

From Unity

Days 1-3 not available

[Day 4](#)

14 Questions to Improve Your Outlook



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- [Day 4](#)

[How Can I Be More Self-Aware?](#)

By Robert Brumet

Excerpted from [Living Originally](#)

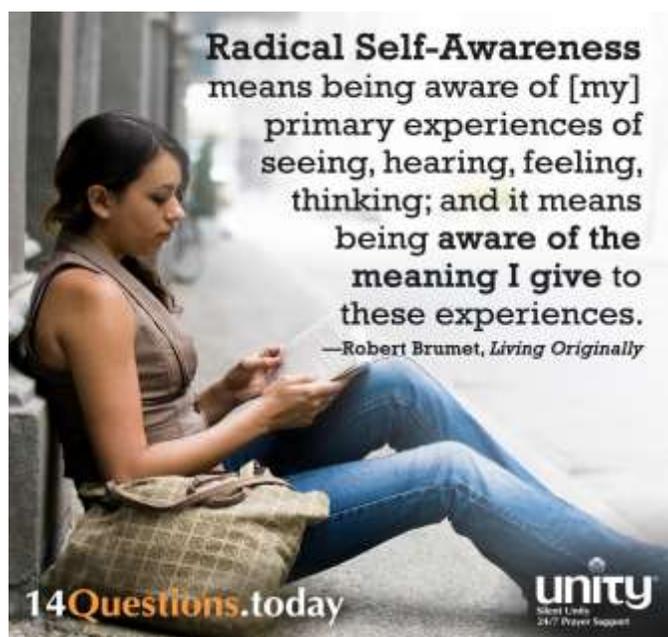
In the broadest sense of the term, *self-awareness* simply means I am aware of myself as an individual separate and apart from others. When an animal sees itself in a mirror and says, "Hey, that's me!" that's one indication of self-awareness. Virtually all humans have this ability. A few other animal species seem to have it as well. In a deeper sense of the word, self-awareness means that "I know that I know." I have the ability to reflect upon my own awareness. I am aware not only of a body called *me*, but I am also aware of a sense of an internal *me* looking in the mirror at me as the body. I have an internal mirror that reflects the contents of my mind just as the external mirror reflects the image of my body.

Radical Self-Awareness takes us another layer deeper. As I recognize my physical self in the mirror, and as I am aware of seeing that image, I can also be aware of my reaction to this awareness. I may notice I feel some chagrin at how much gray hair I see in that image staring back at me. (Is that *really* me?) *I am aware of my response to my awareness.* I see an image in the mirror, I recognize that image as me, I have a mental judgment about that image (I'm getting old), and I have an emotional response to that judgment (dismay). I am aware of all this *and* I am aware that I am aware of all this! Welcome to the practice of Radical Self-Awareness!

Radical Self-Awareness means being aware of the primary experiences of seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking; and it means being aware of the meaning I give to these experiences. It means being aware of the emotional

response that arises from my ascribed meanings, as well as seeing all this without judgment or analysis. This is not as complicated as it sounds; it all happens in an instant. I may not always have the full awareness in the exact instant it arises, but as I reflect back on my emotional reactions, I will begin to see all this unfolding. With practice, I can see this more quickly each time it occurs.

For example, I say “hello” to a friend and she does not acknowledge my greeting. I become aware that I’m feeling angry at her. This can throw me into a story about “how inconsiderate and insensitive this person is” ... and so on. Or I can stop and breathe and feel the sensations in my body and pay attention to my feeling of anger. I may discover that beneath the anger lies some hurt feelings. I realize I feel hurt because I believe my friend doesn’t value me enough to respond to my greeting. If I stay present to the experience of hurt, I will see it rests upon my interpretation that my friend deliberately ignored me. Seeing this, I understand there are other possible interpretations—perhaps she did not hear me, or she was preoccupied. I may then see how often I base my own sense of worth on the responses (or lack thereof) from others. I can see this without any self-judgment, and may even feel grateful for the insight. All this can occur within a few seconds if I simply take time to be aware of my own experience in the moment.



Day 5

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- [Day 5](#)

Who or What Can I Forgive?

By Carla McClellan, “Can We Forgive This?” featured in [Unity Magazine](https://UnityMagazine.com)[®]

I was recently asked if I thought it was truly possible to forgive those who carry out violent crimes against innocent people. I answered “yes”; I believed we could forgive completely.

Research tells us we are wired for revenge and forgiveness, and we have the capacity to choose either response. Researchers are specific about how they define forgiveness when studying its effects on our well-being and happiness. Psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky calls forgiveness “a shift in thinking” toward someone who has harmed you. It has nothing to do with reconciliation, forgetting, excusing or justice. When you are ready, forgiveness is a powerful choice you can make that can lead to greater well-being and relationships. This choice carries with it an intention to heal yourself.

The definition of forgiveness I relate to is the one H. Emilie Cady gave in *Lessons in Truth*: “To forgive does not simply mean to arrive at a place of indifference to those who do personal injury to us; it means far more than this. To forgive is to *give for*—to give some actual, definite good in return for evil given.”

My interpretation of her meaning is to give something back that is unexpected in our human experience.

