THE
POWER
OF
PRAYER
As a communications major in college, one of the first things I studied was theory. One theory by a noted philosopher in the field is that “one cannot not communicate.”

Take a moment for that double negative to sink in. In the same way, one cannot not pray.

Just as we are still sending a message when we are silent, I’ve learned that when we are not speaking, we are still praying. Our prayers are as constant and fruitful as our thoughts.

As scripture reminds us, “Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear” (Isaiah 65:24).

Many people believe prayers must be wordy, loud, and beseeching for God to hear them. When I was young, I listened with curiosity as preachers and other adults raised their voices to God to give them this or change that. I could never bring myself to pray in that way. I somehow knew that we did not need to utter a word for our prayers to be heard.

My mother taught me to say grace before every meal. It is rare that she starts eating before she has given thanks to God and for the hands that prepared the meal. When she forgets to say grace, I remind her she already prayed without uttering a word.

One of my earliest experiences praying in silence followed the death of my 2-year-old son more than four decades ago. For a time, I was utterly speechless as I struggled to find words to ease my sorrow. I would sit in silence for what seemed like hours, waiting and hoping for answers.

Without realizing it, I was following the steps Jesus laid out when the disciples asked him how to pray. “But whenever you pray, go
into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him” (Matthew 6:6-8).

Today I consciously begin my daily prayer time by centering on my breathing to quiet my busy mind and relax my body. I close my eyes and repeat one of the affirmations that help ground me, such as: *I am poised and centered in the Christ mind, and nothing disturbs the deep, calm peace of my soul.*

I continue to breathe deeply as I begin to feel relaxed and centered. Following the natural rise and fall of my breath, I sit quietly and listen. When thoughts invade my peace, I give them a gentle nod and return my attention to my breathing until I feel poised and centered again. I am now in my inner room with the door closed to all outer distractions. Here is where I listen and I wait in the Silence.

When I feel ready, I return my attention to my breathing, open my eyes, and express gratitude for this precious time of sacred communion. I feel an inner knowing that my prayers have been heard, my needs have been met, and the way before me is smooth and easy.

It was during a time of silence one morning, lost in my grief, that I received an answer in the form of a scripture: “I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten” (Joel 2:25).

Through Unity teachings, I have learned to pray affirmatively by acknowledging that my beliefs empower my prayers. I put my heart into believing in a restoration of peace and joy, which has happened not just once but again and again, reassuring me that one cannot *not* pray.

As Jesus said, “Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24). This kind of prayer is about not being married to a particular outcome, but instead, preparing the way for something better than one can even imagine.
**Prayer of Silence**

I am now in the sacred place. 
That place where the Father and I are one.

I close the door to all distractions, to all external issues. 
I surrender myself to the divine presence in the 
assurance that all sorrow is healed.

The outpouring of healing and comforting love 
brings peace and calm to my soul.

Infinite wisdom reveals to me a new understanding 
of my life and my circumstances.

Guided and inspired, I find the strength 
to live each day with faith, 
joy, and enthusiasm.

Dear God, this moment is our moment. 
In it, I experience the gift of Presence, 
and I find the peace I am looking for.

I open wide the doors of my being 
to receive the wonderful blessings 
and goodness prepared for me.

—Rev. Beatriz Gallerano-Bell
Affirmative prayer has the power to change our perception of current experiences. It grounds us in the present, such that we open ourselves to new possibilities for the future.

But how might affirmative prayer bring lasting peace to relationships from our past? How might the power to transform our thinking through prayer become the catalyst for growth from past pain?

My biological father passed away in 2008. He had left our family when I was a child, and we did not speak again for 30 years. The few times we spoke, after I reached out, brought a bit of peace to that experience. It was not until he passed that I recognized how much remained unaddressed.

For years, I clung to stories that somehow I was the reason he left. I believed his departure meant I was flawed and unworthy of love. I feared trusting others. I was mistakenly sure that they, too, would see my brokenness and disappear.

These beliefs ran counter to Truth, but I felt powerless to change them. Attempts to resolve them felt like letting go of a familiar part of myself.

Given that my father had died, I would never be able to ask the questions that I felt needed answers in order to heal. The best resolution I could muster was to move on despite the painful memories and meanings I had given the past.

I did move on—but every relationship, career opportunity, and decision I made was tainted by the idea that I was undeserving.

My healing journey began with a simple question: Am I willing to affirm my innate wholeness and perfection and begin the process of releasing any beliefs that run counter to this truth?

I sat with it. I held it in prayer and meditation. It flooded the pages of my journal. The question of my willingness remained front and center until I finally said, “Yes, I AM willing.”

The moment we affirm willingness, the flood of infinite healing that is always available rushes to our aid. “Yes, I AM willing ...” became the opening statement of my daily prayer life. Today this phrase represents the firstfruits of a prayer practice that empowers my spiritual evolution.

The affirmation I AM willing to see myself as whole over time became I AM whole. Affirming innate wholeness, I become an active participant in releasing thoughts of brokenness.

