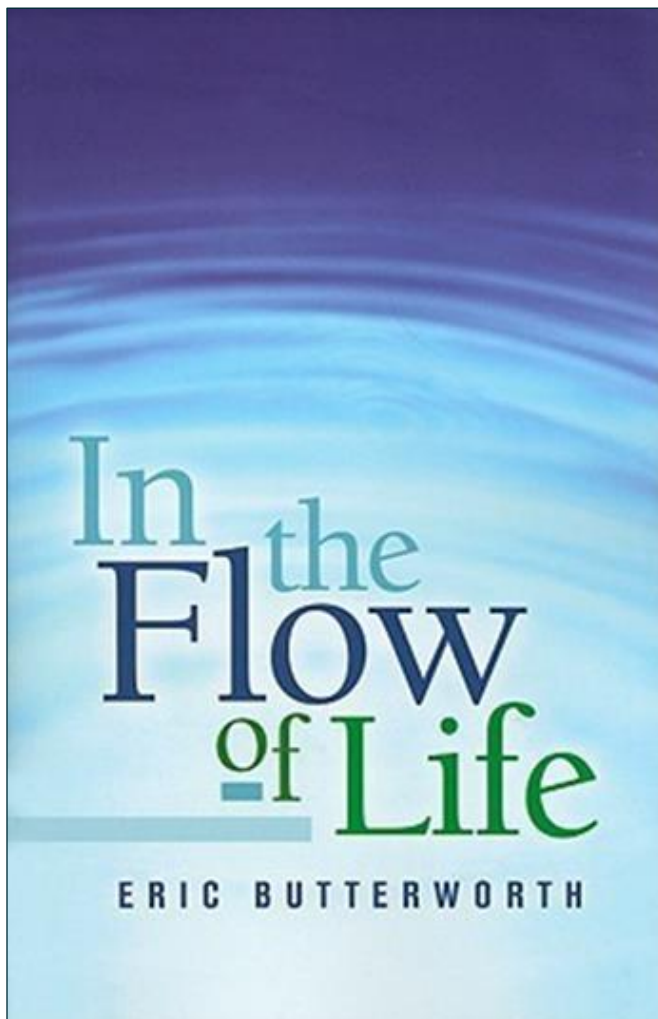


Unity of Fairfax presents...



Unity Awakening 2024: *In the Flow of Life*



Workbook by
Rev. Russell Heiland

A seven-week series
based on
In the Flow of Life
by Eric Butterworth

September 22
to
November 3,
2024

Introduction



Welcome to Unity Awakening 2024!

Dear friends,

This year marks our 11th year of the annual Unity Awakening series of Sunday talks and small groups that highlight Unity or New Thought teachings. No two seasons of Unity Awakening have ever been alike until now. Sort of. Let me explain.

This is an election year, and I was asked by a member of Unity of Fairfax how I was going to address the political climate. As a community whose mission is “Aligned with the indwelling Christ, we co-create a world that works for everyone” it seems that there is a great deal of energy being expended in the nation today in the opposite direction towards division and separation. Hmm, how to balance the divine ideas of “Truth” with the lived experience of “facts”? Using the tool of spiritual discernment, I took this question into prayer and was guided to revisit prior Unity Awakening material where I found the answer—*In The Flow of Life* by Eric Butterworth.

Eric Butterworth was, and still remains, one of the greatest ministers in the Unity movement. All of his books are worth reading, and all of his lectures are worth listening to again and again. He took Truth ideas and made the approachable and practicable for anyone.

My guidance to revive *In The Flow of Life* for Unity Awakening 2024 stems from recognizing that if we want to manifest “a world that works for everyone,” we, ourselves, need to be sure we are releasing any negative and unhelpful ideas that prevent us from being in the divine flow of omnipresent good. As we do that, then we will find opportunities for peace-making, healing, and meaningful impacts in the world around us. Our anxiety will shift to empowerment, and our fear will be transformed into love. There’s nothing to lose and everything to gain by being “in the flow of life.”

If you were with us in 2013, you will enjoy discovering how you have grown and changed in the intervening years. If you are new to the work of Eric Butterworth you will no doubt be delighted and inspired by your engagement with the material—and especially if you participate in small groups.

Yours in the awakening,

Rev. Russell Heiland

Rev. Russell Heiland

The “Flow” of Unity Awakening 2024

.....



| Week | Date | Sunday Message | Read |
|------|-------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 9/22 | In the Flow and in the Know | Preface, Introduction, Chapter 1 |
| 2 | 9/29 | Whole and Holy | Chapter 2 |
| 3 | 10/6 | Affluenza – It’s Contagious! | Chapter 3 |
| 4 | 10/13 | To Get Along, Grow Along | Chapters 4 & 5 |
| 5 | 10/20 | Giving UP | Chapter 6 |
| 6 | 10/27 | Excelsior! | Chapters 7 & 8 |
| 7 | 11/3 | Behold, I Make All Things New Again | Chapter 9 |

NOTE: Throughout the text, there are references to pages from *In the Flow of Life*. This refers to:

Eric Butterworth

In the Flow of Life

Unity School of Christianity

1982 10th printing, 2011

Getting Started!



*Unity of Fairfax Vision:
We envision a world of
peace, abundance and
respect for all creation.*

*Unity of Fairfax Mission:
Aligned with the
indwelling Christ, we co-
create a world that works
for everyone.*

Awaken is verb conveying a variety of meanings such as “to waken” or “to rouse.” It can also mean or “to stir up and excite.” It comes from the Old English verb *awæcnan*, meaning “to spring into being” and, less often, “to wake up.”¹

Describe a time in which you have experienced an awakening—a springing into being—of some sort in your life. Be prepared to share this experience with your group.

