

UNITY CHURCH OF SUN LAKES
APRIL 28, 2013 SERMON

BY REV. PAULA T. WEBB

A number of years ago I was at a local resort to perform a wedding. As I waited for the ceremony to begin, the Wedding Coordinator and I struck up a conversation. Initially she was interested in what types of couples I usually married ~ were they interfaith or divorced and so forth. As the conversation wound down, she got quiet and then asked me if I thought that one person could make any difference in our world today. She went on to describe all the civil wars across the planet, the economic crisis here in the U.S., and the unfortunate abuse of animals which was close to her heart. As she searched my face intently for some sort of relief from her obvious emotional turmoil, I have to admit her question took me rather by surprise.

Her question took me by surprise because I don't see the world that way. I don't see our planet as full of gloom and doom at all. However, relating my beliefs about the subject in a short sentence or two to this young woman to possibly ease her turmoil I realized would be a bit challenging! So, I simply asked her if anyone had ever smiled at her while in line at the grocery store ~ and she replied yes of course, and a smile appeared on her face as she remembered the experience or number of experiences. I asked her if having a total stranger smile at her at the time had made her feel good ~ and she said absolutely! So, I said to her, why not keep that nice thought and memory in your mind, instead of focusing on the rest of what goes on in the world? She seemed rather surprised for a moment, and then said, you know, you're right, that makes sense! And, she walked away, I am assuming, with a brighter frame of mind.



Later on that day after my duties as Officiant were done and I headed for home, I thought to myself, can one person really make a difference in this complex world of ours? And I had to admit, that yes I do think that one person makes a difference. And here is how each one of us can!

First, I do not watch the news on a regular basis – neither does my husband [Mark Douglas](#). Why? For the most part it is just too negative. Every single news program, whether local or national is full of negative photos, negative comments ~ and so I [we] choose to not fill my mind and heart with someone else's negative perspective. Now that does not mean I don't know what is happening in the world, as a matter of fact, I feel I probably have a better understanding of what is happening than others. Here's why.

The mere fact that information is now pretty much instantaneous means that each and every day, each and every one of us is able to become more aware, more knowledgeable, and to personally evolve ourselves ~ if we so choose. And, we can choose to continue to evolve in a happy and positive manner, by creating our own opinions and thought processes! This is the beauty of our God-given right of Free Will. Meaning, we do not have to subscribe to anyone else's opinion of anything ~ and that is how we make a difference ~ first by our own thoughts, and then by our own actions individually and collectively.

One thing to keep in mind is that just because someone or anyone else may not choose to evolve into a spiritually higher thought process or being, that has nothing to do with my energy, or my perspective ~ so to spend any amount of time worrying about what someone else's perspective would be literally a waste of time and energy ~ energy that can be spent on evolving more spiritually myself.

So I choose to believe the following:

- *I believe in the best of people*
- *I know there are many people working to better our planet and*
- *I don't listen to anyone else's negativity!*

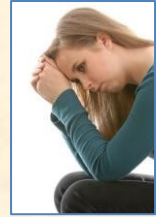
In other words, if I hear a news story that I feel is important, instead of just taking it as gospel shall we say, I will research the story myself and not rely on maybe just that one reporter or columnist to give me the details surrounding it. Why? That's simple. By researching the story myself, I am taking an active interest from my own, possibly more positive perspective and I then become part of the solution, not a continuation of the problem. In other words, I am now sending out my positive energy into the Universe, to God, to assist in alleviating any world problems ~ simply by my positive thoughts.

Let me quote this short excerpt by Ernest Holmes from one of his first recitals when he was around six years old:

*You'd scarce expect one of my age
To speak in public on the stage
And if I chance to fall below
Demosthenes and Cicero,
Don't view me with a critic's eye
But pass my imperfections by.*

In other words, think positively, no matter what information may be in front of you. ***Your positive energy counts!***

A couple years ago there was a news story about a young woman who was making a difference in her town. I don't remember what city it was or what television station it aired on; I just remember it was a story set somewhere on the East Coast. Several years before the story aired about her, this young woman had become very depressed; she felt that her life was a failure at the tender age of 27, and one night had decided to end it all. Her boyfriend had left her for a more "sophisticated" and thinner gal, her boss refused to promote her because he said she wasn't "management" material, she had few friends because she worked long hours trying to further her career which now seemed pointless, and the church she attended at the time gave her little to no solace as to how to be happy. And so she made the decision to commit suicide and end her own suffering with the mindset that no one would care or miss her anyway.