I AM willing to be complete likewise became I AM complete. In the broader context of life, affirming completion establishes my innate worth as a perfect expression of God. In the context of a situation, affirming completion means I no longer choose to
partake of the emotional juice it affords. I move on, free of the emotional burden and open to a deeper realization of Truth.

In my daily practice, one affirmative prayer truly acts as my go-to in moments when I feel deeply disturbed: I AM okay. In this context, okay is an expression of acceptance. When confronted with challenges of any type, acceptance allows me to see what is so. It reminds me that regardless of conditions, I contain the necessary spiritual tools to meet the challenge. Sometimes they are at my fingertips. Other times I need to pause and draw from the infinite wellspring within.

In all cases, I AM okay taps into the source of peace and strength that lies within. I AM okay affirms that God is at work. I AM okay reminds me that I am loved, nurtured, and supported by the one presence and one power in the Universe.

Affirmative prayer has offered me the opportunity to heal my relationship with my father. While most of this healing occurred long after the opportunity to reconcile on this earthly plane, in Spirit I know it is complete. Releasing both the past events surrounding our relationship and all the meaning I gave to them is an ongoing journey—one for which I am innately prepared.

Affirmative prayer continues to transform my life as I remain willing, and I am certain it will do the same for you. As you begin to explore your own willingness, always remember: You are whole. You are complete. And most important, you are okay.

PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

I am open and receptive to the forgiving power of the Christ within me.

I now willingly release any unforgiving thought I may be holding, consciously or unconsciously. I forgive anyone who has hurt or betrayed me. Painful memories now dissolve in the light of God’s love. And I forgive myself for holding on to judgments.

Through the power of forgiveness, I am set free. Divine love cleanses and heals my soul as I let go of any resentment.

The past no longer has power over me. The heaviness has now returned to the nothingness from which it came, and my heart is filled with compassion. Within me is an immense power and strength that I call forth to guide me toward my good.

Centered in God’s love, I am free to begin anew.

—Rev. Elizabeth Longo
I woke up at 7:30 a.m. and looked out the French doors overlooking our back lanai (porch).

What I saw was my husband David, frozen, holding on to the door frame leading into the living room. I cried out, “David, are you okay?”

“No,” he answered weakly.

I raced from the bedroom to the door where he stood. His left leg was on the lanai and he could not move it. I struggled to pick it up and get him into the house. It was like picking up a log. I finally got it inside along with his right leg. I placed a chair behind him and asked him to sit. He said, “I can’t.”

I immediately called 911.

Within five minutes EMS arrived with five burly men and one strong woman. They carried him to the ambulance in a sling and took him to our 15-bed hospital on the island of Molokai.

As soon as they left I called Unity Prayer Ministry, who prayed with me. Then I prayed and prayed until I got the call that he was going to be life-flighted to Honolulu.

Because of COVID-19, hospital beds in Honolulu were hard to come by, so David remained at our local hospital until 11 p.m. when a room at Straub Medical Center became available.

His travels then began: an ambulance to our Molokai airport and a life flight to Honolulu, which was met by another ambulance to transfer him to Straub. Both David and I had been previously hospitalized at the very efficient Straub, so I was pleased that was where he was going.
David arrived shortly after midnight and underwent a battery of tests. These ultimately revealed that he had suffered a major stroke. I called all our Unity friends and had them join with me in praying for a positive outcome.

Although the stroke had affected both his left leg and left arm, his strength immediately began to return without drugs or surgery. Each day showed improvement. Thank you, God! Our prayers were being answered.

When he came home on his birthday five days later, he walked gingerly but unassisted. All feelings and movements had returned.

To have a major stroke with no aftereffects is almost unheard of. It was called a miracle, an honest-to-heaven, full-on miracle! Prayer works!

David’s life returned to normal. After two weeks he was given permission to drive again. He once again shops at the grocery store, which he loves. He once again washes the dishes and throws a load of laundry in the washing machine. He watches his favorite sports. As he has done for years, he thanks God for life every day. In short, life is normal for him again.

I believe David’s miracle occurred because of how he lives his life. He is very God-centered. He repeats the mantra, “I love you, God,” countless times a day. He blesses every person he encounters with a silent affirmation and a smile.

David is completely happy with his life and our life together. We both feel so blessed to have experienced this 2020 miracle and are very grateful.

PRAYER OF LOVE

Divine spirit that is love joins us together as one. Creator and creation are joined in love through all eternity. All humanity is bound by the thread of love that connects all sentient beings, all that moves upon the earth and through the sky as one.

Claiming our oneness, we live life awakened to the awareness of the deep, abiding love of God.

We hold love as our divine inheritance and remind ourselves often that God is love, therefore we are love. Love is our countenance as we walk through the moments and hours of our days. We embody love that sees good until good is what appears in our lives.

We hold a posture of love by opening our hearts with compassion and loving-kindness for our world and all its inhabitants.

We are grateful for love that is made manifest through God expressing as creation. We let it be so, so that it can become.

—Rev. Karen Romestan