¹ “awaken” and “waken.” *Dictionary.reference.com Dictionary.com - Free Online English Dictionary. 2013, <<http://www.dictionary.reference.com>> (16 July 2013).*

Unity Awakening 2024

Week 1 - SEPTEMBER 22



In the Flow of Life, by Eric Butterworth

Reading for this week: Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 1 – “Living Life from Within Out”

Welcome to the first week of your seven-week small group study! In the first meeting, your facilitator will lead you in a conversation of group dynamics and practices including such things as opening and closing prayer, late arrival and absences, refreshments, restroom breaks and overall facilitation. Your active participation in the discussion will enrich this experience for you and the other members of your group.

Group members will be at different levels of comfort with small group processing. Below you will find a listing of group agreements with space to add any others that your group creates. Following these agreements will foster a sense of trust that will add to the vitality of your group.

Our Small Group Agreements

The intention for this Small Group Exploration is:

We will start and end on time, meeting _____ (day) from _____ to _____ for the next _____ weeks.

We agree to be a _____ (open/closed) group for the duration of this agreement. (“Open” means allowing new people to join the group at any time during the seven weeks.)

We agree to the following values (check those the group agrees on):

☐ **Confidentiality:** I will keep anything that is said strictly confidential.

☐ **Attendance:** I will give priority to the group meetings for the agreed number of weeks.

☐ **Acceptance:** We accept each other unconditionally. We are not here to “fix” each other.

☐ **Feelings:** We respect each other’s feelings.

☐ **Okay to Pass:** No one is required to share.

☐ **Okay to Disagree:** I accept that others may not hold the same view.

☐ **Participation:** I speak for myself only, and I listen to others attentively.

☐ **Balance:** We seek a balance in our sharing times. Everyone is welcome to share, and no one dominates.

☐ **Prayer Support:** I am willing to pray for others.

Other agreement:

Other agreement:

With God as my guide, I, _____ intend to uphold the above agreement to the best of my ability.

Group Members

This information is confidential. Please use it only for intra-group communication.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Name: Phone: Email: | Name: Phone: Email: |
| Name: Phone: Email: | Name: Phone: Email: |
| Name: Phone: Email: | Name: Phone: Email: |
| Name: Phone: Email: | Name: Phone: Email: |
| Name: Phone: Email: | Name: Phone: Email: |

“It has been said that the starting point in spiritual realization is a right understanding of that One designated as the Almighty.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 9.
What is your present understanding of “that One designated as the Almighty?”

“Let’s examine the prevailing attitudes about this thing called life. There are two basic views: (1) We come into the world as empty creatures who go forth in life to be filled. Life for us at any time is the sum of what has happened to us and what we have been able to accumulate in wisdom, experience, or things. (2) We come into the world as living souls of infinite potentiality to be discovered and released, for life is lived from within-out.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 11.

What is your present belief “about this thing called life?” Explain why you resonate more with the first or the second point.

“Emerson could not understand why we make life such a problem by frustrating the flow of good. He said, ‘Our life might be much easier and simpler than we make it; the world might be a happier place than it is; there is no need of struggles, convulsions, and despairs, of the wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth. We miscreate our own evils. We interfere with nature.’” *In the Flow of Life*, pp. 114–15

Why do you agree or disagree with Emerson’s statement?

Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is within you.” *Luke 17:20–21 NRSV*

What does this Scripture verse mean to you?

An historical note about the connection between Unity and psychology:

Charles Fillmore, co-founder of the Unity movement, along with his wife Myrtle Fillmore, was an ardent student of the newly emerging field of study called psychology. At its inception Unity, along with other New Thought teachings, focused on the power of the mind and its influence in bodily and worldly affairs. Early in Unity's history and in the history of psychology, the terms conscious mind, subconscious mind and superconscious mind began to be used with regularity in roughly the same way. The conscious mind referred to those things that we are conscious that we know, feel, remember, think, etc. The subconscious mind referred to the storehouse of all memories, feelings, experience. For the most part, an individual is not consciously aware of what is in the subconscious. The contents of the subconscious are revealed in dreams, instincts, psychological tests, hypnosis, neuroses and "slips of the tongue," to name a few. The superconscious mind, in Unity, is often referred to as Christ Consciousness—that highest and best expression of our true selves. Psychologically speaking, it is the spiritual or transcendent part of human consciousness.

*"Life is mind over matter...if you don't mind, it doesn't matter."
~attributed to many individuals*

*"The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind."
~Khalil Gibran*

This brief note is just that, a brief explanatory note. It is offered here as ancillary information to support Butterworth's discourse on consciousness in Chapter 1 of *In the Flow of Life*. Please note that different authors and teachers may have variations in their operating definitions of these three important terms. If you have questions about the usage of a term, be sure to ask for an explanation or check to see if the written material provides a glossary.

"...if we think health or abundance, we do not create these things. There is no way that man can create these things. There is no way that man can create health. It is a flow or "flowering" of divine life. When the mind is stayed on the God-thought of wholeness, we are synchronized with the flow of life. When we think abundance, we are synchronized with the flow of abundance. We do not create it nor do we start or stop the flow. We simply accept it, giving our 'consent' to its natural flow. This is what the presence of God really is—the life of God present in us an inexorable flow."
In the Flow of Life, page 24

How does one give “consent” to the flow? Cite examples where you have given consent to this flow.

