

# **The Art of Ease and Grace: Three Keys to a New Life**

Transcript of a Talk Given by Carol McNulty-Huffman at Unity Church of Maui on June 12, 2022.

(Subheadings Added for Ease in Reading)

## **INTRODUCING THE SPEAKER:**

**Virgie:** I have the great privilege of introducing our speaker today. Carol and I have been good friends since the beginning of time. She is my prayer chaplain. Every month, I get a call from her and she leaves a prayer on my answering machine; I like that because anytime during the month I get to listen to her prayer over and over again. Carol has a chapter in this wonderful book [*Shine Your Light: Powerful Practices for an Extraordinary Life*]. It has this beautifully written introduction.

I'm going to read that to you. "Carol McNulty-Huffman is a writer and inspirational speaker and the founder of Wellspring Empowerment Enterprises. She lives on the island of Maui in Hawai'i. Earlier in life, she had an adventurous career as a park ranger, serving as a guide and natural resource manager in six different national parks. She also spent six years as a park planner. Her professional life, however, didn't prepare her for the birth of her special needs daughter." [who is now an adult.]

"There was no guide and no plan, and there were no apparent resources. The life-changing journey of transforming the stress and struggle of her experience into the gift of a lifetime is the subject of her upcoming book, *The Art of Ease and Grace*. For a free experience

of Carol's favorite balancing meditation, please visit <https://theartofeaseandgrace.com/meditation.>”

She also has a blog [on her website]. This book, with her wonderful chapter, will be available after the service. Again, with aloha, I welcome Carol.

[applause]

**Carol:** Deepest mahalo, Virgie, for that introduction. It has been a pleasure to journey with you all those years. It has been such a pleasure to be a part of Unity Church of Maui for over 25 years now. I came here during the dark night of my Soul and this church lifted me... and lifted me. I am delighted to share my story. First, I'm going to tell you about a young girl named Carrie.

### **FIRST COMMUNION EXCITEMENT:**

Carrie was so excited because she had just received her First Communion at Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

She was especially excited; this was the spring, but in the fall, when she went back to school at Sacred Heart Elementary School, she would get to go to Communion with the big kids.

Every Tuesday at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, where her family attended, she would go with her entire class. Over 500 students from this school would file into the pews, sit with their class, and attend the mass. About 45 minutes into the mass, it was time for Communion and Carrie was just beside herself. She stepped out of the pew, behind her classmates, and starts walking up to the altar to receive Communion.

## **TURMOIL TAKES OVER:**

Suddenly, she realized, "I can't receive Communion. I ate a doughnut right before church."

At that time you had to fast for three hours before going to Communion.

As she advanced to the altar, Carrie realized, "If I sit down, everyone is going to think I've committed a mortal sin. If I go to the altar, I'm going to commit a mortal sin. So what do I do?"

With each advancing step the turmoil continued and her heart was beating.

## **COMMITTING A MORTAL SIN:**

Then she decided, "I would rather receive Communion and get to confession right away, than have my classmates think I had committed a mortal sin."

She went to the altar, received her Communion, and as soon as she could, she went to the church chapel. You see those confessionals in the back there. She found one that did not have a line and she went right in.

## **CONFESSION IS NEXT:**

She confessed... Inside the confessional, if you have never been in there, there's a door and a priest opens that door, and then "How have you sinned?" is the question.

Carrie explained the situation and said that she had eaten a doughnut... so she didn't fast for the full three hours. The priest gave her a penance to say. Then he

went into an absolute rage. He screamed at her and said that she had committed a sacrilege. And that she was going to, when she died, burn in the fires of hell.

"You are hereby excommunicated from this church, so get out of my confessional now."

### **THE HEAVINESS OF HER PENANCE:**

Carrie went up to the altar and she said her penance as fast as she could. "Our Father, who art in heaven... Our Father, who art in heaven... Hail Mary, full of Grace... Hail Mary, full of Grace..." She said the penance and then she also pondered the fact that "He never forgave me of my sin. Isn't that part of confession?"

### **DELIVERING NEWSPAPERS:**

After this, she wasn't very interested in going to church. It turns out her older brother had a paper route and so she volunteered to deliver [news]papers with her brother Robert. It [also] turned out that Robert, after delivering papers all around their home, didn't have time to get to their regular church. So we went to another church within walking distance of their home.

