How to Stay Centered, No Matter What
My faith assures me that every event in my life has meaning and brings gifts.

“Everything happens for a reason” has been tossed around so much that it has nearly become a meaningless cliché.

But think about it. If you chose to look for the reason in things you’d prefer were not happening, imagine all you could learn. How would that shift the way you move through challenges? How would life change?

We find what we seek. If we look for lessons and possibilities, life takes on purpose and evolution, no matter what comes. Everything about our journey is transformed if we let go and let God—another well-worn aphorism that is also incredibly powerful when truly embodied.

For me, that defines practical spirituality.

The year 2019 began bright and new with our annual White Stone service at church, a meditation in which we allow a guiding word for the year to come to us from intuition, guides, God—call it what you will, it’s a way to claim my yearly intention.
The word that came for me was purpose. I remember thinking that I always try to live “on purpose” and found it interesting that I would need reminding.

And then …

Within weeks, my daughter, a mother of two young children, shattered the bones in her leg simply by stepping off a curb. After her major surgery but before life showed any semblance of a return to normalcy, my husband had emergency quadruple bypass heart surgery.


Then the real horror erupted, one lesion at a time. A rare and deadly infection, a cousin to tuberculosis and leprosy, developed under my husband’s healing wound. It took months of hospitalizations, multiple surgeries, and near-lethal doses of antibiotics before they would say he might survive … maybe.

And the bills must be paid. And the family has needs. And we live in South Florida, and here comes a hurricane.

And … everything happens for a reason. Does it? Really? Do I truly believe that?

Turns out I do. I had to claim my truth and remember my Source, digging deep into my well of faith to let go and let God in ways I never thought I could. But I did. And what did I find?

Meaning. Purpose. Love. So much love. That people truly are how God gets around. That my husband is some sort of superhuman superhero. That nurses are angels on earth. That my family is far stronger than I ever knew, and naps are glorious gifts. That my Unity community is amazingly generous and supportive and loving and grounding. That Facebook can be a lifeline. That attitude actually can be everything, and life really is a gift. That clichés become clichés because they are true. That acceptance is evolutionary, and even a one-minute meditation can work if it’s all you have time for. Just for starters.

Because I claimed my faith, it was there for me to claim. I found meaning because I insisted upon it. I processed feelings as they came and relied on my support system. At my core, I believed I could make it, so I did. It was incredibly simple and beyond complex at the same time.

For 2020, the word for my white stone was sync. Medical journeys continued for my daughter and husband, and yearly themes about clarity of vision abounded—20/20 being perfect vision. Then came COVID-19. What is it we collectively needed to see?


Knock, and the door shall open. It will, no matter which door you knock on—hope or despair.

I can’t explain it in words—it’s beyond words. I can feel it though. I let myself be still and know. I am God. You are God. It’s all God.

Do you believe that? Really? Because if you do, no matter what you face, you will find the God-ness within it. The reason and purpose will be there for you to claim. And it won’t take a crisis or pandemic for you to realize how powerful your faith can be.

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Getting Centered Fast

When you only have a minute to calm yourself and recenter, pick one or more:

• Pause, take a deep breath, release.
• Put your hands on your heart and connect.
• Breathe in with *I am* and out with *in God*.
• Look up, literally. Watch the sky for a bit.
• Take off your shoes and stand on the earth. Feel.
• Call a trusted friend.
• Count to 60.
• Call Silent Unity®️, the Unity Prayer Ministry, to ask for prayer (816-969-2000).
• Find three things to be grateful for.

A Prayer of Faith

I look upon the world of circumstance and declare: *Infinite possibilities are now available to me!*

Thank you in advance for all the blessings of today and every day hereafter! I am alive at the greatest time in history, and I am privileged to witness this amazing day of creation.

Give me the wisdom to make each moment today matter. May I use this fresh supply of 24 hours as if it’s the most precious gift in the world.

My heart now fills with unshakable faith, and I go forth in a spirit of joy, expectancy, and enthusiasm!

—Rev. Sherri James
Inglewood, California
I express the strength and vitality of God.

A treasured gift from my congregation is a silver bracelet inscribed with a verse from Philippians: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (4:13 NKJV).

This scripture about strength is particularly meaningful to me. Years earlier before I became a minister, I randomly chose Andrew, who symbolizes strength, as the apostle I would represent in a two-year discipleship program at my home church.

*Did choosing Andrew, I wondered at the time, mean I had strength or needed strength?*

“Both,” my minister affirmed.

As I reviewed events in my life, I concluded that, yes, I had been strong in many situations. But the strength I would need in the coming years, I couldn’t begin to imagine.

Strength is the “ability to endure, stay the course, last, be persistent, persevere, and be stable,” according to Rev. Paul Hasselbeck, D.D.S., and Rev. Cher Holton, Ph.D., in *PowerUP* (Holton Consulting Group, 2010), a book about the 12 powers.
Hearing a doctor pronounce, “You have breast cancer,” is enough to send almost anyone reeling, and I was no exception. How would I have the strength to get through this?

As a student of Unity, the use of affirmations resonated with me. Affirmations are not to make something come about but to deepen our conscious awareness of what is already true about us as expressions of God’s divine presence.

So I affirmed: I rest in the knowledge that God is my strength.