Fred Luskin, Ph.D., has been studying forgiveness for many years. He said forgiveness is giving up all hope for a better past. As the director of Stanford University Forgiveness Projects, he has collected many stories that bring hope, understanding and inspiration to those suffering from unimaginable actions. He said in the beginning it was hard to get people to share their stories of forgiveness, but now there is a constant inpouring of stories.

One particular story touched me. It was the story of a man, whom we'll call Bob, whose wife and two sons were killed by a neighbor who was driving while intoxicated. The neighbor was sent to prison, and after some time, Bob went to see him. Putting ourselves in Bob's shoes, we can see this took a lot of courage on Bob's part. Bob took an action toward forgiveness by being willing to talk to his neighbor. The neighbor also had to be willing to see Bob and have the courage to talk to him about the horrible accident. To be able to access this level of courage, a choice had to be made by Bob by opening his heart. We can imagine the question he asked himself was something like, "Will I let the story of this accident define the quality of my life?"

Bob asked the neighbor how his son was handling having his dad in prison. Asking this question showed Bob empathized with the experience the neighbor was going through. The man said he didn't know because his son was too young to visit. Bob told the neighbor he knew the heartache of losing a son and wanted to help so the neighbor's son would have his father back. It took a powerful shift in Bob's thinking to get past the hurt, anger, resentment and sadness, but he found a way. By being willing to focus on the neighbor's son, he could begin to release the negative emotions and perhaps create some good from the accident. He could help another dad see his son.

I had a similar experience when my daughter died when she was 27 years old. She wasn't killed by someone, but she left the physical world. I was devastated and in great pain; I could barely get out of bed. I wasn't supposed to outlive my daughter. With the help of others, I was slowly able to see the choice before me: I could either remain crushed by this experience, or I could make the loss meaningful to me in another way. I knew my daughter wouldn't want me to stop living because she died, so what was another choice? Was there a way I could shift my thinking? I decided to keep her memory alive for me by doing something each day that would have made her proud. I remember each day how blessed I was to be her mom and I do something loving every day. I imagine something like this was going through Bob's mind. How could good come out of horror? We humans are resilient and can make extraordinary choices. He chose not to focus on the horror at some point and chose to give support to another dad and his son. What a compassionate choice and bless him for taking this step.

Luskin said in the past forgiveness was limited to religious and political discussions. It has now entered into the daily discussion of psychology, spirituality and emotional well-being. People are starting to realize forgiveness can also help a person's physical health. Forgiveness is a skill people can practice to lead lives of compassion, peace and service. Luskin continues by saying we are experiencing the consequences of an excessively angry culture. There is much damage done to relationships, people and health through anger, blame and a kind of

self-righteous aggression. We live in a culture that is stressed and angry. People are hungering for solutions—a corrective has to emerge. And the most complete, strongest corrective is forgiveness.

Our minds instantly form opinions and characterizations about other people. But our hearts have a different way of knowing. Can we forgive from our hearts even if our minds don't want us to? Maria Nemeth believes so. Her book, *The Energy of Money*, includes a powerful forgiveness exercise. We move toward forgiveness by being willing. Being willing to be led by our hearts and not the chatter from our minds is a powerful way to release our negative assessments of others. Being willing to give good to others, no matter what, is a powerful practice and a skill that will transform anger into something more productive. Who doesn't have opinions about the way they were raised? Or how their children act? Or why lovers leave them? Let's be here now, in this moment, creating a better story for a future filled with hope and promise. Lewis Smedes says, "To forgive is to set a prisoner free and to realize that prisoner is *you*." He also says, "Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of the past into a hope for the future."

My hope for the future is that we will change our bitter, angry, resentful stories into ones of great beauty, love, peace and service. We do this by being willing to forgive—by being willing to let our hearts lead us courageously forward, no matter what the chatter of our minds is saying to us. It is an action we take from our authentic self. Here are some ways to begin your forgiveness process:

Be willing to forgive; we all have the ability to be willing. By being willing, we set an intention to think differently about some hurt.

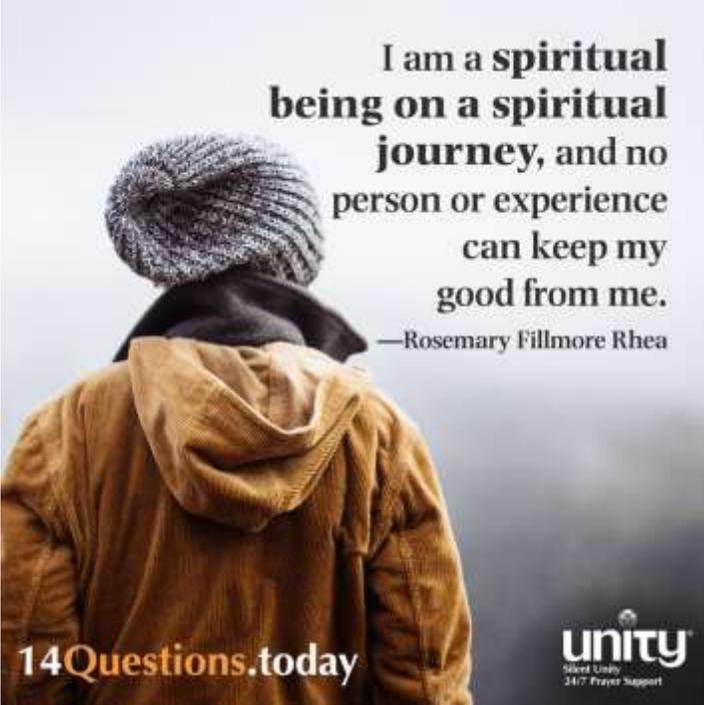
Look at the story of pain, hurt, resentment, and suffering you are carrying around, and ask yourself: Have you had enough?