Carrie thought, "This is wonderful. I don't have to go to Sacred Heart. I can still go to church."

### **CONFESSION AGAIN FOR THE SAME SIN:**

Then one day after school, she decided to go to this church and go to confession again.

She went to a priest. The priest was very kind and said, "Don't do this again. Here's your penance."

[It was] a very light penance. She said her penance. With all of that, she was still so confused and hurt and feeling like she'd done something wrong—filled with shame and guilt. She just didn't know what to do with all those feelings. After she said her penance, she just stuffed the feelings inside, covered them up, and left them there.

### **CAROL IS CARRIE; THIS IS A TRUE STORY:**

As you may have realized, I am Carrie. That is my childhood nickname. This is a true story. I was thrown out of Monsignor Harris' confessional, told I was excommunicated from the church, and that, when I died, I was going to burn in the fires of hell. So, what does one do with all of that?

### **NATURE BECOMES CAROL'S SANCTUARY:**

I turned to nature as my sanctuary. I didn't like church much after that. As Virgie mentioned earlier, that led me to have a 25-year career with the National Park Service.

### **STRANGE ILLNESSES SHOW UP:**

In my 20s, however, I started developing some allergies and some illnesses, and some strange things; the doctors really couldn't figure out what was going on.

The best thing that I ever did at that time—and I'm so grateful for the Grace that led me to my counselor, Adrienne—is I started counseling. I went in and I started to feel all those feelings that I had buried. With that renewed balance of body, mind, and spirit, and other

fascinating experiences along the way—including what Virgie mentioned, the birth of our daughter.

## **INTRODUCING THE ART OF EASE AND GRACE:**

I took those struggles and turned them into gifts and I learned that there are three keys in life. *The Art of Ease and Grace* is about using these three keys to step into a new life.

What are the keys? Very briefly—we'll talk about them in more detail later—they are Vision, Vibration, and Grace.

## **GLOBAL WELLNESS DAY:**

I'd like to use a theme for our discussion of the three keys. I learned that yesterday was global wellness day. It was amazing to learn that this woman, Belgin Aksoy, out of Turkey also got sick. Her gift to the world after she was healed, was to create a global wellness day, which is in 170 countries and on 7 continents.

She believes that everyone on the planet deserves to experience wellness. She includes six factors in wellness. Wellness is the cornerstone of a healthy and fulfilling life: physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, socially, and environmentally. If you want to learn a little bit more about that, you can go to [globalwellnessday.org](http://globalwellnessday.org). I had a fascinating time exploring that.

## **TIME FOR SOME HUMOR:**

That story was a bit heavy, so before we get into the heart of the talk, I'd like to share a little bit of humor.

This is a birthday card that my sister sent me a few years ago.

“To stay young, the doctor said to exercise and eat the right foods.” one friend says to the other.

She's like, "What? I thought he said accessorize and buy nice shoes.”

[laughter]

## **Vision, Vibration and Grace**

### **VISION:**

Vision is about holding a long-term vision for your life or even a short-term intention of what you would like to have happen. The key to visioning is to focus on what you want rather than what you don't want.

### **VIBRATION:**

Vibration is about stepping into the vibration of your vision so that it can easily manifest. We all know the basic example of the difference between love and fear. Fear, of course, is a lower vibration and love, as Louise so beautifully sang about this morning, is that wonderful high vibration that we all aspire to, all the time. And so, stepping into that love—all you need is love—is the heart of vibration.

## **GRACE:**

And Grace! Grace is a wind that is always blowing; it's a power and a presence, as Patricia so eloquently spoke about in her prayer, that is always there. And we simply need to acknowledge, tap into, and know—and know—that it is there.

## **BASIC PRECEPTS OR PRINCIPLES:**

[And now let's discuss] some basic precepts about the Art of Ease and Grace:

- The heart of the Art of Ease and Grace is being present to what is. We've all heard about being present to the moment and mindfulness. It turns out that all world religions teach the value of being present.

And as I learned—I didn't know that at the time I was thrown out of the confessional, but...

- Struggles in life can be a gift. They can show us inner resources we never knew we had.

