

# PRAYER AND PRAYING TOGETHER

## THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES



A guide for those who seek to discover the true  
meaning and power of Prayer

by  
**Lucy Lopez**

## Introduction

I was raised in a Catholic family. We had been Catholic for many generations. The kind of Catholic upbringing I had was terribly confusing and often frightening. It was rarely consoling or uplifting. I think many people who have had a Catholic upbringing, at least those from a few generations ago, might relate to this.

In my case, I had a father who hit my mother almost daily and seemed to be permanently trapped in an unspeakable and unending rage. But he went to church every day and often at least twice a day and expected my mother and all of us nine kids to do the same. He was also verbally and emotionally abusive and wildly jealous. But he insisted we prayed together as a family every day.

Evening prayers lasted at least thirty minutes and included kneeling on hard, wooden floors with outstretched arms on the final decade of the Rosary. During this time, he would be ready to strike any child whom he thought was not fully attentive or who had messed up the lines of whatever prayer was being said. As children, I think much of our prayer effort was invested in praying we would not get hit.

But, I learned to pray, or at least that is what I believed I was doing. I learned to be penitent for things that I really had no cause to be such as feeling unkindly toward someone or something or not wanting to attend church or telling a lie because I was afraid I would get a beating from my father or for wishing my father dead.

To put it simply, I prayed because I felt I was a bad, unworthy and powerless person. Most of all, I prayed because I was afraid of being punished by God, whom I was taught was both infinitely loving and unsparingly wrathful in his



MY SELF-  
HEALING LIES  
IN PRAYING  
FOR THOSE  
WHO HAVE  
HARMED ME  
MARIANNE  
WILLIAMSON

judgment and punishment. Can anyone, let alone a child, actually make sense of that?

As an adult, I stopped praying for many years, at least not in the way I was taught. I did hold good intentions for others. I did try to wish people well. I did try to acknowledge when I was not thoughtful or generous or forgiving or kind. And I did hold an intention to be and do better.

This kind of intention-holding was non-directional, meaning, I did not offer it to someone or something. I suppose I was simply calling upon my 'better' or 'higher' self. But there was always a sense of obligation to aspire to be or do something better since it was accompanied with a fear of what might happen to me if I didn't try to make a better person of myself. It was also accompanied by guilt and self-bashing.

My meditation practice (primarily Mindfulness practice) as well as my studies in Buddhism (mainly of the Tibetan tradition), opened new ground for me. Through meditation practice and Buddhist teachings, I found a way of recognizing an ultimate reality that was inherently and infinitely good yet impersonal, unconditional and unconditioned. One of the descriptions of this 'ground of being' or our 'Buddha nature' that I became particularly fond of and that I frequently quote as a Meditation teacher is

*'Incorruptible, Un-enhance-able and Unsurpassable'*

This description matches my own experiences of the ultimate 'ground of being' that I touch or land on or fall or slip into again and again in my meditation practice. This is indeed who or what I have come to realize as my true identity and my ultimate or essential nature.

It is this ever-present, true Self that I have also come to recognize as the source and cause of all of Life. All things emanate from it, yet it itself is none of them. Just as water is



DID I OFFER  
PEACE  
TODAY? DID I  
BRING A  
SMILE TO  
SOMEONE'S  
FACE? DID I  
SAY WORDS  
OF HEALING?  
DID I LET GO  
OF MY ANGER  
AND  
RESENTMENT?  
DID I  
FORGIVE? DID  
I LOVE?  
THESE ARE  
THE REAL  
QUESTIONS. I  
MUST TRUST  
THAT THE  
LITTLE BIT OF  
LOVE THAT I  
SOW NOW  
WILL BEAR  
MANY FRUITS,  
HERE IN THIS  
WORLD AND  
THE LIFE TO  
COME  
HENRI NOUWEN

the essence of the ocean and all its waves, so this Self is the essence of all there is, yet defined or limited by none of it.

Now, some people choose to call this God and I often do. I also call it Love, Life, Infinite Intelligence and sometimes the Quantum Field or Pure Consciousness. But my relationship with it is nothing like the relationship I had with the god of my religious upbringing. For one thing, it is not separate from me. On the contrary, I am It.