See what this story is costing you. Does it allow you to move past all the suffering? Does it keep you frozen in the past? Has it affected the quality of your life? Does it expand your awareness of what is good in life? Is it uplifting?

Tell the truth—are you willing to let it go completely—just the story you tell? Without the drama of the story, the truth is what did or didn't happen. Are you willing to not tell it again?

Set an intention to write a new story of promise, hope, and peace. There are lessons to learn within every tragedy and blessings beyond our story.

You will never regret it. I promise.



I am a **spiritual
being on a spiritual
journey**, and no
person or experience
can keep my
good from me.

—Rosemary Fillmore Rhea

14Questions.today


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Day 6

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- [Day 6](#)

Am I Really Listening?

By Paula Coppel, “Discovering the Law of Attention”

When we enact the law of attention—when we apply the power of our perception to a full experience of the present moment—we are lifted to a fuller awareness of our oneness with God and with all of creation. Applying the law of attention doesn't take years of study. It doesn't require buying, attracting, or pursuing anything. It happens simply through a shift in focus—and the reward is instantaneous. A few years ago, I experienced the power of attention in a most moving and memorable way. I had been reading Eckhart Tolle's landmark book, *The Power of Now*, noting how often I was not fully present in my daily life. In particular, I realized that I often half-listened when my children, Ben and Emily, were talking to me while I cooked and cleaned.

One night, I decided to respond differently. As I was setting the dinner table, Emily, then 13, came in and began telling me about a problem with a friend. Instead of continuing my task and answering her with rote “uh-huhs” and “really's?” I put down the silverware and turned full around to face her. I looked right into her eyes and focused entirely on her and every word she was saying.

After a few seconds, my attention on her became so intense that the room around us disappeared. I lost all sense of self and felt as though I was falling into her—into the pools of her eyes, into her soft voice, and tender heart. I felt overcome by my oneness with her, and tears filled my eyes.

A few weeks later, I told a spiritual mentor about this experience with my daughter, trying to make sense of it. “I felt like I was falling into her,” I said.

“You were,” said my teacher. “You were falling in love.”

Yes, that was it. Once the distractions were cleared, once I was totally present, the way was open for a rush of love.

The law of attraction can help us improve the circumstances of our lives and is valuable for doing so. The risk is if we begin to believe this is all there is. Our ego is perfectly capable of conjuring up one thing after another that it thinks we “need” in order to be happy. We then find ourselves on the same treadmill that has led so many people to live, in Thoreau’s words, “lives of quiet desperation,” always chasing after the next thing. By contrast, the law of attention implies a peaceful practice and expanded awareness. Attention is a manifestation of love, so being more attentive means being more loving. We know this from our own experience: When someone pays attention to us—looking, listening, giving—we feel cared about. Conversely, when someone ignores us, we feel demeaned, insignificant, unloved.

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The more we focus on the present, the more we experience “the peace that surpasses all understanding,” and the more ably we radiate that peace to others. The kingdom is at hand; the true riches of life are already here. As we release our need to own, to get and to have, we can apply the power of attention to discover the true bliss that comes from no-self and no-thing at all.



[Day 7](#)

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- [Day 7](#)

[How Healthy Is My Media Diet?](#)

Interview with John Raatz, "The Peace Diet"

Excerpted from [Let It Begin With Me](#)

John Raatz is the founder of the Global Alliance for Transformational Entertainment (GATE), an evolving membership community of creative, business and technical professionals in entertainment and the media, and others who realize the vital and expanding role the media and entertainment play in creating our lives, and who aspire to consciously transform that process for the benefit of all. He speaks with us about the possibility of a transformed entertainment industry and the impact of the media in the pursuit of a more peace-filled world.

"I believe that our media diets, that which we consume in the form of media and entertainment, radically affect the states of our mental and emotional situation."

—John Raatz, founder of the Global Alliance for Transformational Entertainment

Q: *John, as you know, this series of interviews is focused on how we can facilitate the emergence of a more peaceful world. You are truly doing that, making huge waves in the world through your vision of transforming the entertainment industry. What do you see as the connection between media and entertainment, and our evolution to a more peaceful society?*

There's an old adage that says, "Whatever you give attention to grows stronger in your life," and I think that most of us have media diets that do not give us peaceful nutrition.

We experience so many images, so many sounds, so many of the sensual aspects of war and violence through film, through television programming, through news shows, through newspapers and magazines. It's no wonder we live in a world that is filled with as much violence as it is when our media diet is comprised of so many such images.

Day 7

I'm not advocating, by the way, that we completely eliminate those kinds of images when they're a part of a storyline, for example, in a movie or a TV show, but I am suggesting that we need a new set of values. Another adage that I like is, "A new seed will yield a new crop." I believe that we need new media values for a new world. That's one of the purposes of transformational entertainment in media.