And rest I did. I never lost a night’s sleep after that diagnosis. “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength” (Isaiah 30:15).

Another aspect of strength is dependability or, as Charles Fillmore says in Keep a True Lent (Unity Books, 1953), “It is the force or power to do, capacity to accomplish.”

When we are dependable, we use our spiritual strength to do what we commit to. We follow the course we’ve set for ourselves, and spiritual strength allows us to do so with clarity, focus, ease, and grace.

Using our power of strength for spiritual awareness, we choose to focus our attention and thought energy on the possibility of positive outcomes in our own lives, the lives of others, and the world.

One way to face challenges that call for strength or courage is to be aware of ways we’ve demonstrated strength in the past. What have you believed you could never do that you not only found the strength to face it, but afterward knew you had grown spiritually as a result of? Focusing on such situations and writing about them can offer you a deeper appreciation of your own strength.

A little boy was trying very hard to lift a heavy stone. His father said to him, “Are you using all your strength?” “Yes, I am,” the boy exclaimed impatiently. “No,” the father replied, “you are not. You haven’t asked me to help.”

Being spiritually strong doesn’t mean that we have to go it alone, without assistance from others, or can’t benefit from the upliftment we receive from those who are ready and willing to help.

In meditation and prayer, especially this month, recall anew your successful use of your power of strength. Envision yourself filled with God’s unlimited strength, able to stand firm, to be courageous and still in the midst of chaos, to be resilient and endure, to be persistent and steadfast.

In difficult times, remind yourself that no matter the situation, God is ever present.

It may also help to remain centered by identifying situations that increase your anxiety, stress, or worry, and to the greatest extent possible, avoid or limit your exposure to them.

Remember that strength is not something you have but what you are as an expression God’s divine presence. Consider frequently using affirmations of strength, such as God’s presence within guides me and lifts me up. I am an expression of the strength and vitality of God.

In every decision you are called to make, in every challenge you face, your power of strength carries you through, radiating from God’s presence within you.

Rev. Margo Ford is minister at Unity Spiritual Center of Waco, Texas.
A Prayer of Strength

I am strength. I am the energy of God in action.

My strength originates in God, and I am fully equipped to handle any life experience. I can accomplish all things through my awareness of the Christ in me. I stand firmly on my awareness that God in me directs my life.

My spiritual gift of strength allows me to keep my mind firmly on my good. I dismiss distractions and temptations, and I think and act in alignment with the purpose God has placed in my soul. I trust my intuition and mentally hold on to what is revealed to me in moments of meditation and inspiration.

—Rev. Gaylon McDowell
Chicago, Illinois
I can handle any circumstance by tapping into the wisdom within me and all around me.

A while back, I allowed an interaction with another person to upset me. Their comments felt harsh, criticism of me unnecessary, and opinions biased.

The incident seemed caught in replay mode in my mind. I couldn't shake it off. I felt distracted and caught up by negative emotion.

I prayed and asked for guidance to move forward. But if it came, I couldn't hear it as my mind busily chewed on replays and defensiveness.

Where was my usual calm nature? My centeredness? Why was my brain replaying something I did not like nor want? What if the Law of Attraction brought me more of the same? Eek!

Where was wisdom in all this? I wanted its serenity, clarity, and certainty. I needed to call on that spiritual faculty to access discernment, right judgment, and intuitive knowledge. I wanted to stand in my power and leave anything unwanted behind.

In his book The Twelve Powers of Man (Unity Books, 1930), Charles Fillmore said that to call on one of our spiritual faculties is “mentally to recognize that [power],” to identify with it, align with it.

Wisdom is all around us.

Rereading his words helped open my consciousness to the wisdom right around me, including a famed quote from Paramahansa Yogananda: “Steer the ship of concentration calmly to the shores of blessedness.”

Stuck on my mirror was a card from teacher Edwene Gaines: “I act on the guidance, intuition, good impulses, and inspiration I receive.”

And in H. Emilie Cady's book Lessons in Truth (Unity Books, 1903): “God is in everything that happens to you. There are no ‘second causes.’” As I sat with these truths, dwelled upon them, I repeated: Every life experience blesses me. I felt a shift, a welcome letting-go.

Wisdom is in the midst of us.

I asked, Who do I know who demonstrates calm, unwavering wisdom despite circumstances? What does that look like?

One of my mentors, author Jean Brannon, came to mind. She is steadfast in her centeredness and in the way she views life as a sacred experience. If someone mentions any seeming drama, her response is nonreactive, calming, and based on the truth that all paths are sacred and good is in everything. Her wisdom is quiet and deep.

Wisdom is within us.

In meditation, we find peace and realize our constant connection to Source. We remember our alignment, and as we do, we may feel a shift in ourselves at our core.

All the “outer” fades as we stay in the moment, focusing on our breath. We drop into our heart space, our innate divinity, that Christ, Spirit, God-light within us.

Take a breath right now, if you will, hold it, and let it go. Breathe in the recognition of all that you are: wise, discerning, balanced, filled with the light of the Divine.

Know that what you are is wonderful. Within you are the resources, powers, capabilities, wisdom, and more to live a vibrant life, to handle any circumstance, and to shine. You make a beautiful difference in this world.

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