

## 2018 Imagination and Walt Disney

This week, the power of Imagination is the 6<sup>th</sup> power in our series which means we are half-way through the 12 spiritual faculties Charles Fillmore described. He was enthusiastic about the “powers” concept giving each power a center location in the body; assigning a disciple to the power; and writing about each power. We have to understand that this is simply one way to look at how our divinity expresses through us. Foundational to Unity’s teachings and other New Thought faith lines is the idea that within each and every human being is the spark of the divine. Because our divinity expresses **through** our humanity, there are a number of influences that affect how and to what extent we express our divinity. The paradox of being is that we are both human and divine and Unity teaches that Jesus was our example and embodiment of how to hold the tension of two natures in oneness. Most of the time it feels more like ping pong for me—I’m divine, no I’m human. I’m One with Spirit, no I am trapped in a body. Still there are moments when I can sense my divinity within the expression of my humanity. Moments when I can distinguish one of the powers Fillmore describes and identify multiple powers in collaboration as I move through some activity. So today we’ll play with imagination.

Fillmore describes this power in the Revealing Word as “the imaging faculty. With our imagination we lay hold of ideas and clothe them with substance. What [one] pictures or imagines in mind will eventually appear in body [and physical world]. In the communication of God with man, the imaging power of the mind plays an important part. It receives divine ideas and reflects their character to the consciousness.”

Imagination does not operate in isolation. Last week we talked about free will and the directive, executive faculty of the mind that pivots and can focus on the divine or the material, sense consciousness. Imagination can manifest as dreams or nightmares. Linking with the faith faculty allows imagination to move an idea from fantasy to manifestation.

So let’s look a bit at how imagination might express through our humanity. I believe people with an active power of imagination show up as curious. Children seem to have the most immediate and uninhibited access to all their 12 faculties and children are curious. Take a child to a new environment and watch them explore—touching, examining and usually tasting everything!

As we get older we compile a list of experiences we didn't like or that were painful and we put a damper on our curiosity. I won't try something new because I might not like it. I know enough, ego says. I don't need to explore new stuff. I have to say that I have been inspired by my elders: my mother, my grandparents, Phil Pierson and others who into their 80's and 90's continue to be curious about what is current and developing. My mother, at 89, recently admonished one of my younger cousins who was complaining about not knowing contact information for something—"Well look it up on the internet!" She has a computer and email address and uses both. Without curiosity, life becomes boring and our imagination doesn't have much to work with.

Which brings me to another expression of imagination—creativity. Creativity is one of our core values here at ULV! This is what we say: We are individual expressions of the unlimited life-giving energy of Divine Mind. With infinite possibilities available, we shape our world and our experience. Webster says creativity is *the ability to make new things or think of new ideas*. So where do the new ideas originate? Where does our inspiration arise? The easy answer is Divine Mind. Source of all ideas is the One Mind. Again, remember last week we talked about Atomic Energy and the impact of the power of Will. The easy answer does not contemplate the *divine idea* moving through our humanity, subject to the pivoting focus of free will. As we "clothe the idea with substance" with our minds, we shape the manifestation that appears in our bodies and world.

If you get intimidated by the idea of creativity, think of it as simply arranging what exists or discovering something that already exists. Michelangelo described sculpting David as just cutting away the marble from the statue that was already there. When we discover something new, it was already there. What is new is our awareness of the thing. We combine things in new ways to produce something new but the materials are already there. Whether we are carving wood or cooking dinner or writing a sermon or discovering the cure for cancer, we are accessing what exists and applying our touch of arranging and seeing something new. That's the power of imagination at work in creativity!

It is that power to visualize possibilities that is an amazing tool of our imagination. Positive visualization has been very popular in Unity for many years. Many of us have created "Vision Boards" to bring forth into manifestation the desires of our heart.

The body cannot tell the difference between what we see and sense awake and what is vividly imagined whether we are awake or asleep. If we talk about a delicious meal long enough, everyone will salivate and hear that growling in their stomach. If you are falling off a cliff or lose control of the car, your body races into action. The outcome is much better if it is merely a dream you must awaken from.

I think Jesus was talking about the power of imagination in John 4:35 when he said, “Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.” Use your imagination and apply your faith and see what manifests. Kind of good advice.

