

## 2018 Renunciation and Prohibition

Today's power seems to go by lots of names. Elimination, Release, Renunciation. It is about letting go! Which is not our nature. Our Western culture trains us to hang on, accumulate, amass wealth and awards and houses and cars and maybe boats. Letting go often brings change, another of our NOT so favorite things. Letting go reminds us of loss. No one wants to lose anything but weight! But how many of us have ever opened the refrigerator door and been overwhelmed by a distinctly funky odor? Wow, that wasn't there yesterday! Whew! And sometimes we shut the door. Maybe it was just my nose. Later we open the door again and the funk is still there. Worse maybe. We may spend a few moments rationalizing how busy we've been and there are other people in the house and on and on. We shut the door again. Unfortunately we continue to need stuff in the refrigerator and so, finally, we have to begin to search for the source of offensive odor and take it out. We acknowledge that 12 boxes of baking soda will not be enough; we have to find the funk and eliminate it.

The refrigerator metaphor for Unity folks also involves what's up front versus what is less obvious. As we learn more about positive thoughts and affirmations and healthy habits, when we open our refrigerator, the top shelf is full of fruits and vegetables and it's all organic and fresh and transparently displayed. Right?? When we have to begin to search for the source of the odor, we have to dig around the bottom shelves and open those unlabeled containers you can't see through. Oh, we forgot we had that in there! But the old stuff decaying is overwhelming the power of the new stuff we are trying to focus on. Out with the old to allow the new to be fully established.

We can't just breathe in. We can't accumulate oxygen without releasing the carbon dioxide. Life is flow and flow balances in with out. It pairs creating with destroying. It provides for giving and receiving. So let's dig into this idea of letting go—no matter what we call it.

Now Webster says Renunciation is a *formal rejection of something*, usually a belief or claim or a *relinquishing and abandoning* a right or title. Here is a synonym that probably alarms us: "*going without*". Charles Fillmore, in Unity's Revealing Word dictionary says Renunciation is: "A letting go of old thoughts in order that new thoughts may find place in consciousness. A healthy state of mind is attained when the thinker willingly lets go the old thoughts and takes on the new. This is illustrated by the inlet and outlet of a pool of water.

The center of renunciation, sometimes called elimination, in the lower part of the abdomen, carries forward the work of elimination of error thoughts from the mind and waste from the body.”

Often our first introduction in Unity to the power of Renunciation is “denial”. Sometimes we forget that denials must be paired with affirmations. We only have affirmations and never look for the error thoughts we currently hold; so those hidden negative thoughts continue to be counter to the positive affirmations we hope to establish in our consciousness. Fillmore says denials are: “the mental process of erasing from consciousness the false beliefs of the sense mind. Denial *clears away* belief in evil as reality and thus *makes room* for the establishing of Truth.” Sometimes I offer the explanation that we are **denying power to** the error thoughts. The thought may still rise in my consciousness from time to time but if I consistently recognize it and deny it power, ego mind and sense consciousness quits bringing it up. Notice I said, “if I consistently recognize it”. In order for our affirmation work to be effective, I have to be willing to do the denial work.

Let’s say I have a dozen post-it notes around the house that say things like: I am Healthy, Whole and Free; or I am beautiful; and I am loving. And I see these throughout the day and I keep expecting to lose weight and feel better about myself. I get frustrated because there is no change. I eat a tub of ice cream staring at the post-it that says “I am Healthy, Whole and Free”. Fresh vegetables on the top shelf and a tub of funky, moldy, stinky beans on the bottom shelf. Unnoticed and unaddressed. I have to be willing to acknowledge my thoughts of “I am not worthy” “This will never work” and “They were right, I won’t ever be \_\_\_\_\_” Until we are willing to identify and recognize these counter-productive thoughts and begin to deny these error thoughts power, they continue to act against the energy of our affirmations. Fillmore says denials should be like a “gentle sweeping away of cobwebs”. We have to be gentle with ourselves and these error thoughts. Our tendency is to try to cut them out but we end up trying to separate ourselves from parts of ourselves. Denying not their existence but their power is like gently using an eraser over and over again on a dark mark. It may always be there but it gradually is so light it stops distracting us from the new thoughts written in bold print that we go over again and again.

Forgiveness may not be an obvious expression of the power of Renunciation yet it is a transformational practice of letting go.

In the Revealing Word, Fillmore says forgiveness is: “the giving up of something. When you forgive yourself, you cease doing the things that you should not do. It is through forgiveness that true spiritual healing is accomplished. Forgiveness removes the errors of the mind, and bodily harmony results in consonance with divine law.” So when we forgive, what are we giving up? What is the error thought that we have been holding? My experience is that if I dig down into any situation in which I believe I need to forgive, I have a story that portrays me as a victim. I have a story about being powerless in relationship to another person or circumstance. I am not powerless. You are not powerless. No matter what has happened in our physical world, we retain the in dominatable power of our divinity. Forgiveness does not mean we abandon accountability for actions. Whether I am forgiving myself or someone else, whatever actions were taken or words spoken remain and there are consequences. AND, I still have the power to begin anew. I have the power to let go of my victim story and heal. I deal with the consequences from a place of personal power, not victimhood. I am responsible for my healing, my health and my actions. Forgiveness is really all about ME. I don't need the other person to know I forgive them. The changes are all within my consciousness. One of the most beautiful aspects of the tremendous shift around sexual abuse and misconduct right now is watching women and men reclaim their own power. Priests, coaches, and people with positions of worldly power are being held accountable as individuals reclaim the power of their sacred self. I really see this as a shift in consciousness that cannot be stopped by politics or the lack of personal insight of those in worldly power. I pray we all continue to support those claiming the power of their sacred self.