“An affirmation of Truth is not intended to make something true. It is an effective means of synchronizing our consciousness with the flow of life.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 25.

I am in the flow of life!

Unity Awakening 2024

Week 2 - September 29



In the Flow of Life, by Eric Butterworth
Reading for this week: Chapter 2 – “The Healing Stream”

Insights from last week’s discussion. Describe your insights or “a-ha’s” based on last week’s meeting.

On page 31 of *In the Flow of Life*, Butterworth presents the story of “casting the nets on the right side of the boat” (found in John 21) as a living parable.

Share how it might be considered a parable of hope.

“The scientists have found that the healthiest people are those who have habitual attitudes that make them impervious to social situations and surroundings.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 33.

How do you interpret this scientific finding from personal experience?

“All God’s blessings are for every child of the Father, and each individual should learn to receive direct from his indwelling source. Every individual has to live his own life and draw for himself upon the life, substance, health, and strength that are waiting to be brought forth. No one can eat another’s food for him, or breathe for him; neither can one person express the indwelling life and health for another. Each one of us must draw upon the source of these things for himself. Blessed are we when we recognize that this is the way of receiving, and do it.”²

Myrtle Fillmore, co-founder of the Unity movement with her husband Charles Fillmore, was no stranger to illness and disease. Both her mother and grandmother died around the age of 40 from tuberculosis. In 1886, Myrtle was struggling with the illness herself, but while attending New Thought classes taught by E.B. Weeks of the Illinois Metaphysical College, she heard the affirmation, “I am a child of God and therefore I do not inherit sickness.” It made all the difference. She set about praying, affirming and speaking loving and positive words to the life centers in her body and in two years she was healed. She went on to live vibrantly another 45 years.

Have you witnessed, or do you know of, a healing or healings in which conventional medical techniques were *not* involved? If so, how do you explain them?

² Myrtle Fillmore, *Myrtle Fillmore's Healing Letters*, Unity Books; Unity Classic Library edition, 2006, pp.25-26.

There's a story told about Charles Fillmore in which he was asked, "Mr. Fillmore, if you fell down and broke your arm, what would you do?" Fillmore replied, "I would look at my arm and say, 'be thou made whole!'" The man then asked, "Well, what would you do if it weren't instantly healed?" Fillmore responded, "I would go the doctor to have it set."

In Unity, we place no limits on the ways in which healing can be experienced. Have you witnessed, or do you know of, a healing or healings in which conventional medical treatment *was* involved? If so, how do you explain them?

In discussing "The Healing Stream of Life," Butterworth introduces the Latin term "*vismedicatrix naturae*" by defining it as "'the healing power of nature.'" *In the Flow of Life*, page 37.

Consider these words from Alan C. Logan and Eva M. Selhub in the abstract to their article entitled “*Vis Medicatrix: does nature ‘minister to the mind’?*”

“The healing power of nature, *vis medicatrix naturae*, has traditionally been defined as an internal healing response designed to restore health. Almost a century ago, famed biologist Sir John Arthur Thomson provided an additional interpretation of the word nature within the context of *vis medicatrix*, defining it instead as the natural, non-built external environment. He maintained that the healing power of nature is also that associated with mindful contact with the animate and inanimate natural portions of the outdoor environment. A century on, excessive screen-based media consumption, so-called screen time, may be a driving force in masking awareness of the potential benefits of nature. With global environmental concerns, rapid urban expansion, and mental health disorders at crisis levels, diminished nature contact may not be without consequence to the health of the individual and the planet itself. In the context of emerging research, we will re-examine Sir J. Arthur Thomson’s contention that the healing power of the nature-based environment—green space, forests and parks in particular—extends into the realm of mental health and vitality.”³

Have you experienced “the healing power of nature?” If so, please share with your group.

“Whether the method employed is medication or meditation, one can only cooperate in opening the mind or body processes to the ceaseless flow of the healing stream.”
In the Flow of Life, page 38.

³ Logan, A.C. & Selhub E.M. “Vis Medicatrix: does nature ‘minister to the mind’?” *Biopsychosoc Med.*, 6:11. doi: 10.1186/1751-0759-6-11, April 2012.

“...it can be confidently stated of any person, no matter what the condition, ‘You can be healed.’ The means employed may be many and varied, but the reason for the healing is one: the unimpeachable wholeness of the universe. You *can* be healed because you are whole.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 39

This may seem like a bold statement. When you read it, what thoughts and feelings do you experience?

Metaphysical Malpractice:

Are We Responsible for All Situations in our Life?

by Paul Hasselbeck, Unity Institute and Seminary, Unity Village, MO

Many in the midst of an illness or a trauma have heard the question, “What are you holding in consciousness to have manifested this?” And, it is odd that the same question is rarely asked when things are going well or something good is accomplished. What is going on here? Since what we focus on increases, it certainly would be more productive to focus on how consciousness is manifesting good in our lives.

Plain and simple, asking what is in another’s consciousness in the midst of problematic events and experiences is metaphysical malpractice by well-

intentioned, if misguided, individuals. The question arises out of the Law of Mind Action, which states, “thoughts held in mind produce after their kind.” What we hold in consciousness can “out-picture” in our bodies and lives.

Metaphysical Guilt

Often one cannot know if it was his/her own thought or a thought held in collective consciousness having its way. A better question to consider with someone in the midst of illness or trauma is, “what is the most supportive and positive response I can make to this situation?” Part of that response is to hold the situation and all concerned in prayer knowing the truth that everyone is already whole and perfect.