By 'I', I don't mean the historical and personal mind-body that I and others call 'Lucy'. I mean the essence that pervades that mind-body, the water, so to speak. That's the 'I' that I'm referring to when I say that 'I am It'. And you too are 'It'. Ultimately, you see, there is nothing but 'It'. The mind-body, individual and collective, like wave and ocean, is the form, the channel, the instrument through which the essential, unseparated Self expresses itself.

So, if we are 'It', the source and cause of all there is, what does it mean to pray? Are we praying to anything or anyone? Are we asking for something? Why do we pray? You'll find the answers to these and other questions in the pages that follow.

A cautionary note: This introduction is just that – an introduction, a brief foray into an endless and fathomless subject called 'reality'. Please therefore do not expect it and the brief notes that follow to be exhaustive. Reality is not a subject that can ever be exhaustively handled, least of all in a little ebook such as this. I do hope, however, that these brief notes will inspire you to delve deep(er) into the practice of Prayer and discover the limitless power that you have to create new realities not just for yourself but for all else. In the end, there is only one of us!

In the Loving Power of Prayer  
Lucy Lopez  
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ANYTHING  
THAT  
TAKES YOU  
OUT OF THE  
CONTEXT  
OF BEING  
SEPARATE  
IS HEALING.  
ANYTHING  
THAT  
TAKES YOU  
OUT OF THE  
CONTEXT  
OF  
SEPARATE-  
NESS IS  
INTIMACY.  
DEAN ORNISH

## Definition of Prayer

*An Intention held in a high emotional state  
focused on ULTIMATE DESIRABLE OUTCOMES  
using the manifesting power of Universal  
Energy/Love/Infinite Intelligence/God*

(Please see what I mean by ‘God’ and ‘Ultimate Desirable Outcomes’ below)

We pray because we desire and can imagine something better, whether for ourselves or another. A prayer can therefore be about shifting from a currently undesirable situation to a more desirable one. But it can also be about shifting from an already good/great situation into something even better/greater. This is consistent with the infinite reality we live in which we call Life/Love/God/Infinite Intelligence and its eternally creative nature. Creation is not over. It is ongoing. Eternal.

“

**MOST MEN  
LEAD LIVES  
OF QUIET  
DESPERATION  
AND GO TO  
THE GRAVE  
WITH THE  
SONG STILL  
IN THEM  
HENRY DAVID  
THOREAU**



## Prayer is not about 'fixing'

When we pray, we **DO NOT** indulge in an undesirable situation by lamenting it, arguing with it, resisting it, judging it, rejecting it, denying it, suppressing it, avoiding it. This is really, really important. Doing any of this simply focuses and holds energy in that undesirable state thus blocking its flow.

Instead, we accept this situation as one of infinite possibilities and what we're doing in prayer is ***exercising our ability to choose a different possibility.***

Acceptance does not mean agreeing or condoning. It means merely acknowledging in a mindful i.e. non-judging way.

This is consistent with the insight of Buckminster Fuller, a man very much ahead of his time, who said:

*You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.*

This is exactly what we're doing, on the level of thought and emotion.

Remember also not to remain attached to a desired outcome or, as I said earlier, averse to an existing situation. By all means, revel in the deliciousness of a desired outcome but do not let the energy of Life, of Love be inhibited by either your attachment or aversion, both of which are obstacles to its intelligent 'flow'. Again, this is how the practice of Mindfulness can be so helpful.



EVERYTHING  
YOU NEED  
YOU  
ALREADY  
HAVE. YOU  
ARE  
COMPLETE  
RIGHT NOW,  
YOU ARE A  
WHOLE,  
TOTAL  
PERSON, NOT  
AN  
APPRENTICE  
PERSON ON  
THE WAY TO  
SOMEPLACE  
ELSE. YOUR  
COMPLETE-  
NESS MUST BE  
UNDERSTOOD  
BY YOU AND  
EXPERIENCED  
IN YOUR  
THOUGHTS  
AS YOUR  
OWN  
PERSONAL  
REALITY  
WAYNE DYER

## The Prayer experience is a Good Feeling experience

Given that we are intending only good feelings, it is only natural that we will feel good during our prayer. If you don't feel some degree of calm, peace, joy, it's because your attention is still on the undesirable situation and/or you're trying to work out HOW the desired outcome will come about.

