Because they didn't think it could catch on fire! They were told it couldn't. And so they only insured it for about a third of the value of what was in there. And some of what was in there was, of course, priceless. Priceless!

So given all of that, his reaction -- there was a lot of rubbish in there; go get your mom and her friends; it's a big fire -- that was kind of odd, wasn't it? We might all think the guy did lose a screw or two in his head!

Because what might he have done? Well, he might have thrown himself on the ground, weeping that it's all over. *"My life's work is over! I'm devastated!"* We might have reacted to an obstacle that way at some point in our lives.

He could have blamed somebody else for not turning off a Bunsen burner or for leaving a cigarette in the ashtray. But he didn't! He would have been justified, but he didn't.

He could have gotten angry -- really angry! -- at the concrete manufacturer that made the quote/unquote "fireproofed concrete" and sued them. A lot of people would have done that! But he didn't.

He could have given up. For gosh sakes; he's 67 years old! How many inventions do you need to make in your life? He'd done a couple of three or four. Right? He could have just said, "*You know, this is a good time to end it.*" But he didn't do that, either!

Rather, he said the entire experience had invigorated him! And the next day he told a reporter:

"I've been through a lot of things like this; it prevents a man from being afflicted with ennui."

Okay; here's our ... You know what that means, don't you? Yeah; I love that you're giggling over there. But I see, like, "*What the heck does ennui mean?*" I think I pronounced it right; I hope I did. It's a French word. It means boredom; dissatisfaction; or weariness. So let's put those words in there.

He said, "*I've been through a lot of things like this; it prevents a man*" -- or him -- "*from being afflicted with weariness; dissatisfaction; and boredom.*"

Whew. Wow! So now, here are some very interesting and amazing facts. And it's in these facts that we're going to see the hand of Divine Intelligence in operation.

Within three weeks, his plant is partially -- not 100%, but partially -- up and running. Within a month, his men are working double shifts and churning out new products the world had not yet seen. And despite a loss of almost \$1 million -- which in today's numbers would be about \$23 million -- the year after the fire they made \$10 million in revenues, which is almost \$200 million in today's world.

Within the year after the fire, Holiday wrote about this incident in the book:

"(Edison) not only suffered a spectacular disaster, but he recovered and replied it to spectacularly."

Edison used his will in the right way to give Life a chance to rebuild in a better way!

- 1) He used his will to stay with his empowered perception that this was not a horrible tragedy, but an opportunity.
- 2) He used his will to stay humble ("*It's just rubbish!*"); resilient ("*I'm not too old to start over*"); and flexible ("*We've got to create a whole new experience here!*").
- 3) He used his will to move into inspired action, saying, "*I'm getting this up and running again.*"

And I'm going to add a fourth and a fifth that weren't talked about in our two quotes. But they're really important. So I know I've been talking for a while; you might be starting to get a little bored. Listen up; take a breath. Wake yourself up; shake a little bit. Poke your neighbor; go, "*Wake up! This is really important!*" [Congregants laughs] Go ahead! Poke your neighbor! "*This is important; listen up!*" [Laughs]

He used his will to accept the "what was." He used his will to accept the "what was." How many times -- you don't have to answer this! -- but do we moan and groan and cry and wring our hands over the "what is"? We can't do anything about the "what is"! We can do nothing about it! Not about the circumstance. About what's happening in here [points to heart], yes! But not about here [points outside herself]. So (Edison) used his will to accept! "*Like, okay; my place is burned. Let's have a party.*" Right? Maybe didn't have a party, but ...

And the fifth one -- the next one I want to add to one, two, three, four: number five -- is: He used his will to face this challenge with enthusiasm and cheerfulness. "*Go get your mother and her friends; they're never going to see a fire like this again.*" How many times have you been able to face a challenge with enthusiasm and cheerfulness? Hmmm. [Laughs] Hmmm. I'm pondering that right now.

So when we started this series -- if you were here the very first night -- I asked you to bring a challenge. To bring a challenge and apply what we're talking about here to that challenge. And I remind you of that now. And maybe you weren't here that first night and didn't do that; maybe you've totally forgotten about that. But even if you didn't hear it in the first place; did hear it and forgot; I want to remind you.

If you have an obstacle facing you right now, maybe it's not as serious or violent as Edison's, but it's still significant for you! According to Ryan Holiday in this book, there is only one response. There's only one response to your obstacle. And it is not, *"Okay; I'm okay with this."* It is not, *"Okay; I think I can feel good about this."* But it is -- get your obstacle in mind if you have one. If you have an obstacle in mind, get that in your mind right now, because here is the idea for us tonight:

"I feel great about this, because if this happened, then it's meant to happen. And I'm glad that it happened -- how it did and when it did. In this moment, I turn it over to Higher Intelligence -- the Power of Life -- knowing that I am on course to a greater good that I would not have if this obstacle had not been in front of me."

Take a deep breath. [Inhales and exhales deeply] I'm going to say that again. And I made half of that up just now, so I probably won't say it exactly the same. [Congregants laugh] But that's okay.

"I feel great about this, because if it happened, then it was meant to happen. And I am glad that it happened when it happened. And in this moment, I turn it over; I surrender; I let go. Because I know that Divine Intelligence is at work to create an outcome that is even better than where I was before this happened."

[Congregant: "Woo hoo!"] Woo hoo! [Laughs] To be able to do that -- to say that; to feel that -- is the right use of our will. To surrender to the All Good.

My question is, my friends: Will you say "Yes" to that? [Congregants: "Yes!"] I like that! Because if you can ... If you can say, "Yes" to that, then any obstacle -- any obstacle that you encounter -- will become the way to your greatest and highest good.

Namaste!

[Congregation whoops and applauds]

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