And I found my typo here. Stuggles, which are actually struggles, can also teach us compassion. I have compassion for my typo.

[laughter]



## **GROUP SHARING OF WELLNESS VISIONS:**

**Carol:** Using our three keys, I'd like to have you join in today about vision. Does anyone want to share: What is your vision for wellness in your life? Any takers?

### **PATRICIA'S VISION:**

**Patricia:** To see myself swimming with the dolphins, being able to be in the water and know I'm safe. To see the vibrancy of my body, the calmness of my mind, and my heart open to all experiences that come my way.

**Carol:** What a beautiful vision. I will try to repeat all of that, so people can hear. Patricia is swimming with the dolphins; she's in the ocean knowing that she is perfectly safe. It is blissful. Beautiful vision. Anyone else like to share?

### **VIRGIE'S VISION:**

**Virgie:** I'd like to share. I was recently diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder. It's a silent or invisible disorder that affects my joints and my muscles, so I have muscle weakness and joint pain. My vision for wellness—it's incurable—so my vision for wellness is to live the best quality of life that I can. I live in the attitude of gratitude because they ruled out really serious diseases like multiple sclerosis and myasthenia gravis, and lupus. They ruled those out, and so I'm grateful for that.

**Carol:** Beautiful, Virgie. Repeat your affirmation for me again, so I can repeat it to the group. You're living in an attitude of gratitude while...

**Virgie:** ...while I live the highest quality of life that I can.

**Carol:** Virgie, affirm that with me, please?

**Congregation:** Virgie is living the highest quality of life that she can and has an attitude of gratitude.

**Carol:** Thank you. Would anyone else like to share their vision for wellness in their life?

**ANA'S VISION:**

**Ana:** I see myself as a condor in the Andes gliding, gently letting the wind push me, and being at peace, and at release with myself.

**Carol:** Mahalo. Your name?

**Ana:** Ana.

**Carol:** Ana?

**Ana:** Yes.

**Carol:** Ana, help me with this, is flying over the Andes...

**Congregant:** As a condor.

**Carol:** As a condor, completely at peace.

**Ana:** Yes, and release.

**Carol:** And release.

**Ana:** Yes.

**Carol:** Beautiful, beautiful. Anyone else like to share and have this group affirm your vision for wellness?

## **LOUISE'S VISION:**

**Louise:** Just feeling happy and healthy and whole in every moment.

[laughter]

**Carol:** Louise is happy, healthy, and whole in every moment.

**Patricia:** And so it is.

**Carol:** Beautiful. We can say that for us too.

**Congregation:** I am happy, healthy, and whole in each moment.

**Carol:** Wonderful. If anyone else is called to share, please do. Yes.

## **PRENTISE'S VISION:**

**Prentise:** Every time I hear vision, I go into dance. I mean that's who I am. For my vision of dance to be what I want it to be, which is beautiful and healthy and inclusive and moving, then all the other elements have to be in place. If I'm depressed or I'm angry or I'm eating poorly, or I'm not sleeping well, or any of that, then my dance vision is going to falter. I have that overall vision. It's like me and every other person who wants to dance is in this giant wave. We're all being infused with everything we need, for beautiful health that we need to be beautiful dancers.

**Carol:** Yes. Prentise's vision, as many of you heard, is to dance with abandon—and to dance a healthy, flowing, beautiful dance.

**Prentise:** That is full of all the health elements that contribute to that.

**Carol:** Yes. As I understand it, that vision that she holds carries over into other parts of her life, because she needs to be healthy in other parts of her life in order to have that feeling of that wonderful, beautiful dance of beauty. Mahalo.

### **MORE WELLNESS VISIONS:**

I created some affirmations to share as well. Those are—feel free to take them along home if you'd like.

- I love myself enough to take wonderful care of me.

Prentise has shifted that to say: I dance beautifully enough to take wonderful care of me.

- I appreciate and care for my body.
- I nourish my body with delicious, healthy food.
- I celebrate my sense of wholeness grounded in love.
- I am whole, perfect, and complete just as I am.

I thought it would be wonderful to take one from the daily word—today's daily word.

- I say YES to wholeness, abundance, and harmonizing love in my life.

### **MORE ON VIBRATION:**

Now let's move on to Vibration and chat a little bit more about that. I find—I'm a writer after all—that journaling

is a wonderful way to step into the Vibration of your Vision.