**Remember the focus is always on what you want, NOT on what you don't want. What you don't want is almost irrelevant. Its main purpose is to *direct your attention to what you DO want.***

This is why a practice of Mindfulness is so useful. It will help you remain PRESENT rather than get caught up in thinking, story, judgement, doubt etc.

Meanwhile, it may or may not be obvious to you that as you pray, you literally, in real-time, change your entire state of being. Today, we know that this involves all aspects of mind-body – neurological, physiological, biochemical, genetic, emotional, mental and physical.

Your energy state which is not separate from, but entirely one with all of Life, impacts on all of Life whether you see it or not, whether you feel it (in a way that is familiar to you) or not. This is how we change the world. Not with slogans, lamentations, quarrelling or righteous indignation but with the feelings of goodness and greatness that *we ourselves feel and allow the universe/life to be infused with.* **In other words, we offer no resistance to the essential goodness and greatness of Life.**



THEREFORE  
I TELL  
YOU, DO  
NOT  
WORRY  
ABOUT  
YOUR LIFE,  
WHAT  
YOU WILL  
EAT, OR  
ABOUT  
YOUR  
BODY,  
WHAT  
YOU WILL  
WEAR  
LUKE 12:22

## The Role of Thoughts, Words, Imagination, Feelings

It is our feelings/emotions (energy in motion) rather than our thoughts that carry the highest momentum/frequencies and which serve as the attractive force that focuses Universal energy into an outcome. (An analogy might be a magnifying glass which focuses the sun's heat to start a fire).

Thoughts are useful in helping us ***arouse the desired feelings***, so be lavish with the use of evocative thoughts, descriptive words, imagination and memory, but understand that they are to AROUSE FEELINGS.

Mechanically saying words or thinking thoughts without the accompanying feelings will not work. In fact, it is quite possible, as I'm sure you'd have experienced, to say one thing but feel something else.

This incongruence not only creates an internal conflict that feels unpleasant but it also results in unpleasant/undesirable outcomes which reflect those emotions rather than the 'right' or 'good' words and thoughts.

“

THE TRUE  
SIGN OF  
INTELLIGENCE  
IS NOT  
KNOWLEDGE  
BUT  
IMAGINATION

ALBERT  
EINSTEIN



## The Childlike, Beginner's Mind

Let us not presume to know HOW and EXACTLY what is required in bringing about an outcome. There is the temptation to think that we know what a person or situation needs in specific detail.

For example, we may think a person is sick because of karma or poor eating habits or lifestyle or because they have not healed a particular relationship...and so we will pray or hold intentions or 'send healing/love' accordingly. Please refrain from this.

These causal assertions are BELIEFS that we have. They are not FACTS. To therefore prescribe a specific outcome on the basis of these beliefs limits the ways in which a desirable outcome may manifest.

In this sense, let us be like children, totally unconcerned with HOW we will get what we want, yet feverishly excited and confident that we will get what we want.

Let us also have what is referred to in Zen Buddhism as 'beginner's mind' – an open mind, a receptive mind, uncluttered by the knowledge, information, beliefs, opinions, judgments and conditions it has acquired from this material world.

This does not mean that our knowledge or expertise is useless. It is possible and indeed quite likely that we may be *lovingly (rather than fearfully/egotistically) guided* to use it at some point.

However, *during the time of Prayer*, it is best that we set aside all that we know or think we know and yield instead to the Intelligence that is truly all-knowing and that predates our existence and all that we have learned.



TRULY I  
TELL YOU,  
UNLESS  
YOU  
CHANGE  
AND  
BECOME  
LIKE  
LITTLE  
CHILDREN,  
YOU WILL  
NEVER  
ENTER THE  
KINGDOM  
OF  
HEAVEN

MATHEW 18:13

## ‘Apparent’ and ‘Ultimate’ Desirable Outcomes

What is a ‘desirable’ outcome?

This is an important question.

We tend to think of ‘desirable’ outcomes as ‘things’ – a new car, a house, a job, success in a business, recovery from an illness, a partner who does what we want, a change of government, a different leader, a different system, more money....These are what I call **‘APPARENT DESIRABLE OUTCOMES’**

BUT let us understand that the underlying assumption we have about getting the thing that we desire is ***that it will make us happy or happier***. Ultimately, that is what we want – to be happy, to feel truly, deeply, enduringly good about ourselves, about others and about our world.