Q: *I think a lot of people believe the answer is just to turn it off, and yet we don't want to turn it off. We love our media. We love entertainment. What you're doing is really innovative because you're not saying, "Turn it off." You're saying, "Let's just transform the message." What has the response been like so far?*

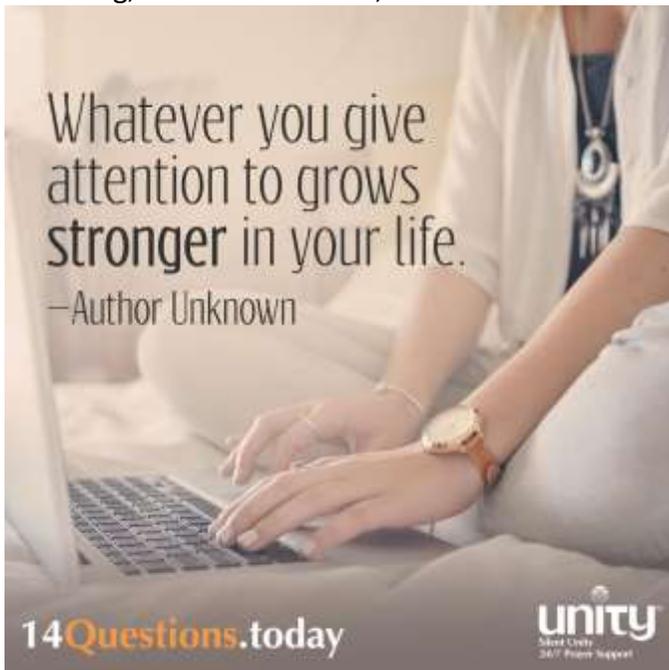
The response has been phenomenal. It was actually more than I had expected, and I expected quite a bit. But the response worldwide has shown me that this is an idea whose time has come, and I'm not the only one promoting this kind of an idea, either. There are many, many people worldwide who believe that entertainment and media is a powerful force in our daily lives, and can assist us in the shift and the transformation.

Q: *What is your vision for what that would look like—a transformed entertainment industry?*

I'm not sure I can answer that question. I think it's very much in the state of process, in the state of development. I do believe we can have more balance. There's an audience of people out there who are starved for programming that uplifts us, that inspires us, that shares the wisdom of the world with us. I think, for starters, if we had more programming that reflected those kinds of values and preferences that we would be much, much better off.

Q: *Do you think the entertainment industry has a responsibility in creating this shift that's happening on our planet right now?*

I do. I think they have a responsibility for having contributed to it in its current condition, and I think they have a responsibility to help turn it around. It isn't just for profits. I have nothing against the entertainment companies making a profit. I hope they do make a profit. I just hope that their executives and others in seats of power can open to the idea, the possibility, the reality that there are lots of people out there who want something more. They want media and entertainment that reflect who we have become and who we are becoming, with more holistic, humanistic values.



[Day 8](#)

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- [Day 8](#)

What Is My 'Why'?

By Elaine Meyer, editor of [Daily Word](#)[®]

At a recent employee meeting, Unity World Headquarters CEO [Jim Blake](#) invited us to answer, “Why I ...” as in “Why do you work here? What inspires you?”

As I walked back to my office, a coworker shared why she came to Unity—how she'd taken a pay cut in order to be of service to the world. My answer was simple and certainly not as noble as her story. I needed a job, and because my grandfather had retired from Unity after 50-plus years, I was guaranteed an interview as a legacy. I was hired, and 29 years later, I'm still here.

So for me, the “why” that sparked a response wasn't why I *started* here, but why I *stayed*. And my answer to that is this:

1. To serve myself. Being surrounded by inspiration at beautiful [Unity Village](#), Missouri, feeds my soul.
2. To serve the world.
3. To be creative because creativity is integral to who I am.
4. To help provide for my family.

I know I'm on track because every once in a while the Universe provides a subtle nod—a divine thumbs up. Have you ever received those? They come when we're feeling tired or when self-doubt starts to nudge itself in our brains. This is when a favorite song comes on the radio, a friend calls out of the blue, or any number of other messages.

Divine synchronicity reminds us that there's something greater than ourselves at work in the Universe.

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One instance will always remain with me. Several years ago I was inspired to write a [Daily Word](#) message on “Grace” that began: “Everywhere I look, I see God’s grace reflected back to me.” There was nothing too Pulitzer Prize-winning about it, but it felt right.

Months passed before a letter came across my desk. It was from a woman who shared that her younger sister had suddenly made her transition on the same day the “Grace” message appeared. When her family went to her apartment to clean out her belongings, her sister’s copy of *Daily Word* was turned to that message for the day.