As forgiveness relates to healing, letting go of the funky stuff allows the healthy stuff to flourish. The less time I spend seeing myself as a victim, the more time I spend seeing myself as a powerful, loving presence in the world. Forgiveness does also ask that I spend less time being angry about what happened and more time taking positive action in support of empowering myself and others. Guess what? My body responds to my thoughts. The more my consciousness is rooted in healthy thoughts, the less discord is held in my body. How does discord show up in your body? Think about it. It is unique for each of us. And the path to health is about finding what we need to let go of and practicing a new story, new thoughts and new actions.

Denial and forgiveness are expressions in our realm of thoughts. Elimination may show up as an expression in our thoughts or in our physical realm.

As we continue to deny power to error thoughts, we eliminate the thoughts from consciousness. In the physical realm, we seek to eliminate habits and things from our environment. We change friends or jobs or activities.

Anyone addressing the challenges of addiction knows the importance of removing something from your physical life. Whether it is alcohol, drugs, gambling, shopping, video games, meaningless sexual encounters, over-eating or any of the numbing activities we find addicting to the point of interfering with living healthy lives we begin to eliminate them from our lives. Many of you are familiar with Will Bowen's campaign to eliminate complaining from our daily conversations. The idea originated with Edwene Gaines and was intended to shift our consciousness from complaint to gratitude. But eliminating anything from our physical realm brings forward one of the most difficult challenges in the power of Renunciation. We cannot legislate the changes in consciousness needed for the transformational power of letting go. You cannot **make** people stop complaining any more than you can force people to let go of an error thought they firmly believe.

Prohibition is called the "Noble Experiment" because it attempted to legislate a *morality* that viewed alcohol as the greatest evil afflicting our nation. Although there were earlier state by state attempts to restrict the production and sale of intoxicating liquor, the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920 was the first federal move to try to force abstinence on the whole nation. Using fear tactics during WWI, the brewing industry, largely German based, was portrayed as an enemy within our borders. Pabst, Schlitz, Blatz and Miller were lifted up as aligned with our European enemy. This led the way to the success by the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League to get a constitutional amendment. None of the promoted benefits of prohibition had materialized. Crime rates rose steadily during prohibition and the US spent 300 million dollars in enforcement while losing 11 billion in excise taxes. 1,000 people per year died from drinking tainted illegal liquor. Restaurants closed, unable to survive without the sale of liquor revenue and entertainment revenue fell. The country also experienced the Great Depression during Prohibition years. By 1932, Franklin Roosevelt was elected on a platform to repeal Prohibition. In 1933 the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment repealed the ban on the production, sale and distribution of intoxicating liquor. Today 10 states still have counties within them that prohibit the sale of liquor. Vacationing in Arkansas and having a glass of wine takes some planning! Today debates about legalizing marijuana seem to have replaced banning alcohol. Our society is struggling with the opioid crisis and the toll of other addictions on the fabric of our society.

We debate the morality of women choosing to terminate a pregnancy or an individual seeking to control when and how they die; and we seek to legislate a moral choice on all individuals.

From Unity consciousness, it makes perfect sense to say “I am healthy, whole and free”. Each of us must know the truth to bring it into manifestation. No one can legislate the consciousness needed for healthy choices. Taxes on cigarettes and sugary drinks do not end consumption. “All people are created equal and are entitled to equal freedoms and rights”. Events in the world indicate that shift in consciousness is not established. We enact laws of nondiscrimination and civil rights and still individuals act in oppressive ways.

I invite you to breathe out. Exhale with focused intention and begin to acknowledge the power of Renunciation. What people or circumstances in your life do you give your power to? What might happen if you denied the idea that other people or circumstances had the power to limit your divine power? However those error thoughts show up in your mind’s inside conversation—stop giving the error thoughts space in your head. Let go of the error thought before it begins to expand in your mind and affirm the truth of your being. Are there habits, practices or circumstances you need to eliminate from your life and daily routine? Consider the shift in consciousness necessary and then take action. Affirm “I am healthy, whole and free” AND eliminate sugary drinks from the shopping cart and refrigerator. Finally, open your heart and mind to forgiveness. It is one more way to let go of limiting thoughts we hold about ourselves. Your divine self is perfectly whole, never wounded, never damaged and with infinite strength and beauty. Know that truth and release any story that portrays you as weak, broken and powerless. Turn your energy away from anger and into moving forward towards a world of mutual respect, love and peace. Know that vulnerable is neither weak nor broken.

No one can make anyone else let go. We can lift up the truth to one another and support each other in overcoming the fear of letting go of the stories and error thoughts that seem to be in our very dna. We can hold a light as others find their own light in the darkness. We can celebrate the power of renunciation that allows us to free ourselves from the chains we have created.

Exhale once more as we affirm: **Divine Renunciation expresses through me as denial, forgiveness and elimination.**