Fillmore said back in his definition that the image we hold in mind comes into expression in our lives. Clearly the power of will is important so that our images are aligned with our unlimited divinity and not the limits of sense consciousness and ego mind. We must maintain awareness and mindfulness to check in with the images we are holding. Do we hold an image of what is possible co-creating with an unlimited Source or do we settle for what is probable, easily attainable or already here? Do we see potential or limits and obstacles? Because we grow into the image we hold in mind. That is the law of attraction and the process of clothing an idea with substance. Which leads me to the shaper of American imagination—Walt Disney.

Think of a fairy tale castle with fireworks in the background and what do you think of? Disney! If I say, “M I C” part of you might hear in your head “C you real soon” or you might hear “K E Y”. Many of us have grown up entertained by Disney movies, cartoon characters, television shows and visits to Disneyland and Disney World. Disney was born December 5, 1901 outside Chicago but grew up on a farm in Marceline, Missouri. When the farm failed, the family moved in to Kansas City where he helped his father deliver newspapers and learned to love trains with his uncle, a train engineer. Walter Elias didn’t have a particularly easy or simple path to success or even to animation. You may not know that his older brother Roy was involved in Disney’s work from the beginning and served as the first CEO of Disney Studios. Walt was creative and Roy provided the financial stability that allowed Walt to be creative. Surviving his brother Walt by several years, Roy oversaw the completion of Disney World in Florida but named the park in his brother’s honor.

Walt Disney's imagination included a passion for improving technology that continued throughout his career. Steamboat Willy was the first animated film to include sound. He combined animation and live action. He envisioned an amusement park that offered education as well as entertainment for everyone in the family and was an avid conservationist. In July of 1955 the Disney brothers opened Disneyland in California. It was a disaster! Private invitations had been counterfeited and thousands showed up to a park unprepared for those numbers. Adjustments were made and soon investments were multiplied tenfold. Disney productions endured the wars and during the Great Depression. During WW II, 94% of the Disney Studio work was for the government. Walt Disney, the staff and studio work have garnered 48 Academy Awards and 7 Emmy's. Truly Walt Disney's imagination has shaped American culture for decades.

So is it all a good thing? If you research you will find various criticisms and evidence that Walt was anti-Semitic and racist. For a time men with facial hair or long hair were refused entrance to the Park due to "failing to meet the dress code." Billy Jean King coined the phrase "See it to be it" referring to the need for girls to see women excelling in leadership and sports. Disney may have single-handedly created what we might call the "Princess Problem". What young children saw were females who were tasked with overcoming obstacles to look pretty and wait for a handsome man to kiss them or bring them a shoe. This does NOT sound like a career plan! The goal presented was to become a princess and you didn't get to be a princess without becoming the wife of a prince. I'm not sure even Megan Markle is entirely thrilled with how that is working out.

Since the death of Walt Disney, Disney Studios has taken on the responsibility of role models and presented young women with Mulan, Pocahontas, and Tiana. Still, most Disney movies involve the death of a parent, a villain and an element of a fantasy happy ending.

So here is the thing, imagination allows for new possibilities to be made manifest and it is up to **us** to direct the power of imagination with will and faith. I can imagine the best and the worst possibilities. I can imagine limitless possibilities and I can imagine the tightest of limits on my potential. The images we hold attract the energy of substance to come to fruition. The world is alive with imagination! Children are being exposed to amazing possibilities regardless of gender or race or ethnicity or religion.

Adults **and** children have outlets for their curiosity and creativity in new technology and avenues previously thought impossible. If you want to see possibilities unfolding, google “TED talks by teens”. TED stands for Technology, Entertainment and Design. When Steve Gunn gave his TED talk in the Lehigh Valley, I was impressed by the adults, but you kind of expect them to have figured some stuff out. I was just blown away by the youth.

If you are not excited by the power of imagination in YOU, I would like to poke you awake! I think the story of Walt Disney is a cautionary tale that invites us to consider both the potential and danger of how we use our imagination. Right now, your imagination may be creating a box you don't need to be in. Turn your thoughts around and you may not only discover a way out of the box, but a beautiful new world you are creating. Allow will, wisdom, love and faith to partner with your imagination so it is guided in a way that blesses you and the world around; so it is guided confidently into manifestation instead of withering in the land of fantasy. If you don't think you have any imagination any more, spend some time with a child. I am sure some of our parents would be happy to let you spend some time with one of their children. That is the beautiful gift of diversity in community. If we take time to connect with others in our community even in this room we can see the world through the eyes of others and open our hearts and minds to new possibilities. Don't let your spiritual powers go unused!

**Divine IMAGINATION expresses through me as curiosity, creativity and visions of possibility.**