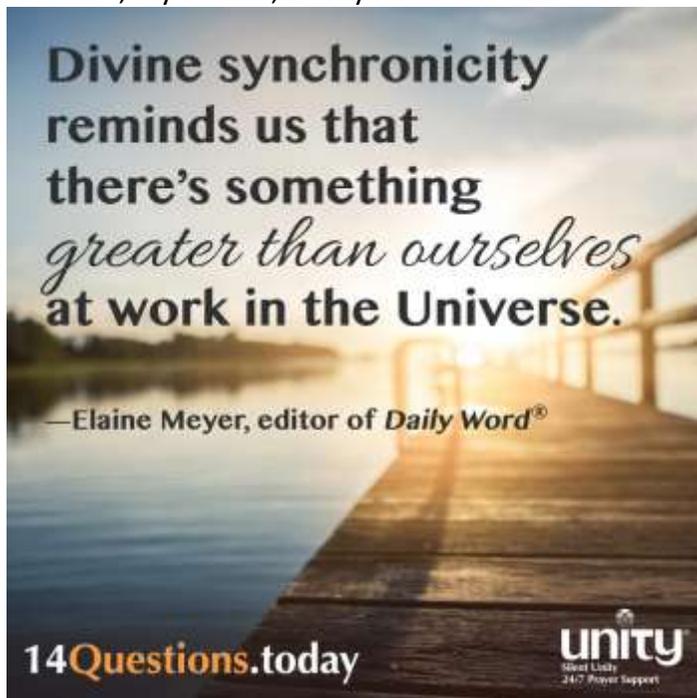
What was her sister’s name? Grace.

This reader truly felt the message she read was divinely sent, just for her, to help her cope with the tragedy—a divine reassurance that Grace was still with her in spirit.

I heard a starfish story a while ago. It went something like this: A man was walking along the beach and saw a boy walking toward him, pausing occasionally to pick something up and throw it in the ocean. The man asked the boy what he was doing. He replied, “Throwing starfish back into the ocean. They can’t get back on their own, so I’m helping them.” The man replied, “There are thousands of them. You can’t possibly save them all, so what’s the point? It won’t matter when the sun comes up.” The boy picked up another one, tossed it in the water, and replied, “It matters to that one.”

Perhaps, just perhaps, my one starfish was Grace’s sister. If that’s the case, I feel content. It made a difference to her, which is good enough for me.

And that, my friends, is why I do what I do.



Day 9

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- [Day 9](#)

How Much Room Do I Give People to Grow and Change?

By Wendy Craig-Purcell

Excerpted from [Ask Yourself This!](#)

Do you hold people hostage to their past? Do you hold people hostage to their last mistake or their worst fault? If you've ever been held hostage in such a way, you know it doesn't feel very good. Are you as bad as the worst mistake you've ever made? Of course you aren't. Are you as bad as your worst shortcoming or inadequacy? No, you're not. There's much more to you than the worst mistake you've ever made or the prickliest part of your personality.

Some time ago I saw a poster that captured this idea well. It portrayed a little boy of about six or seven. His hair was disheveled, his T-shirt was soiled, his jeans ripped (not as a fashion statement like they are today), and his shoelaces were untied. He was standing with a baseball bat in his hand looking at the broken window his baseball had just flown through. The caption read: "Please be patient with me. God isn't finished with me yet."

There's a little bit of that boy in all of us. We can all say about ourselves: "Please be patient with me. God isn't finished with me yet." This question is aimed at fostering that same kind of patience, tolerance, and kindheartedness toward everyone else.

We in Unity (and in all of New Thought, for that matter) believe that humankind—all of it—is inherently good, not inherently flawed. We believe that the spark of the divine, the God Presence, indwells each and every one of us. We didn't put it there (God did),

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and we can't get rid of it (thank God!). However, we can hide it, ignore it, cover it up, or dumb it down. Nevertheless, it is still there, waiting to be expressed. You are not born in original sin (which is a church

teaching, not a Biblical one). You are born in original blessing—in the image and the likeness of God. We all are.

This Truth isn't a permission slip to stay stuck at our current level of expression, but rather an invitation to give ourselves—and others—plenty of room to grow and change. And when growth and change do occur, it is time to celebrate! Even the baby steps! That's what helps us keep going.

Do you hold people hostage to their past? Do you have a good memory for what they didn't do, the mistakes they made, or where they fell short—but a poor memory for the good they've done? My minister friend Robert Stevens says we could take a lesson from a story he read about John D. Rockefeller.

When John D. Rockefeller was CEO of Standard Oil, one of his executives made a colossal mistake costing the company more than \$2 million. That day no one wanted to have anything to do with Rockefeller because they all knew his temper. Everyone kept their distance from him except one executive who absolutely had to meet with Rockefeller that day. Though he wasn't the one who had made the costly error, he was nonetheless prepared to be the target of considerable misplaced anger. When he entered Rockefeller's office he saw him at his desk scribbling furiously on a piece of paper. Rockefeller looked up and said, "I suppose you've heard the bad news."

The executive said, "Yes. I know we've just lost \$2 million. I guess you're going to fire him."

"Fire him?" Rockefeller questioned. "Definitely not. We've just invested \$2 million in his education. And I've been sitting here all morning reminding myself of his good qualities and the times he's done well and saved the company money."

What a powerful lesson for all of us. When we're angry and upset—even when it appears justified—our field of vision can narrow so much that we only see the failings, faults and mistakes in the other and not the fullness of who they are. Giving people room to change and grow requires the mature understanding that we are all going to make mistakes from time to time but that we are more than the mistakes we make.



Day 10

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- Day 10

What Clutter Can I Remove From My Life?