Which is why, it is on this level of feeling that we want to focus our prayer. In other words, we don’t need to preoccupy ourselves with the specific details of *what needs to happen in order for us or this person or this situation to feel good or be better*. Rather, we focus on the ultimate desired outcome – feeling peaceful, excited, powerful, full of vitality, flexible in mind and body, energized, open and free, confident, ease...These are what I call **‘ULTIMATE DESIRABLE OUTCOMES’** Get what I mean?

Put another way, why would we want anything at all if we didn’t believe that it would make us feel good? And by the way, excitement, power (I mean innate power rather than acquired ‘power’ i.e. the Power of Love which is the only power), flexibility, invigoration etc are all frequencies within the bandwidth of ‘GOOD’. They are words we use to describe different forms of FEELING GOOD.

“

PEOPLE  
SAY THAT  
WHAT  
WE'RE ALL  
SEEKING IS  
A  
MEANING  
FOR LIFE...  
I THINK  
THAT  
WHAT  
WE'RE  
SEEKING IS  
AN  
EXPERIENCE  
OF BEING  
ALIVE  
JOSEPH  
CAMPBELL

With our focus on (not attachment to) our Ultimate Desirable Outcomes, we can and must confidently leave the *HOW the outcome will happen* and *WHAT specifically needs to happen along the way* to the Infinite Intelligence that brings all things into being. That Intelligence that keeps galaxies in place, that pumps blood through our bodies, that generates energy in the mitochondrial factories in cells, that causes waves to roll and seagulls to soar.



ONCE YOU  
MAKE A  
DECISION,  
THE  
UNIVERSE  
CONSPIRES  
TO MAKE  
IT HAPPEN  
RALPH WALDO  
EMERSON

## For those who have trouble with a religious 'God'

If you're still having trouble understanding or accepting this, think about how your body is able to do all the things that it does on a cellular level. You certainly aren't micromanaging it all, are you?

*There is an Infinite Intelligence that is Life itself that creates and organizes and powers all things in concert with your mind-body.*

While some people might give it the name God (and I often do), this is not a super-human being that is separate from Life, or separate from us, that judges us and determines whether we are deserving or not as taught in some forms of religion. Rather, this is an impersonal Life Power/Intelligence that responds to the energy of emotion aroused by thought/imagination.

So, when we pray, we are merely acknowledging and directing this Universal Power/Intelligence towards our Ultimate Desires (which, as you may have noticed, are aligned with its/our true nature – Goodness, Greatness, Love... We leave the micromanagement of it to this Intelligence.

We do NOT intercede, plead, lament our situation or our sorry, pathetic, sinful selves, we do not self-flagellate or declare our unworthiness...which is the sort of thing many of us would have learned to do in traditional religious practices.

On the contrary, we recognize the true meaning of FAITH, which is the recognition of the Infinite Intelligence, the Infinite Goodness that pervades and gives rise to all of Life, and we **keep the FAITH.**

“

WITHIN  
MAN IS  
THE SOUL  
OF THE  
WHOLE,  
THE WISE  
SILENCE,  
THE  
UNIVERSAL  
BEAUTY  
RALPH WALDO  
EMERSON

Meanwhile, we remain open and receptive to the prompts, the intuitive nudges, that we feel when we are attentive to this Truth, this inner knowing, this Infinite Intelligence.

This is where many of us are likely to flounder for we have been so conditioned to acquiesce to the loud, bullying voice of the Ego – our own and that of others. This voice speaks to us in ways that we describe as ‘rational’, ‘logical’, ‘practical’, ‘realistic’ and is in unglamorous contrast to the still, small voice of Truth, of Wisdom, of Love.

It is not that reason and logic have no place in our lives. Indeed they do. But true reason and logic rather than *fear disguised as reason and logic* arise from the place of Truth and Love. And we will recognize its voice, its prompts, its nudges, its tender beckoning and affirming by the peace, the calm, the joy, the sweetness, the lightness and spaciousness that our willing, rather than fearful, yielding to it unveils.

And when we thus faithfully yield, we may find ourselves being guided in both familiar and unfamiliar ways. Sometimes, this may mean doing nothing at all. Sometimes, it may mean taking an unusual course of action that appears to defy learned logic.