What often happens when you state your Vision—whether you do it verbally, whether you do it in writing—where does your mind go? My mind goes to everything unlike that in my life.

As Reverend Mary Omwake would often say from this platform, when you affirm love in your life, everything unlike love is going to show up so it can be cleared, and you can stand firmly in your Vision. And so, I think journaling is a wonderful way to raise my Vibration because I'll write my affirmation and then I immediately write down everything else I'm thinking about.

Then I can look at it and I can say “Do I really believe this? Do I really want to hold this in my life?”

And then I can clear it and move on. And then that Vision gets stronger.

## **OUR CONSCIOUSNESS IS LIKE AN ICEBERG:**

I've learned that our consciousness is like an iceberg. And so, for Carrie, those feelings of guilt and shame were under the water for a long time. They weren't the tip of the iceberg above the water—the thoughts that we realize we have.... I've heard estimates that 95% of our consciousness is unconscious, and so there's a lot under there.

It's just such a wonderful analogy to me, this iceberg for the consciousness. I like to imagine that as I clear that old stuff that may still be stuck inside, that my iceberg is

floating higher than ever and maybe it's less than 95% under the water.

### **MORE ON GRACE:**

Grace! Grace is a wind that is always blowing. Grace is a feeling. Grace is a place. Grace is this most beautiful gift from the Divine that is with us in each moment. For that, I am so grateful.

Grace was with Carrie when she said her prayers, after each time she went to confession. Grace was with her when she found another church after school so she could get another opinion from the priest. She never told her family what happened. She didn't have the kind of relationship with her mom to share that, and so she just carried it inside her[self] for decades. Grace was with her in those moments when she became ill in her twenties.

Grace was with her as she found a counselor to help her sort out—and lighten the load—and begin to feel so much better.

### **SUMMARY OF THE THREE KEYS:**

There we have it—*The Art of Ease and Grace: Three Keys to a New Life*.

To summarize, Vision is about a long-term Vision or even a short-term intention you have in your life. Remembering to focus on what you want rather than on what you don't want is key. Stepping into the Vibration of your Vision will help it manifest much more easily. Grace is a wind that is always blowing.

## **MEDITATION:**

Let us take a moment in meditation to access that place. What I thought we'd do in the meditation is take one of your visions, take a situation in your life that's challenging, [or] take a relationship that's challenging; at one point in the meditation, I'll ask you to call that up and you can use these keys, or the process we're going through, to perhaps shift that to a better level.

Louise, if you are open to it, I'm happy to have music during the meditation part.

Let's do a little bit of channel breathing—one of my favorite types of breathing. I usually put one hand on my belly and one hand on my heart and take a very nice deep breath, deep into your belly. Don't worry about it expanding and expanding.

[soft piano music]

Keep breathing in, as your heart center expands as well, so you are just full of Grace. As you breathe out... imagine that you are breathing out into the earth, three to four feet down [toward] the center of the earth. As you breathe in again and fill the belly and the heart space, bring up that grounded earth energy. Fill yourself with that.

And imagine then that, as you breathe out, you breathe out through the top of your head and send that breath into the Universe. Breathing back in[to] the belly and the expansion of the heart space, just imagine, breathing in Grace, and again, breathing down into the earth.

Continue that for a few moments, and then I'll ask you a question.

If you have something, please bring up your vision, your challenge, relationship issue, whatever it is that you'd like to heal. If you want, you can put two hands on your heart and start breathing in and out just from your heart.

My question for you—and we'll go into meditation in [the] silence after you answer to yourself—my question for you with that situation, with that vision: what would love do? What would love do in this situation? How would love carry out this vision? What would love do?

[soft piano music and relaxing nature sounds]



## **LOUISE LAMBERT SINGS AMAZING GRACE:**

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound,

That saved a Soul, like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares

We have already come;

We've no less days to sing God's praise

Than when we first begun.

Though we've been gone ten thousand years,

Bright shining as the sun,

We have no less days to sing God's praise

Than when we first begun.

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound.

That saved a Soul like me!

I once was lost, but now I'm found

I was blind, but now I see.

[END OF AUDIO]

<https://theartofeaseandgrace.com/>