By Michelle Robin, "Free Your Space"

Excerpted from [Wellness on a Shoestring](#)

You may experience many different types of clutter during your life: There is spiritual clutter, which can keep you from being who you truly are. You may have mental or emotional clutter stemming from the beliefs of your parents, which leaves you stuck in the past or worried about the future and unable to fully enjoy the present. You may also have clutter in your body, such as toxins stored in your liver or fat cells, or simply foods in your diet that don't work with your body chemistry. Any of these elements can make it harder for your body to function.

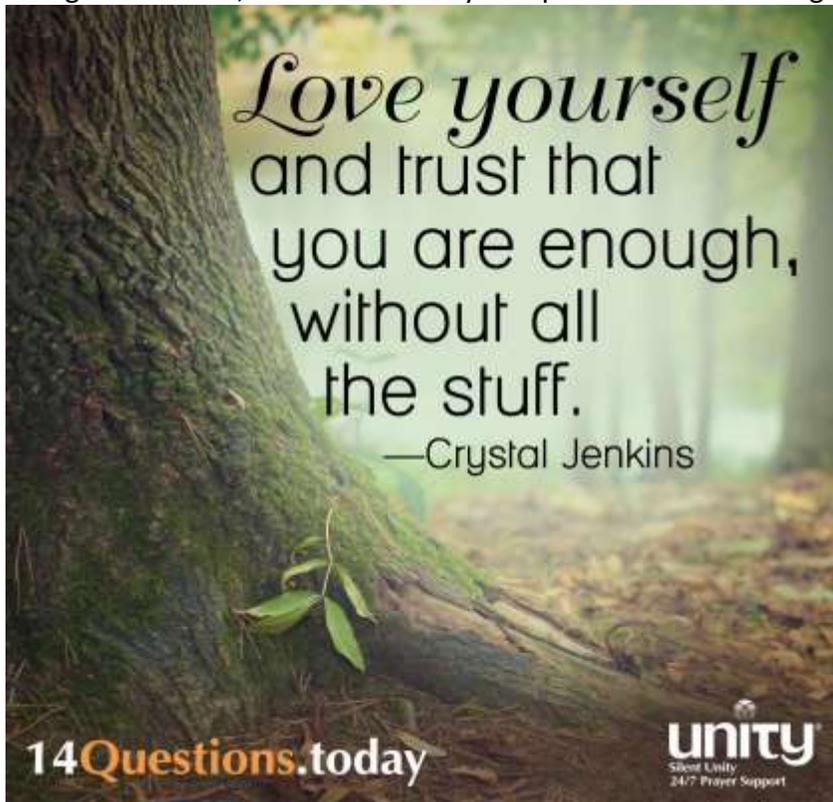
One of the most powerful things you can do to support your own wellness is the regular elimination of what does not support or nurture you. Perhaps your bed is unmade, and all the surfaces of your bedroom are piled with laundry and paperwork. This creates an unsettled, unclear vibration in the room that makes it difficult to sleep well. Maybe your desk is cluttered, affecting your ability to think clearly and creatively. Or perhaps your car is dirty and in need of minor repair, like windshield wipers that need to be replaced. This creates a low level of ongoing anxiety that affects your day-to-day ability to function well. Similarly, a cluttered closet jammed full of clothes that you hope to fit into someday keeps you from loving who and where you are right now.

And then there is the clutter of things that people put between themselves and other people, and between themselves and new experiences. Do you touch your partner lovingly as you sleep, or do you always have a pet or pillow between you? Is there so much going on in your calendar that you have no white space, no downtime, and no space for something new to come into your life?

Day 10

Clutter disconnects you from yourself, from your heart, and keeps you living a life in which you are not paying attention. You live looking in at all the mess, and you never have the energy to look out and around you, able to access what could bring you a better life. Clutter feeds a mindless way of living that keeps you mired in chaos and can lead to many forms of disease. But don't despair: Wellness increases naturally and easily as you get rid of the clutter. And cleaning out your life doesn't have to happen all at once, in one huge cleansing session; it can and does happen bit by bit.

Also, know that when you de-clutter your environment and your emotional self, you get rid of the noise that can keep you from being able to hear your inner wisdom or connect to a higher self or God. De-cluttering other parts of your life gives your mind and body, literally and figuratively, the space to be open, to have a dialogue with God, to connect with your spirit and receive the gifts of the Spirit.



Day 11

14 Questions to Improve Your Outlook



Beginning tomorrow, November 9, visit [14Questions.today](#) for a two-week journey that will challenge your way of thinking when an outcome isn't what you expected. You'll discover uplifting messages, inspiring stories, and 14 questions from [Silent Unity](#)® to help combat feelings of disappointment, grief, anger, fear, or loss.

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- Day 11

What If This Could Be Easy and Fun?

By Wendy Craig-Purcell

Excerpted from [Ask Yourself This!](#)

What creates more joy, more happiness, more contentment than a simple sense of fun? For many years I enjoyed a deep and rich prayer partnership with another Unity minister, Rev. Richard Rogers. Frequently, when I would share about some difficulty I was going through or about feeling overwhelmed by my work at the church and responsibilities at home, Richard would stop me and ask: "What if you just let this be easy and fun? What if you just stop for a moment and allow this to be a little bit easier, a little bit more fun?" While I wasn't always successful in doing it, I always appreciated the question because it helped me shift my perspective.