She was very methodical in her planning; she gave away her dog, her plants, emptied out her refrigerator, cleaned her apartment and even made out a will and wrote a letter to her parents. She decided the easiest way to complete this type of task would be to overdose with sleeping pills. And, finally, on her chosen day to leave this physical world, she went to the grocery store to purchase alcohol to drink with the sleeping pills to speed up the process of her suicide.

As she stood in line waiting to pay for her alcohol, she noticed an older gentleman in line ahead of her, about the age of her grandfather, staring at her. She opened her mouth to quickly tell him to quit staring, and he smiled at her and apologized for staring. He went on to say she was one of the prettiest young ladies he had ever seen and that was why he had been staring. As her mind went into shock and disbelief at the thought of someone thinking she was attractive, the gentleman also said that he could tell she was a good person and wished her all the best. He paid for his purchases and walked out of the store. After paying for her alcohol, the young woman walked out to the parking lot, half-hoping she would see the man again, but she did not. Upon returning home, she turned on the television, poured herself a drink and chuckled at the impossibility that she might be pretty. After several drinks she got up, walked into the bathroom and looked in the mirror; and said to herself, I guess I am kind of cute after all. Returning to the living room, she sat back down on the couch and fell asleep.

The next morning she awoke, and realized that she had not followed through on the task that had seemed so important the day before. The entire bottle of sleeping pills was still sitting on the coffee table, untouched. And, other than having a small headache from drinking the night before, the first thought that came to her mind as she made a cup of tea was how amazing it was that a total stranger thought she was pretty. She decided to put off the suicide, at least for the moment. From that moment on however, she kept that thought in her mind, and little by little worked her way back (as my mother used to say), into the 'land of the living' and eventually dismissed any thoughts of suicide from her mind. The news story that I saw featuring her recounted this event in her life; and how she went on to create a local clothes consignment shop for less-advantaged high-school girls to purchase prom dresses for very low prices.

So here we have a woman that is currently providing much-needed assistance to others, simply because a total stranger gave her a compliment during her darkest hour. *Is that not one person making a difference?* First the gentleman telling her she was pretty and a good person, and then the young woman helping less-advantaged young girls ~ both of them individuals, both of them strangers to each other and yet both of them made, rather MAKE a difference.

The point I am getting at here - is that you never know what kind of day anyone else is having and so a simple smile or nod of the head can make all the difference in not only one life, but many!

Now you may be sitting here thinking to yourself hmmm, I have had a similar experience, right? Most of us have. I know I have had days where my Spirit is low, and then someone will allow me to pull out in front of them in a long line of traffic, shortening my trip significantly. A total stranger. A total stranger who did not have to stop and let me go before them. A stranger who let me “go before them” ~ possibly to lead the way? Possibly to lead me on my way? A new way, or a new path? Because isn't that what happens when someone is kind to us we are simply thrust onto a new thought process even if for only a moment or two? Our thoughts shift to positive ones, our actions may lead us to be kind to another, and our energy radiates the Universal Love that is within all of us again even if only momentarily ~ it still makes a difference.

Let's look at it this way. Every single atom is alive due to what? Energy. The entire Universe is one big field of energy. Every atom is, in essence created and creative energy, and since each one of us ~ and by that I mean every living thing, human, animal, plant ~ is made up of billions of atoms created by God, would it not make sense that our energy, individually and collectively, in essence His energy, can make a difference? Of course it can!

As we close this here today I will leave you with one of my favorite poem by Anna L. Derschell, “I Am a Part of All That's Good” from the book Unity's Best Loved Poems:

“In moments rare there comes to me a vision unexpected; I clearly see within my soul the Universe reflected. I am a part of all that's good, I feel I know no limit; the God in all stands forth so clear, no fancied ills can dim it.

No matter what life's future hours may hold of earthborn sadness, I know there comes to me in Truth a heritage of gladness, that far transcends all grosser things, I've caught the vision glorious; we are a part of all that's good, and good shall be victorious.”

And so it is!

© Rev. Paula T. Webb