Asking ourselves the question, “What are we holding in our own consciousness?” during the good, bad and ugly in our lives can be very useful if not used to turn on ourselves resulting in metaphysical guilt. Metaphysical guilt arises when people use the Law of Mind Action to beat themselves up for some event or physical distress in their lives. We humbly suggest that each person use this Law productively, knowing thought held in mind closely aligned with divine ideas produce life-enhancing results.

Inner Goodness

Self-awareness and self-knowledge arise out of examining what is held in consciousness. Knowing where we are can help us to determine what we have to change in our consciousness to get what we desire. This is much like a geo-positioning system needs to know where it is before it can determine how to get where it wants to go.

The practice of spiritual truths and practices like the Law of Mind Action are primarily for raising one’s own consciousness and not for inflicting on others or ourselves. Spiritual truths and practices are not so much about getting outer goodies as they are about realizing inner goodness.⁴

⁴ Hasselbeck, Paul and Pierson, Phillip. “Metaphysical Malpractice: Are We Responsible for All Situations in our Life?” *Contact magazine*. April/May 2009: pages 20–21.

Describe your understanding of the terms “metaphysical malpractice” and “metaphysical guilt.” How does one avoid them?

Ohm vs. OM

In Chapter 2 on pages 39–40 of *In the Flow of Life*, Butterworth mentions Ohm’s law, a principle of electronics whose formula is $C=E/R$ (Current at the point of use is equal to the power at the source divided by the resistance of the conduit through which it flows). Put it most simply, resistance to the flow of electricity converts current into heat. It’s part of what makes electric lights glow and stove burners hot. In relation to wellness, he makes the point that resistance to the flow of life in us supports the development of illness.



In the East, the chanting of the sacred sound OM has been used for thousands of years to dissolve negative emotions and energies in the body to affect restoration of vitality. One could say that OM dissolves Ohm.

Here's a practical exercise for the group, or you may wish to try this at home: chant "OM". Some yoga classes start by chanting OM three times, some meditation groups chant OM for several minutes. Try it! Note your OM thoughts here.

"If you keep consciously in the flow, you will be guided to eat those things that the body requires. Your tastes will change so that you will begin to desire what you need and not just that which titillates the palate. You will also find unfolding in your natural eating habits a Spirit-motivated diet." *In the Flow of Life*, page 42.

Within the wellness community, opinions are far and wide about what makes for a healthy diet. Have you discovered for yourself a "Spirit-motivated diet or a plan of eating (and drinking!) that adds to your overall sense of vitality? If so, please share it with your group.

"I am a child of the universe, established eternally in the healing stream. I am strengthened, renewed, restored, and made whole in every way." *In the Flow of Life*, page 45.

It has been said that there is a difference between healing and curing. Generally speaking, healing means the restoration of wholeness, while curing means elimination of all evidence of disease. You can be healed without being cured, and cured without being healed. In your own words, explain the difference between healing and curing and what that means to you.

I am in the flow of life!

Unity Awakening 2024

Week 3 – OCTOBER 6



In the Flow of Life, by Eric Butterworth
Reading for this week: Chapter 3 – “The Reality of Affluence”

Insights from last week’s discussion. Describe your insights or “a-ha’s” based on last week’s meeting.

“... the secret of prosperity and success is that it comes through you and not just to you.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 47–48.

How does this observation by Butterworth differ from what you may have been taught?

“The true ‘prosperity consciousness’ is consistently open to the flow, attracts opportunities both to give and receive, wisely directs the use of substance, and remains free from its burden. An important guideline: If you are worried about the money you have or don’t have, you are out of the flow.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 49.

Much has been said in recent years about the “Law of Attraction.” Charles Fillmore, in *The Revealing Word*, defined it in this way: The law that all conditions and circumstances in affairs and body are attracted to us with the thoughts we hold steadily in consciousness. What do you think about “the Law of Attraction”?

Butterworth raises the question: What is success? and says, “We have unfortunately equated it with positions and accumulations.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 49.

What is success to you? How do you measure it? Share your answers with your group.

In our culture there is chronic fear around money and supply. In Jesus' time, there were no banks, IRAs, Social Security and insurance programs. How did he address the people's fears about having their needs met? In the Sermon on the Mount, this is what he said:

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." *Matthew 6:25–33 NRSV*

What does the expression "strive first for the kingdom of God" mean to you and how does that impact your concept of affluence?

Butterworth recounts: "As one man wisely said, 'Many times I have been broke, but I have never been poor.' The economy may fluctuate in recessions and depressions, but you can never be cut off from the all-sufficient substance of Spirit. Prosperity is, thus, the law of the universe and not just a condition of the fortunate." *In the Flow of Life*, page 54.

Do you agree with Butterworth that prosperity is the law of the Universe? Have you experienced the condition of being broke but not poor? Explain.

“You may feel justified in your worry and fear over financial problems or in your resistance and resentment towards persons or forces that appear to be keeping your good from you. But the plain truth is the free flow of substance is being dammed from within, and not without... No one can keep your good from you but you.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 55

In the above quote, Butterworth is making a bold assertion! What is the “good” Butterworth is challenging you to consider?

If it is true that you block your own flow of good, how do you unblock it? What spiritual tools do you have at your disposal?

Whistle While You Work!

The dwarfs from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs had the right attitude about their day - by whistling they enjoyed accomplishing the day's tasks. They must have understood that a key to prosperity is one's attitude. Here's what Butterworth says about that:

"All work is an opportunity by which you can get into the flow of life. It doesn't matter what the nature of the work may be. What counts is the attitude with which you approach it. The support of the universe is constant in you, and the creative process is constantly seeking to flow forth through you." *In the Flow of Life*, page 57.

