

The Effect of Regenerating Images in Memory (RIM) on Affirmative Prayer Outcomes

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August 15, 2022

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to determine if the addition of two RIM method experiences produces a more tangible and demonstratable result with affirmative prayer. The study revealed that participants' RIM experiences uncovered and worked through hidden emotional blocks to having the outcome they desired. This greater awareness led to breakthroughs that allowed movement toward their desired results. The study also revealed that having a more focused clarity of intention for prayer supported more substantial results.

Introduction

Does prayer work? If it does, why does it work for some more than others?

When we pray for a certain outcome, and it has not manifested, we tend to feel frustrated. It's not unusual to ask "Does prayer work? Am I praying in a wrong way?" or even think, "I am not worthy of such an outcome." Self-doubt or confusion can arise from such an inquiry.

In researching such questions as 'Does prayer work?' or 'Am I doing this right?', one can find many studies. The scientific evidence helps to distinguish between a practice that serves rather than wastes time in unfounded ritual.

This study looked at one's emotions and beliefs and how they affect affirmative prayer outcomes.

New Thought or Affirmative Prayer

This study narrowed its focus to new thought prayer. The New Thought Community is a spiritual movement based on metaphysical concepts. It evolved from the Transcendentalism movement. The concept of "knowing" truths that did not follow logic, often described as faith, goes back to Plato, but it was the German philosopher Immanuel Kant that called it Transcendentalism. The dictionary definition of transcendentalism is a philosophy that "goes beyond the usual limits of human knowledge, experience or reason, especially in a religious or spiritual way." Influenced by the works of Kant, the Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) exchanged transcendental ideas with Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882). In the 1840s, living in America, Emerson brought these concepts to other familiar New Englanders, authors such as Henry David Thoreau and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Although several religious denominations formed during the Transcendental movement, the three major ones are Religious Science (also known as The Science of Mind), Unity, and the Church of Divine Science. The students in this movement are taught affirmative prayer.

Affirmative prayer is a metaphysical technique focused on a positive outcome. Holmes states in his book *This Thing Called You* (Holmes, 1998, pg.44), "...this affirmation is so completely believed in that there is no longer any conscious or subconscious denial of it. When your prayer or treatment arrives at a complete acceptance, it will be answered."

The bible passage from Matthew 9:29, "It shall be done to you according to your belief," is affirmative prayer. In the teachings of New Thought, it is recognized that prayer works when the request of the outcome is in alignment with the emotional belief system of the person praying.

Affirmative prayer consists of five steps (Centers for Spiritual Living, 2021):

1. Recognition: Acknowledging the power of the Source of Life, often referred to as Love, Creator, God, Spirit.
2. Unity: Affirm that the prayer and Source are one – there is no separation.
3. Realization: Affirming the spiritual truth of the prayers' desired outcome. This is when the person praying recognizes the possibilities past the present conditions, plants the seeds of change of thought, and brings about the energy that opens the doors to the desired outcome.
4. Thanksgiving: Feeling of gratitude for the realized outcome the prayer is now opened to receive.
5. Release: Letting go and surrendering the prayer to be manifested by the Laws of the Universe.

Members in the three denominations mentioned earlier (i.e., Science of Mind, Unity, and the Church of Divine Science) who have studied this philosophy extensively can become licensed to offer spiritual guidance to others. They are called Practitioners or Prayer Partners.

Science of Mind

Holmes set out in his early teen years to seek the thread of truth that connected the world's religions. Some of the authors and teachers aligned with the New Thought movement who inspired Holmes were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Troward, Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, and Emma Curtis Hopkins.

According to Ernest Holmes (1998), if we have clarity, belief, and confidence in a particular outcome, then prayer will work. He also asserts, "Not only must we have complete faith in Spirit [Greater Power], and Its ability to know and do, but we must have complete confidence in our approach to it. We must not be lukewarm in our conviction. We must know that we know," (pg. 159).

How we get to this level of belief seems to be the next logical question. Holmes taught, that to reach that knowing, we will need to recognize the mental equivalent of the requested outcome. He describes "mental equivalency" as "having a subjective idea of the desired experience," (pg.610). Holmes also makes a point of stating "Before a mental attitude can be created, there must be nothing left in the subjective state of our thought which contradicts our objective affirmation." (pg. 283).

Overall, understanding of this is that the effect of our efforts has a positive outcome when we get clear on what we desire. A good practice to discern what we want is to ask, "Is the fulfillment of this work worth our efforts?" As we take the time to identify what matters to us and get a clear vision of a clearly defined outcome, our energy and focus and attention becomes

specifically directed. As Holmes stated, we do not want to stay lukewarm with our endeavors, but rather become confident in what we want, letting go of areas or efforts that are not serving us any longer. This effort brings us to deeply believe that life supports our personal objectives and supports that God loves us and wants us to be successful. This feeling of sureness also may motivate one to take the extra actions needed to accomplish the outcome desired.