Sometimes it may mean having the urge to call someone or read a certain book or go to a certain place or search again where we had previously searched, or do something which may appear to be totally uncharacteristic or unrelated...

You will know it. You will know it because, once you turn down the cacophonous volume of the Ego by being very present, very mindful, you’ll hear that still, small voice. And then the question: *Will you listen and follow?*



INTUITION  
DOES NOT  
COME TO  
AN UN-  
PREPARED  
MIND  
ALBERT  
EINSTEIN

LISTEN TO  
THE WIND,  
IT TALKS.  
LISTEN TO  
THE  
SILENCE, IT  
SPEAKS.  
LISTEN TO  
THE HEART,  
IT KNOWS  
NATIVE  
AMERICAN  
PROVERB



## A little bit about Faith

Faith is that state of consciousness that engages the non-physical eyes, the inner vision, the inner knowing, which is untaught and which is grounded in ultimate Truth. It is not something you'll arrive at intellectually. You can only be there/have it by allowing yourself the freedom to be in the unknown, the unfamiliar, the untaught, the unlearned.

Faith is KNOWING that, when we ALLOW it, Life/Love/God/Infinite Intelligence will always take us along a path of goodness and ease. Now, while we build our Faith muscles, an open, receptive attitude will serve as an excellent alternative/precursor.

Think in terms of 'I have everything to gain and nothing to lose'.



FAITH IS  
THE BIRD  
THAT  
FEELS THE  
LIGHT  
WHEN IT IS  
STILL  
DARK  
RABINDRANATH  
TAGORE

DOUBT IS A  
PAIN TOO  
LONELY TO  
KNOW THAT  
FAITH IS ITS  
TWIN  
BROTHER  
KHALIL GIBRAN

## Does praying mean we need to reject all external aids, remedies, procedures, therapies etc?

No, not at all. But it does mean that we use them as guided by that Infinite Intelligence, that inner wisdom which is ALWAYS a state of Love rather than fear.

This is an important difference. Whenever we use something in a state of Love i.e. fearlessness/absence of resistance, we are more receptive to whatever benefits it can offer us.

I personally believe that we have the capacity to heal ourselves. Indeed, it is the only way we ever heal – by **allowing** that innate Intelligence to do its work, to return us to our natural wholeness.

Many of us do this ‘allowing’ by default when we believe that whatever external aids we use such as medication, procedures and therapies, are going to work. And so, because we believe, they do.

However, until we have learned how to FULLY allow, i.e. to have Faith, which really is about how to stop resistance fully (which is why it is often described as ‘unlearning’), external aids will continue to play a useful role.

Clearly there is much more that I could say about this but that would require a whole other document at the very least 😊

“

TO ONE  
WHO HAS  
FAITH, NO  
EXPLANATION  
IS  
NECESSARY.

TO ONE  
WITHOUT  
FAITH, NO  
EXPLANATION  
IS POSSIBLE  
THOMAS  
AQUINAS

FAITH IS  
NOT  
SOMETHING  
TO GRASP.  
IT IS A  
STATE TO  
GROW INTO  
MAHATMA  
GANDHI

## Why pray together?

Sometimes, we can feel alone and unsupported and may even abandon praying altogether. When we pray with others, however, we are more likely to feel the spirit of togetherness, solidarity, common purpose, support, understanding, acceptance, care, compassion...

When we pray together, the impact of our prayer, our intention, is magnified. Now, we no longer have one solitary point of focus, we have many points of focus but all converging on a particular outcome. Many magnifying glasses on the same kindling. Wow!

When we pray together, we become present/mindful to the needs, concerns and desires of others i.e. their suffering, *without indulging, commiserating, story-fying, embellishing what is undesirable*. In fact, this is the reason why it is better that we do not give details about the situation or person. Instead, we lovingly (which is the state of presence/mindfulness) focus our attention on what is ultimately desired.