We all have routine tasks to do that we don't particularly like. Perhaps it's doing the laundry, washing dishes, shopping for groceries, paying bills, or mowing the lawn. If the tasks are ours to do anyway, why not find a way to make them more enjoyable? This question sparks our creativity and adds joy to our lives.

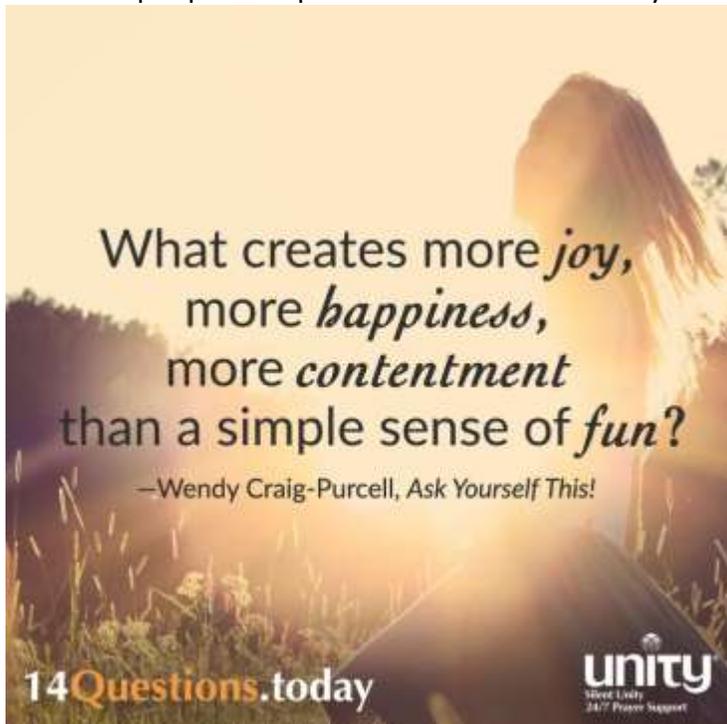
I love this additional story of Walter Russell, who, when faced with having to mow his very large lawn at his splendid country home, decided to make the task more fun. Instead of mowing the lawn in typical straight rows, he made a game of it. He would mow patterns and designs in the grass as he cut it and then gradually eliminate the patterns until all the grass had been cut. He took a routine task he wasn't particularly fond of and made it easy and fun!

May Rowland, former director of Silent Unity (Unity's 24/7 prayer ministry), devoted an entire chapter in her book *Dare to Believe!* to a similar practice. She suggested that when we feel overwhelmed, burdened, or worried, we should give the situation "the

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light touch ... the touch of light.” She wrote, “Our success lies not so much in how we handle the situation, but in how we handle ourselves. We are able to handle each situation that arises easily, smoothly, and harmoniously—with the light touch—when we learn to control and direct our thinking about each situation. Our strength emerges from our way of thought.”

We will always have to deal with situations in life that are less than pleasant. No matter how long we have been on a spiritual path, no matter what church, synagogue, mosque, or background we’ve come from, life happens. There are always circumstances we hadn’t planned or asked for (at least not consciously) and that we’d rather not have to deal with. Living consciously doesn’t change that. But it does fundamentally shift how we respond to such things. Asking yourself, “What if this could be easy and fun?” is a powerful way to connect with a deeper place of peace and centeredness in your day-to-day living.



[Day 12](#)

14 Questions to Improve Your Outlook



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- [Day 12](#)

[What Am I Doing Today That Makes Me Better Than Yesterday?](#)

By Rev. Marilyn Muehlbach



When things don't go as you hoped, it's difficult to see you still have choices, but we are only victims to the fate we create for ourselves. We can still learn to love and accept others even when we don't agree with them. In that way, we honor ourselves as much as we honor them.

Before we can be a positive influence on the people around us, we need to get into the habit of practicing self-care. When life is spinning out of control, I'm better when I return to the BIG 4:

1. Meditate—Just a few moments of clear mind makes a huge difference in how I face the day. (It may take many moments to achieve those few moments of clear mind.)
2. Eat Healthy—Eating healthy food (and ditching the sugar) helps my mind clear and my body feel better.
3. Exercise—Moving my body is like hitting the reset button. It invigorates me—body, mind, and spirit.
4. Sleep—Eight hours of good sleep puts me at the top of my game.

If we take a moment each day to focus on the BIG 4, we will be in a much better place to express our divine potential and make a positive impact on the lives of others.

Day 13



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Day 13

How Can I Love More?

By Carolyn Mathlin

When we ask, “How can I love more?” what is typically underneath that question is a desire to understand more. Love is our ever-present reality. Love doesn’t change. Understanding is a bridge to living love. The more we understand, the more we are able to feel and express the love that is already present.

I loved my dearly departed mother with all my heart. We had a very close, connected relationship. Toward the end of her life she stopped doing as much. She needed more help getting places, to the point that she didn’t like going anywhere alone. She became dependent on me for company and help. I started to make up stories in my mind about her being lazy, not trying hard enough, purposefully burdening me so I would stay close to her.