Have you observed how attitude impacts the working environment? Share an example.

A sixth grade teacher once gave his class the assignment to write an essay on this topic: "Take, Take, Take, but What Have I Given?" Use this sixth grade prompt and write on it for five minutes. Time yourself. Share your unedited stream of reflection with the group.

"Opportunity is wherever I am! I am in the flow, and every day I expect new things to happen that will open the way to success. I put my whole self into everything that I do and pour myself out as a blessing wherever I go." *In the Flow of Life*, page 60.

I am in the flow of life!

Unity Awakening 2024

Week 4 - OCTOBER 13



In the Flow of Life, by Eric Butterworth

Reading for this week: Chapter 4 – “The Effusion of Light”

Chapter 5 – “The Art of Getting Along”

Insights from last week’s discussion. Elaborate on the a-ha’s you are having as this group study is progressing.

*“Then God said, ‘Let there be light;’ and there was light.”
~Genesis 1:3*

*“In the same way, let your light
shine before others, so that
they may see your good works
and give glory to your Creator
in heaven.”
~Matthew 5:16*

“‘This Little Light of Mine’ is a gospel children’s song written by composer and teacher Harry Dixon Loes (1895–1965) circa 1920. Loes, who studied at the Moody Bible Institute and the American Conservatory of Music, was a musical composer, and teacher, who wrote, and co-wrote, several other gospel songs... Often thought of as a Negro spiritual, it does not, however, appear in any collection of jubilee or plantation songs from the nineteenth century ...it eventually became a Civil Rights anthem in the 1950’s and 1960’s.”⁵

Group Exercise: Check with your group to see how many verses of the song “This Little Light of Mine” they know, then, sing them! Discuss what the song means to you.

Images of light appear in all the world’s religions. Many sacred occasions center on light—whether the lighting of candles, the phase of the moon, the appearance of stars, auras and halos, etc. How has light been a part of your spiritual practice?

⁵ wikipedia.com “This Little Light of Mine,” June 10, 2013, < [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ This_Little_Light_of_Mine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/This_Little_Light_of_Mine)>, (July 22, 2013).

Why do you think light is such a prominent symbol in the world's religions and spiritual paths?

Eric Butterworth says that, "The precursors of religion are the medicine men and fortune-tellers and seers and prophets who were able, or claimed they were, to look into the future." *In the Flow of Life*, page 64.

Have you had experiences with individuals (including yourself) who were, or are, able to look into the future? Describe how, or if, you think that is possible.

Butterworth addresses a key question about spiritual guidance when he says, "Some persons puzzle over the question, 'How can one distinguish between guidance and human will?' The very question implies a duality- a sense of God 'out there' who would or could desire for you something contrary to your personal desires. Divine guidance is not an exterior force acting upon you. It is the seed of your own divinity (the Christ of you) seeking to fulfill its pattern in the outforming process of your life. God could never want for you that which you do not inherently want for yourself." *In the Flow of Life*, page 71.

If we accept that Divine guidance is the seed of our own divinity, how might this resolve the question of the difference between guidance and human will?

“You cannot really make a wrong choice, a bad decision. Any step you take will eventually lead to your good, because a negative experience encountered will produce the challenge in which to outgrow the kind of consciousness from which the choice was made, leading to a higher consciousness from which constructive steps will be taken. So a wrong choice is a right choice at the particular time. Know this, you are free from the fear of bad decisions.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 77.

Has there been a time in your life when you realized that what appeared as a “wrong choice” eventually proved to be a “right choice?” Share the experience with your group.

“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

~Matthew 22:37–40

“The art of getting along is not a psychological gimmick by which to love the unlovable and communicate with the incommunicable. It is not simply adjusting to or making the best of human perversity. The ‘getting along’ relates only secondarily to the other person. Primarily, it refers to getting along with the reality of your Self and the determination to keep the channels of consciousness free from any and all obstructions... [i]t does mean that before you try to understand an even correct conditions ‘out there,’ you need first to get yourself

consciously established in the flow of life.” *In the Flow of Life*, pages 82, 83.

Have you experienced times in your life where your inner thoughts and feelings created discord in your relationships with others? Describe.

In chapter 5 Butterworth cites a variety of examples of sudden flare-ups of anger that point to inner chaos. He says, “...you were disturbed by what happened because you were *disturbable*.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 85.

How disturbable are you? If you discover that you're easily set off, how can you use spiritual tools to restore your equilibrium?

"Expectations are premeditated resentments."
~Anonymous

Butterworth says "We tend unrealistically to expect the world to provide us with the kind of peace and security and love which can only come from within ourselves. We do not take people as they are but rather as fits or misfits

of our standards and expectations. Then we either reject them outright or we try to change them and make them over to suit our concept of what they should be. This gives rise to the erroneous idea of making friends. Normally a friend is one who agrees with you or one who you have converted to your way, and the friendship lasts as long as he or she remains converted. In Truth, you cannot make a friend, you can only *accept* a friend." *In the Flow of Life*, page 87.

Think of a friend you've had for a long time. What is it that makes the friendship viable? Share with your group.

What do you think Butterworth means when he says, "You may harbor feelings of injustice and the urge to get out from under certain burdens of life that you are convinced have been 'laid on' you by people or conditions 'out there.' You may feel that you would have no difficulty in getting along with people if you could get into an environment more conducive to friendship and love. However, the answer is not in finding the right person, but in being the right person." *In the Flow of Life*, page 93

*"Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend."
~Albert Camus*

I am in the flow of life!