The Science of Intention and Outcome

In their article, *Bridging the Intention-behavior Gap: Planning, Self-efficacy, and Action Control in the Adoption and Maintenance of Physical Exercise*, Sniehotta and Schwarzer (2005) assert that if individuals set an intention to change their health habits but take no action, it creates a discrepancy called “intention-behavior gap.” (pg.143)

Another study arrived at a similar conclusion, “Conceptional and empirical analysis of the intention-behavior relationship has revealed that the gap between intention and behavior can mainly be attributed to persons who intend to act but fail to realize their intentions. It can be assumed that intentions play a crucial role in health-behavior change because non-intenders are found to seldom engage in action. In the motivational phase, a person develops an intention to change, based on self-beliefs, such as risk perceptions, outcome expectancies, and perceived self-efficacy,” (Orbell & Sheeran, 1998, pg. 145). The article continues, “If the positive outcome expectancies (pros) outweigh the negative ones (cons), the likelihood of developing an intention to change the behavior increases.” (pg. 145)

Intention is when we set a focus or goal towards a certain outcome. Our intentions are the motivators that can change the direction in which we are moving. The basic effort of taking the time and developing a thoughtful intention on just about anything in our lives, is a way that can make an impact on attaining our desired outcomes. When we take the time to look at what is

happening in our life and any area that we want to improve, we have started the process of developing a new result. The exciting part of being willing to consider a new outcome, is to know that we do have the ability to influence situations in our lives.

Reflecting on a given situation, where we are struggling with our results, allows us to sense if there are some limiting beliefs getting in the way of our success. We can evaluate if what we have been putting effort into is important to us, or do we need to adjust it. This process also helps us assess if we need to ask for support to achieve our intention.

Intention and Neuroscience

The HeartMath Institute (HMI) proved that combining a clear intention with an elevated emotion triggers an electrical and magnetic charge in the body, and it can change one's biological energy (HeartMath Institute, 2013). According to HMI, we can learn to regulate our body's state to be in heart coherence with others. As we begin to practice the habit of slowing down our mind and focus more on the heart, mind and emotional alignment, we often are able to encounter our natural instincts. HMI suggests we can usually remember what it feels like to be in this state of harmony, although for the most part, we leave it up to chance to be in such an experience. Through research, HMI shows how when we can shift into a coherent state; when in this state, the heart and brain coordination inspires spontaneous creative solutions for our challenges. HMI also states that when we hold sincere feelings of gratitude, compassion, and kindness, we increase our hearts harmony with the thinking mind. By slowing down and listening to our inner voice, we can gain guidance for more insights that can increase potential for more desired outcomes (HeartMath Institute, 2013).

In her book *The Intention Experiment*, Lynne McTaggart (2007) shares numerous studies that show that magnetic energy flowing from healers and meditators can be measured.

McTaggart suggests that one's thoughts affect one's physical reality and that thoughts are things and influence physical outcomes.

Stanford University physicist, William Tiller, supported McTaggart's premise when he constructed a device to measure the energy produced by healers. Study healers held their hands six inches from his device. When they had a focused intention in mind the number of recorded pulses would increase by 50,000 and remain there for five minutes. "These increases occurred even if a participant was not in proximity to the machine, so long as he or she held an intention. Tiller concluded that directed thoughts produce demonstrable physical energy, even over remote distance," (McTaggart, 2007, pg. 24).

McTaggart became increasingly interested in the study of "masters" of intention, which were trained meditators or healers, as the results of studies were verifying that they were enabling the use of their minds more powerfully than the rest of us. She engaged the assistance of psychologist Stanley Krippner and his student Allan Cooperstein at Saybrook Graduate School. They studied different techniques employed by healers. "In every instance," McTaggart said, "I discovered, the most important first step involved achieving a state of concentrated focus, or peak attention," (McTaggart, 2007, pg. 67).

Krippner describes how many cultures have achieved this state of concentrated focus with hallucinogenic drugs. However, many cultures obtain this altered state of consciousness with a strong repetitive rhythm, such as drumming, dance, or intense pattern of breathing. As McTaggart continued interviewing the healers, the methods varied. She found, "Prayer, meditation, and the other methods often focused on eliciting strong intention on the person to be healed. Most described achieving a process that lessened inner chatter, sometimes to a point of ceasing it," (pg. 68).

This study gives insight to the biblical saying from Matthew 18:19, “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.” The above research, also revealed that the rhythm of saying prayers, mantras, and chants spoken together or in a group, brings about focused or concentrated intention.

McTaggart (2007) describes how such a shift was demonstrated by Roger Nelson and Dean Radin who developed “FieldReg” devices (random event generators, REG) to measure the effects of focused groups on random outputs of machines. In 1997 they placed the REGs throughout the world and began continuous running of the equipment. “Although activity of the REGs was normal in the days leading up to 9/11, the machines became increasingly correlated a few hours before the first tower was hit, as though there had been a mass premonition. This similarity in output continued for two days after the first strike,” (McTaggart, 2007, pg. 181). What was important to note was that every one of 37 REG machines recorded a change. It appears that especially in catastrophes, such as deaths, and impeachments, the REG machines registered the largest changes. The joyous occasions, such as births, weddings also have impact. It seems the changes positive or negative match the emotional intensity of the events.