Then one day she had a doctor’s appointment. As it turned out, she had stage 4 breast cancer that had spread into her bones. With that diagnosis, all of a sudden my heart broke open with immense love for my mother. All the stories I had made up in my head about what she was doing to me melted away in the understanding that her body was actually sick. As my understanding increased, my capacity for the love that was already present between us increased.

Every day we are met with opportunities to understand more. We each have a worldview. Those views are influenced by our country of origin, gender, life story, religion, education, economic status, Enneagram number, ethnicity, and the list goes on. We tend to gravitate toward the people who we share similar worldviews with. It’s easier to understand those who are like us and therefore easier to love them.

Then there are those relationships and situations where we bump up against other viewpoints, informed by a different set of influences than our own. Just like my experience with my mother, we can make up many stories based on limited, external information. Our call is to go deeper. The more we understand, the more we can feel the love that connects us all.

There are many ways to inquire as a way to develop understanding and ultimately love. When you are seeking to build understanding, the important starting point is to be pure in your intention. Start with the awareness that this is a soul in human form that has a story, with hopes and dreams, challenges and struggles. When you start with that, you start from a place of connection with them that is beyond personal beliefs.

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Then, be curious. Ask questions in a welcoming, open tone; welcoming because you want to be invited into their world; open because there is room in your awareness for what they have to share.

My go-to question is: "Will you please tell me more?" I learned it from a workshop I took with Dr. Gary Simmons many years ago. The more curious we are, the more we can stay open to viewpoints outside our own worldview, ultimately building understanding and an ability to love more.

We live in a world where we can become isolated, limiting our connection with anyone different from ourselves. The more we see each other in the various expressions of humanity, including all the different reasons people believe what they do, the more we will love. The more we feel understood, the less we need to defend and attack the other. I love the teaching from *A Course In Miracles* "in my defenselessness my safety lies." Learning more about someone else and why they believe what they do doesn't take away your power or your voice. It simply informs you more. Understanding another doesn't mean agreeing; it means you care enough about someone's intrinsic value to see from their perspective. It's not about understanding with an agenda to change them. It's about the intention to love them wholeheartedly.

As you venture out into the world or even sit down to a family meal and find yourself struggling to love someone, stop. Take a few cleansing breaths. Connect with them and then seek to understand. Prepare to be open to, even surprised by, the possibility of loving more right then and there.



You may not find
it easy to like a
difficult person,
but it is always
possible for you
to *love a child
of God.*

—Martha Smock, former editor of *Daily Word*®

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Day 14

[How Can I Make a Difference Where I Am?](#)

By Rev. Mark Fuss

I am a “portion of God made manifest.”

This snippet of a quotation by Unity writer H. Emilie Cady has given me joy and strength for many years now. The idea that I was any part of anything divine was foreign to me for much of my life. Growing up gay in the Deep South and coming of age in the '70s, I was immersed in the theology of sin-fall-redemption of traditional Christianity.

My first time in seminary was a gut-wrenching exercise in self-loathing, shame, and guilt. My inevitable crisis of faith was like a tsunami of anger and darkness. If God could not love me as I was created, then for me there was no God. I was closeted until my 20s, and I came out with abandon, dismissing religion from my life and rarely looking back. My career and clubs (dancing, drinking, and drugs) took center stage in my life. I found all of my self-worth in a job well done and quickly self-medicated anything approaching a painful feeling. This roller coaster seemed to work well for two decades, only occasionally jumping the tracks.

In 1999 the bottom of the barrel found me homeless in New York City, strung out and lost, at the end of my long ride. Early one morning, sitting on a park bench, the thought, *There must be more than this*, entered my mind. I knew I had to get a grip and make some changes if I wanted to live. I moved to Florida, staying with my little brother and his family. The next two years were a lonely struggle ... getting work after years of self-destructive behavior, drying myself out, beginning to put myself back together.

It was 2001 when I first visited a Unity church, Unity of Panama City, Florida. I was stunned and overwhelmed by the love, acceptance, and joy I found there. It was palpable ... in the energy, in the people, in the minister's message. God is Good. Your essence is of God, therefore you are inherently Good. You're not fallen, sinful, broken, but spiraling upward ... an expression of God made manifest. I began to study Unity and New Thought teachings and theology. I joyfully joined the choir, became a chaplain, and soon was on the board of this spiritual community.

Now 16 years later, I am an ordained Unity minister and serve as director of outreach and events at Unity Village. I share, as widely as possible, the same message that I heard my first Sunday in Unity. One Presence,

One Power, God the Good ... and *you* are a portion of God made manifest. It is a message that many in our world desperately long

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(and need) to hear. And it is a message that I continue to study and try to embody ... I am a portion of God made manifest.

My “why” is actually pretty simple. Unity gave me the tools and teachings to lift myself from a long cycle of addiction and self-loathing. Through meditation, affirmations, and denials, and the power of affirmative prayer, I was empowered to do my own inner work. My Unity church offered me a vibrant environment of love, inclusion, and possibility in which to do that work. I want to be a part of doing just that—for anyone who needs and desires that same love, that same message. My work at Unity is not just a job. It is my vocation, a call to “come up higher” in service to our world. That’s my “why” ...