Unity Awakening 2024

Week 5 - OCTOBER 20



In the Flow of Life, by Eric Butterworth
Reading for this week: Chapter 6 – “The Wellspring of Giving”

Insights from last week’s discussion. Describe your insights or “a-ha’s” based on last week’s meeting.

On Giving Kahlil Gibran

You give but little when you give of your possessions.
It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.
For what are your possessions but things you keep and guard for fear you may need them tomorrow?
And tomorrow, what shall tomorrow bring to the overprudent dog burying bones in the trackless sand as he follows the pilgrims to the holy city?
And what is fear of need but need itself?
Is not dread of thirst when your well is full, the thirst that is unquenchable?
There are those who give little of the much which they have--and they give it for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome.
And there are those who have little and give it all.
These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty.
There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward.

And there are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism.
And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy,
nor give with mindfulness of virtue;
They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space.
Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes He
smiles upon the earth.
It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through
understanding;
And to the open-handed the search for one who shall receive is joy greater than
giving.
And is there aught you would withhold?
All you have shall some day be given;
Therefore give now, that the season of giving may be yours and not your
inheritors'.
You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving."
The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture.
They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish.
Surely he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights, is worthy of all else
from you.
And he who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill his cup
from your little stream.
And what desert greater shall there be, than that which lies in the courage and the
confidence, nay the charity, of receiving?
And who are you that men should rend their bosom and unveil their pride, that
you may see their worth naked and their pride unabashed?
See first that you yourself deserve to be a giver, and an instrument of giving.
For in truth it is life that gives unto life while you, who deem yourself a giver, are
but a witness.
And you receivers... and you are all receivers... assume no weight of gratitude, lest
you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon him who gives.
Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings;
For to be over-mindful of your debt, is to doubt his generosity who has the
freehearted earth for mother, and God for father.⁶

Gilbran's poem "On Giving" is deep and thought-provoking. What thoughts and feelings does it prompt in you? Share with your group.

⁶Kahlil Gilbran, "On Giving," <<http://www.katsandogz.com/ongiving.html>> (July 22, 2013).

“True giving is not something you do to or for someone, but it is your consent to let the flow of God flow through you to that someone. Whereas the emphasis is usually on what you give to, the most important thing is what you give *from*.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 100.

What do you think Butterworth means when he says “the important thing is what you give from?”

Butterworth probably raised many a minister’s eyebrows when he wrote, “Churches have failed to teach the truth about giving, primarily because they have been concerned with their own need to receive. Now certainly an effective church is worthy of the support of its congregation, but fundamental to that effectiveness is helping people to understand the principle of giving.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 101.

What principles of giving have you learned at Unity or any other church or spiritual center? Describe.

Do you agree with Butterworth's assessment that there are "two distinct kinds of giving: (1) Giving that is *outer-centered* which depletes the giver, and (2) giving that is *inner-centered* which endows the gift with that which transcends its intrinsic value; and which so blesses the giver that...he or she is immediately and correspondingly filled from within." *In the Flow of Life*, pages 102–13.

In your own words, express your understanding of Butterworth's assessment.

"There is a lot of talk about 'positive thinking.' Normally it is considered purely in an outer-centered context, thinking positively to make things happen 'out there.' In a sense, there is no such thing as 'positive' and 'negative' thinking—only the use we choose to make of the creative power of thought. Thought is always creative." *In the Flow of Life*, page 109.

"In nature, there are neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences."

*~attributed to
Robert Ingersoll and others*

Is thought really always creative? Explain your answer.

Is it possible to have a "neutral" thought?

Is It Really Better to Give Than to Receive?

In Acts 20:35, Paul cites Jesus as saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The problem is that nowhere in the Gospels is Jesus reported to have said that; however, the expression has become common parlance. But is it true? According to researchers, yes, it is.

“A five-year study by researchers at three universities has established that providing tangible assistance to others protects our health and lengthens our lives.

This, after more than two decades of research failed to establish that the same benefits accrue to the recipients of such help.

Principal investigator Michael J. Poulin, PhD, assistant professor of psychology at the University at Buffalo, says, “This study offers a significant contribution to the research literature on the relationship between social environment and health, and specifically to our understanding of how giving assistance to others may offer health benefits to the giver by buffering the negative effects of stress.”⁷

In what ways do you give to others? How do you feel when you give, serve or volunteer?

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

~Luke 6:38

I am in the flow of life!

⁷ Pat Donovan, “Study finds it actually is better (and healthier) to give than to receive,” University at Buffalo, February 4, 2013, < <http://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2013/02/003.html> > (July 22, 2013).

Unity Awakening 2024

Week 6 - OCTOBER 27



In the Flow of Life, by Eric Butterworth

Reading for this week: Chapter 7 – “Life Comes to Pass”

Chapter 8 – “To Grow Old or Grow Onward”

Insights from last week’s discussion. When were you aware this week of giving and receiving in a more conscious way than before?

“Life is a flowing experience, and the only certainty is change. In fear and in greed, in joy and in sadness, there is a human tendency to hold on. When life is equated with things or relationships or with moments of fulfillment, the threat of their loss or change is too much to endure. Thus the discovery of the flow of life is the greatest awakening of consciousness we can achieve.” *In the Flow of Life*, pages 117–118.

Do you agree that “the greatest awakening of consciousness we can achieve” is that everything changes? Why or why not?