“

WHEN WE  
CAN  
ACTUALLY  
BE WHERE  
WE ARE,  
NOT TRYING  
TO FIND  
ANOTHER  
STATE OF  
MIND, WE  
DISCOVER  
DEEP  
INTERNAL  
RESOURCES  
WE CAN  
MAKE USE  
OF. COMING  
TO TERMS  
WITH  
THINGS AS  
THEY ARE IS  
MY  
DEFINITION  
OF HEALING  
JON  
KABAT-ZINN

## Some things you could have a Prayer Intention about

The following are just a few things to help raise your awareness about what you could offer prayerful intention over. The idea is that any event, 'trivial' or 'significant', 'personal' or 'unrelated' can be given prayerful intention. The more mindful you are, the more sensitive you will be to the events in your daily life and the more likely you are to bless them with prayerful intent.

As you do this, you will find that more and more of your time is spent on allowing goodness to flow in and through you. That of course also means that you have less and less time and energy spent on resisting life's goodness. What could be better!

Remember, in the reality of Infinite Intelligence, there is nothing too small or too big for prayer to handle.

- Personal illness, recent or chronic
- Someone who is ill
- A lost item
- A new relationship
- Polluted air, oceans, forests
- A meal you're planning to prepare
- A meeting
- Your evenings/mornings
- A medical treatment
- A habit you wish to give up/cultivate
- The desire to forgive/be kind/be thoughtful/be open/be patient
- A stranger you saw while driving who looked like they were stressed
- A person who has been named, blamed and shamed
- A bank, industry or institution that has been named, blamed and shamed
- Someone who has hurt you

- Your body
- Your emotional and mental wellbeing
- An encounter with someone or something
- A task that you need to get done
- A skill that you wish to acquire
- People who are suffering discrimination
- People who are living in poverty
- People in war ravaged countries
- Children at school and their teachers
- People who bully or exploit others
- Children who miss their parents and parents who miss their children
- Spouses who miss their partners
- People who are feeling unsupported
- Houses that are damaged
- People who are suffering from addictions
- People/animals that are neglected or feeling fearful
- A garden that is looking neglected
- A business that is doing well or not doing well
- All the people involved in a business enterprise
- Families of victims of crime
- Families of perpetrators of crime
- Victims
- Perpetrators
- Scientists, nurses, philosophers, artists, magicians...
- Commercial and high rise buildings and dwellers
- Your fears, rejections, resistances and attachments
- Villages and villagers
- Landlords and tenants
- Brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces...
- Lighting, electrical equipment and electronic devices
- Haunting memories, dreams
- Praying!

I hope you get the idea.

Pray for anything and everything.

Let's pray together!



## About Lucy

Lucy has a Bachelor of Science honours degree from the University of London, a Postgraduate Certificate in Education from the University of Hong Kong and completed 80% of her Masters of Education degree before switching to a research degree toward a PhD. She chose not to complete that after spending approximately 5 years part-time researching and reading in the area of Cognitive Psychology where her particular focus was on the impact of beliefs on our wellbeing. She continues, however, to research independently.

She has done courses (and in some cases worked) with Lifeline Australia, Volunteering Australia and the remarkable visionary, scholar and researcher, Jean Houston (student of Joseph Campbell), as well as the enormously successful, heart-tuned, smile-inducing Mike Dooley, author of *Notes from the Universe*.

She has trained in MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, based on the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn) and has also trained in MBSM (Mindfulness Based Stillness Meditation) with Ian Gawler, Australia's own former athlete, veterinarian and cancer-survivor. She is a fully Accredited Meditation Teacher with Meditation Australia.

Her professional portfolio includes High School and Tertiary teaching, Consultancy in Human Resource Management, Retail Assistance, Research, Mentoring, Counselling, Teaching Meditation and Transpersonal Workshopping for individuals and groups.

## What she lives by

I believe in effortless living which I have learned happens when you stop quarrelling with life, with yourself and with others, and start *allowing* Life.

That doesn't mean that you agree with everything, that you object to nothing, that you don't try to make things better or aspire to things greater.



On the contrary, when you stop quarrelling, when you stop insisting that the world is the way you want it be, when you drop all that warring with life, that's when you release yourself from the prison of limited thinking and allow the amazing possibilities of Life to come flooding in. That's when you're truly *free* to be who and what and how you choose to be.

How do I free myself from the prison of limited thinking? It's a moment to moment, life-long thing which I do by being mindful, practicing daily meditation and mentoring and teaching others these skills 😊. Come talk to me about Effortless Living. It's possible. Really 😊