

## The Unlimited Benefits of Limitations

Cheryl Roth  
June 3, 2016



We are born in a time and place for a purpose, but that purpose is multifaceted and limited at the same time. Contrary to pop-culture spirituality that wants us to believe that we have unlimited potential, it is better to recognize limitations for what they are: **THEY ARE GOOD FOR YOU!**

Time and space naturally limit this realm we are born into. The purpose of time and space is spiritual growth, and growth is a process with intention; it seeks maturity. It requires a time period (a lifetime), and specific conditions: historical era, country, race, culture, family,

personality, physical attributes and gender.

Every human being is born with potential, and with specific personality traits and physical characteristics. People are even born with tendencies toward certain diseases, tendencies to think a certain way, and tendencies to make certain lifestyle choices. This is our inheritance. Scientists call these tendencies “markers” on the DNA. But markers can be overcome and DNA can be changed.

We are not born as blank slates with unlimited potential. We are born with physical, mental, emotional and spiritual traits. Every life has a set of both visible and invisible circumstances to deal with, but we have the ability to make a wide variety of choices. It’s up to every human being within the time frame of their life to figure out what to do with their own unique inheritance. To find their unique purpose and fulfill their unique potential.

### Why Limitations Are Important

To tell a young person that they have unlimited potential and that they can do whatever they want is setting them up for a lifetime of false expectations, confusion and failure. It would be better to tell them that their purpose and potential are unique, and that they need to follow their inner voice when making choices.

The unlimited potential mantra is a rather shallow philosophy. Positive thinking is great but it needs to be rooted in reality. Suggesting that a person has unlimited potential ignores the unique birth right of each individual to build on their inheritance.

Unlimited is too wide of a focus for life. It causes a person to search outwardly for direction rather than from within. Children who are taught that they have unlimited potential and that they can do anything, will experience immediate conflict between that idea and reality – because it is not reality.



### The Real Circumstance of Life

Reality is that there are limitations all around us all the time. There are both advantages and disadvantages to being born in a certain time and place, into a specific family, culture, race, religion, country, etc. Each person’s unique personality has both strengths and weaknesses. Growth as a human being is learning how to make the best of the advantages and disadvantages that are present in

life. Everything, good or bad, can be used toward positive spiritual growth.

A mistake can be a good life lesson; a disaster can bring out the best in people; a loss can help us develop strength of character and compassion. However, without good moral and ethical guidance these same circumstances can lead to feelings of failure, self-pity and resentment.

A personality strength can become a weakness, or a weakness can become a strength. If we learn to navigate life being grateful for our inheritance, whatever that might be, we can be happy with who we are. This is why religion has been an important part of human life and the evolution of the spirit, because we need moral and ethical guidance as we are learning and growing.

## The Benefits of Limitations

The purpose of life is to develop the capacity to love as God loves. To do that we need training: exercises and challenges. Can an athlete, artist or musician realize their full potential without training? In the same way, our hearts and minds can not fully develop without education, exercise and challenges.

All the laws and limitations inherent in life are the training ground for spiritual growth. Understanding this creates a base for clarity, acceptance, humility, compassion and confidence.

### Clarity and Acceptance

People are born with all sorts of fortune or misfortune, but what defines a person is how they think about their circumstances and make their choices. Each person's life is a gift and a responsibility. Knowing and accepting this allows us to look for the positive and productive path with intention to do our best. We can choose to make good on the history we come from, and pave a way for a better future based on our unique potential.



### Humility and Compassion

Knowing that every person is born with a variety of limitations and strengths puts us on equal footing. No one is better or worse than anyone else, we all just have different situations to work through in this lifetime.

One person is short, another is tall. One person is heavy; another is naturally skinny. One person is regarded as beautiful or handsome while another is considered homely or unappealing. Are any of these features a legitimate basis to consider someone better than another?

All religious scripture calls for humility and compassion so we can overcome the immature tendency to compare and judge others negatively. Overcoming ego is part of our spiritual training.

### Confidence

Confidence is born out of accomplishment. When a baby takes its first few steps it gains confidence, even if it falls many times. Eventually the baby gains mastery over walking and then learns to run and climb. The baby learns within the unique limitations of their own body size and weight, gravity, terrain and environment. The baby learns with their parents guidance and encouragement.

In the same way, we learn to navigate our life circumstances and our unique personality, learning that we have capabilities; we can do things. As we follow our natural interests and abilities we accomplish things that we can be proud of. Recognizing that everyone is gifted with different talents allows us to have confidence in what we can do, while maintaining an attitude of gratitude, humility and compassion.



### A lack of limitations is an unhealthy environment for growth and learning

On the other hand, no rules, no guidance and total freedom creates false expectations which lead to frustration, envy, jealousy, anger and resentment. It is a setup for chasing false idols and running around in circles not knowing which way to go. It disregards all the real things we have to deal with in life. It sets us up for feeling discouraged, disappointed and even unloved when life doesn't

go the way we want it to.

Imagine giving your 2-year-old total freedom to do anything they want anytime they want. They might not last a day, they need limitations, rules and guidance for their development and safety. As a child grows from birth to adulthood the limitations and guidance changes, but it's primary purpose remains the same – to help the child learn and grow into a capable, confident, productive and loving adult.

### We are designed to keep learning and growing through self-imposed limitations

This realm of time and space gives us continuous opportunities to grow spiritually. Every relationship,

every job, every new stage of life, every day and each moment is full of potential for discovering new things and growing in new ways. To make the best of these opportunities we have to have intention and focus.

Intention is a self-imposed limitation where *you* decide what *you* want to accomplish or focus on. Learning to focus requires the self-discipline of cutting off distractions, which is another self-imposed limitation. The parental, cultural and societal limitations every person experiences growing up are preparation to become a self-disciplined adult who can contribute to the greater good. Part of learning to love others is finding our own unique way to contribute to society.

### **Let's Get Real**

So we need to stop teaching our children that their potential is unlimited, and instead teach them the value of limitations. We need to show them the value of their unique inheritance, and help them learn how to navigate the advantages and disadvantages of their unique spiritual training ground.

Part of the great contribution the Divine Principle has brought to the world is the understanding that each individual is uniquely divine, and has a specific purpose and inheritance. In every life the victory comes through being grateful for what we have, using our strengths and weaknesses purposefully to contribute to the greater good, and developing the compassion and empathy necessary to become a person of true love.