Butterworth writes that the attitude with which one addresses the challenges of life makes all the difference in the outcome. He goes on to say, “If you are faced with a challenge, refuse to be panic-stricken. Life has not ended for you. Life flows on. Declare for yourself: *I accept the reality of this situation, but not its permanence.* Certainly there is no point in hiding your head in the sand. The experience is there to be met. Determine that you will meet it, but on your terms. Do not let the outer happening squeeze you into its box, but open your mind to the flow of wisdom, love, and good judgment by which you can deal masterfully with it.” *In the Flow of Life*, pages 119–120.

Describe a time in your life when you had an obstacle to overcome or a challenge to meet. How did you do it?

Has a situation or challenge ever worked out for you in a seemingly miraculous manner? Describe.

“Every experience in life comes to pass because life is change. This is true not only of unhappy experiences, tragedies, and difficulties but of the happy experiences too. It is true of all worthwhile achievements.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 126.

How do you feel when you read this quote? What is that feeling telling you?

*“If you don’t like something,
change it. If you can’t change it,
change your attitude.”*
~Maya Angelou

“No matter how real or frightening a situation may be, it is still a transitory thing. Only the good is real and lasting.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 121.

Butterworth comments that, “You may pause at the close of the day, on New Year’s Eve, at graduation, or at the time of retirement and look back to view all you have done. Accept what you see as the facts of your experience, but they are not final. You are not ‘done’ yet. You still have within you a

dynamic potential for growth, and it must come to pass.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 132.

What’s next for you? The possibilities are endless!

“Life is not geared for age and deterioration. Actually, life is a dramatic process of renewal and regeneration. Medical researchers tell us that there is no physical reason that we must grow old and deteriorate, since the cells are constantly renewed and the body is never older than approximately one year. Thus there is no law of decay and death in God. God, who is life-giving, cannot at the same time be death-dealing.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 137.

What factors have shaped your understanding of the aging process. Are there some you might like to change? Share with your group.

“What are we saying? That one should live forever? No one really knows the potential of the life span of humankind. There are researchers today who are

suggesting, in theory at least, human beings can live forever. But that is not relevant to this discussion. Length of years is not important. Quality of life is what counts... The important thing is to keep alive as long as we live.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 138

Eric Butterworth makes an important point when he says, “But the important thing is not what happens to people, but what happens within them. If we are in the flow of life, we will live creatively in work or in retirement. If we are out of the flow, our life will be a study in frustration and boredom, even if we have a steady job. Any time on our own will be spent merely thinking about, recouping from, or resisting the major involvements of our work and family—with no time devoted to self-discovery and the pursuance of individual unfoldment.” *In the Flow of Life*, pages 146–147.

Have you had a time or times in your life when this seemed to be the case? How did you return to the flow of life? What did you learn from being “out of the flow?”

Senior Class

“We now have a whole new class structure in our society, the “senior citizens.” But we need to take another look at what we mean by the term and how its negative implications have defrauded millions of persons of their true place in our world. In general, the word *senior* implies achievement, advancement, honor. This is good. But how often the term *senior citizen* tends to mean a useless person, one who has been put out to pasture.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 149.

What does the term “senior citizen” mean to you? What do you think it means to the general public?

Describe a “senior citizen” who is an inspiration to you. Give details about who they are, what they have done and what they are doing. Share with your group.

“You should never retire, in the connotation in which the term is normally used. Never get boxed into a position where you are ‘out of it.’ The sense of remaining ‘in’ can be acquired in many ways. No matter what your business was, your true business was, is, and will always be the business of releasing the flow of God manifesting in and as you.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 150.

If you are retired now, what is it you are doing to “release the flow of God manifesting in and as you?” If you are not retired, describe someone who is modeling “releasing the flow of God” in their retirement years.

“When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him. When Methuselah had lived one hundred eighty-seven years, he became the father of Lamech. Methuselah lived after the birth of Lamech seven hundred eighty-two years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty-nine years; and he died.”

~ Genesis 5:21–27 NRSV

I am in the flow of life!

Unity Awakening 2024

Week 7 - NOVEMBER 3



In the Flow of Life, by Eric Butterworth
Reading for this week: Chapter 9 – “Life, Death, and Rebirth”

This is the final session for your group to meet and share your experience of the material in Eric Butterworth’s *In the Flow of Life*. Be sure to leave ample time for the group processing questions at the end of this lesson.

Insights from last week’s discussion. In light of last week’s material, did you notice any adjustments in your perceptions about the aging process?

Butterworth asks, "What about death?" on page 153 of *In the Flow of Life*. What's *your* answer? Share your answer with your group.

Butterworth says, "Some people feel that it is terribly negative to discuss death; however, a fear of dealing with the subject could well indicate our bondage to it." *In the Flow of Life*, page 155.

What do you think he means by being in bondage to death?

“If your body should be laid aside in the experience we call death, it is not the end of you or the movement of life that is being projected through you and as you.” *In the Flow of Life*, pages 156–157.

What does Butterworth mean when he says death “is not the end of you”?

If you were to craft your autobiography, what are the three or four most important things you would want people to know about you?

Butterworth mentions that “Charles Fillmore, [co-founder of the Unity movement] cautions that the study of reincarnation is not profitable: not what you have been, but what you now are is the issue. Yet he believed in it completely. It is a helpful and hopeful thing to know that the flow of life continues beyond the ‘shadow of death.’” *In the Flow of Life*, page 161.

Do you believe in reincarnation? What leads you to your answer?

Butterworth discusses the fact that there is much interest in contacting those who have died. He suggests that doing so is not advisable, “even through valid mediumship” because those who have passed on have done just that! “Any kind of holding on in an attempt to make contact with them can serve only to hold them back in their journey.” *In the Flow of Life*, page 168.

What do you think about contacting those who have passed on? Is it possible? Have you done so?

The text of chapter nine gives a perspective of death as an ongoing of life, not to be mourned for extended periods of time. Butterworth says, "Of course it is natural to have feelings of sadness, but the sadness should be tempered with joy of knowing that he or she goes onward to meet his or her good. Any prolonging of grief, any attempt to hold on to one who has passed, is a mixture of guilt and anger, and it is to be totally out of the flow of life yourself." *In the Flow of Life*, pages 167–168.

Are you in agreement with Butterworth on this point? Why or why not?

I am in the flow of life!

Conclusion



We hope you have found Unity Awakening 2024 to be a meaningful addition to your spiritual life. By exploring the material together, you have had opportunities to gain fresh perspectives and insights you might not have had by studying on your own.

If you had to name only one idea or concept that really made a deep impact on you during the Unity Awakening series, what would it be and why? Be prepared to share with your group.

Make a list of the members of your group and list at least one thing each person has said or shared that you found especially thought-provoking or that touched your heart. Share your list with your group, and be sure to thank your group members for their sharing.

Is there anything else you would like to share with your group? If so, jot some notes here as a reminder of what you would like to say.

It is said that we come together in relationship “for a reason, for a season, or for a lifetime.” Your group may want to meet again either for discussion or dinner or some other reason. Take a few moments to discuss what future activities, if any, your group may pursue. It is perfectly okay if this meeting is the natural conclusion for your group.

I am in the flow of life!

Acknowledgments and Gratitudes



Unity Awakening 2024 would not be possible without the generous contributions of the following individuals:

Peter Chapin – small group coordinator
Amy Conley – Sunday PowerPoint and online marketing
Fran Patchett – curriculum consultant for adults
Tony Rogers – website registration
Gaye Newton – graphic design layout
Home group hosts and facilitators
Zoom group facilitators

All the participants whose involvement have made for an amazing experience.

A special thank you to the late Rev. Eric Butterworth whose words and wisdom continue to inspire us today.

About Eric Butterworth



Eric Butterworth served as minister, author, and radio personality. He earned high respect for his delivery and of universal spiritual ideas. His teaching focused on the divinity of all people, and his desire was that everyone would know their oneness with God.

From Winnipeg, Canada, where Butterworth was born on September 12, 1916, his family moved to southern California. He attended Fresno State University and then Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, where he studied music.

Butterworth's mother, May Butterworth, became a Unity minister in 1941. He soon began his own training for the ministry at Unity Village, Missouri. He left to join the army. As a lieutenant in the Medical Corps he trained medical personnel and also served as chaplain and counselor. After World War II, he returned to his ministerial studies. He was ordained in 1948.

Butterworth ministered in four Unity communities: Kansas City, Pittsburgh, Detroit and New York City. While in Detroit, the congregation raised funds to build the Detroit Unity Temple, the largest Unity church at that time. More than 2,000 people attended his Sunday services each week. In 1961, he began his ministry in New York City. His Sunday lectures were held at Carnegie Hall, Town Hall, and then Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center, where the weekly attendance grew to several thousand.

Butterworth authored 14 popular religious books, including *Discover the Power Within You* and *Spiritual Economics*.

Butterworth's radio show "Eric Butterworth Speaks" provided thousands with new perspectives about positive living.

His gentle voice articulated a powerful message that inspired hundreds of thousands of people. People from various religious backgrounds were attracted to Butterworth's positive message. Oprah Winfrey praised *Discover the Power Within You* and said it was favorite book in her personal library. Dr. Maya Angelou called Butterworth her "teacher." Butterworth dedicated his life to helping people to help themselves.

He made is transition in 2003.⁸

⁸ Eric Butterworth Collection, <www.ericbutterworth.com> (July 31, 2013).

About Unity of Fairfax



Unity of Fairfax was founded in 1956. It is affiliated with Unity Worldwide Ministries, a global network of ministries, ministers, licensed teachers and individuals sharing the vision and aim of furthering the Unity tradition of “practical Christianity” as demonstrated by Jesus Christ. A wealth of additional information can be found online at:

- ✦ www.unityoffairfax.org
- ✦ www.unityworldwideministries.org

Vision

We envision a world of peace, abundance, and respect for all creation.

Mission

Aligned with the indwelling Christ, we co-create a world that works for everyone.

Core Values

At Unity of Fairfax, we offer a welcoming, safe environment to explore one’s own relationship with God in a community of like-minded individuals. We maintain a positive, uplifting energy by looking for the good in every persona and circumstance and affirming the healing power of love and acceptance. We seek to be of service and to experience the joy of living, the wonder of loving, and the miracles produced by faith through our core values:

- ✦ **Spirit Centered:** Spirit is at the center of who we are and what we do.
- ✦ **Integrity:** Integrity is the practice of maintaining honesty and respectfulness.
- ✦ **Oneness:** Oneness is the call to revere Divine Life in all living beings and systems.
- ✦ **Love:** Love is a magnet for good and an agent of healing.
- ✦ **Engagement:** Engagement means participating with others in conscientious dialogue and collaborative action.

Notes





In the Flow of Life

©2024 Unity of Fairfax

Unity of Fairfax

2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, VA 22124 ▪ www.unityoffairfax.org

703-281-1767 ▪ admin@unityoffairfax.org