The above research suggests that human beings can change their body energy by tapping into their heart. Knowing this practice has been measured scientifically and informs us that we can effectively influence the stress levels on our bodies. It reveals that over time, focusing on our emotional and physical states can alter the physical reality of one’s mind and body.

The RIM Method

The Founder of Regenerating Images in Memory (RIM) Institute, Dr. Deborah Sandella, PhD, RN., developed a method of processing emotions through a client led technique. The RIM technique invites imagination to translate hidden feelings into perceived form; through RIM, we

learn how to collaborate with our inherent emotional operating system (EOS). Stuck emotional residue from past events are spontaneously identified by the unconscious and organically dissolved. In her book *Goodbye, Hurt & Pain*, Dr. Sandella (2016) writes, “When we become conscious of emotion, we gain the ability to intentionally choose a healthy response rather than a mindless knee-jerk reaction,” (pg. 163). Dr. Sandella explains, “RIM is a way to unlock emotional memory to regenerate new empowering versions,” (pg. 141). The effectiveness of RIM is grounded in recent neuroscience research. For example, Ecker, Ticic, and Huled (2016) the authors of *Unlocking the Emotional Brain* found “New learning always creates new neural circuits, but it is only when new learning also unwires old learning that transformational change occurs,” (pg. 4). Dr. Sandella shares with readers that by closing our eyes and noticing our inner sensations, we learn to sense inner wisdom. She suggests that as the practice of going within is developed, “...you create an intimate relationship with yourself – an inner experience of being seen and heard,” (Sandella, pg. 93). Having a technique that accesses such a personal connection allows one to develop discernment, which heightens emotional intelligence.

Skills within the RIM technique are taught at the RIM Institute. Dr. Sandella’s book offers step-by-step processes that allow the reader to experience the technique on their own. If sensing a need to go deeper, reaching out to a trained facilitator in RIM allows a supportive and effective way to discover what is nudging us or what may be holding us back from what we desire. According to Dr. Sandella, it is empowering to know that our imagination can reveal our potential.

Because RIM has been found to dissolve emotional blocks and create greater freedoms, the RIM method was selected as the intervention for this study. Using RIM, to dissolve emotional blocks or “mental equivalents” as Holmes called them, offers a technique that might

increase the subjective belief and inner feeling that participants deserve to receive their desired expectations.

Hypotheses

As shared earlier, a review of literature suggests that focused intention increases the effectiveness of affirmative prayer results. Further, RIM offers a heavily neuroscience-backed way to dip into the unconscious to discover and dissolve emotional blocks. Thus, defining intentions more narrowly and dissolving emotional blocks to desired outcomes, is the focus of this study.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this study is: consciously setting more focused intentions in addition to experiencing two RIM sessions will produce measurable results in participants achieving more fulfilled affirmative prayer outcomes.

Methodology

I. Participant Recruitment

A. Criteria

1. Licensed Science of Mind Prayer Practitioner
2. An unfulfilled prayer outcome
3. Willingness to participate fully

B. Recruitment Platforms

1. Personal Facebook platform
2. New Thought communities list-serve

C. Selection

1. 11 practitioners responded
2. 10 practitioners were selected
3. 1 practitioner declined due to time commitment

II. Procedure

A. Initial Survey

1. Purpose
 - a. Determine participants' state of mind and prayer practice prior to study
 - b. Clarification of desired outcome
 - c. Amount of action taken toward outcome prior to study
2. Initial Survey Questions
 - a. Eleven questions
- B. Session One
 1. Participant verbally clarified intention
 2. Participant experienced a facilitated RIM session, afterwards s/he focused their prayer intention as indicated
 3. Participant received instructions to continue to pray as usual for the next two weeks
- C. Session Two
 1. Participants were given time to express their thoughts about the previous week's experience
 2. Participant experienced the second RIM session
 3. Participant was informed that in two weeks, a secondary survey will be sent to them and at that time they could expect a call from the facilitator for a final debriefing.
- D. Post RIM Survey
 1. Survey questions
 - a. Eighteen questions, with the last seven questions formed to aid researcher in understanding participants' frame of reference
 - b. Questions 3, 8, 9, 11 reflected significant differences between Pre and Post surveys scores, and thus became the focus of the findings
 2. Data analysis
 3. Final contact for debriefing and to thank participant for involvement

Results

Out of the eleven pre-survey questions, four demonstrate a significant shift on post-survey responses: 1. Levels of Frustration (Question 3; Figure 1), 2. Levels of Perceived Worthiness to Receive (Question 8; Figure 2), 3. Levels of Worthiness between Prayer (Question

9; Figure 3), and 4. Frequency of Action Taken Toward Desired Outcome (Question 11; Figure 4). For confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant.

1. Level of Frustration

Following two RIM sessions, all participants reported a reduction in their perceived level of frustration (see Figure 1). Pre-RIM all participants reported high levels of frustration regarding their prayer outcomes; seven out of ten participants reported levels of 8 or higher on a scale of 10. Post-RIM all participants reported reductions in frustration that ranged from 2 to 9 levels; six participants cut their perceived level of frustration in half.

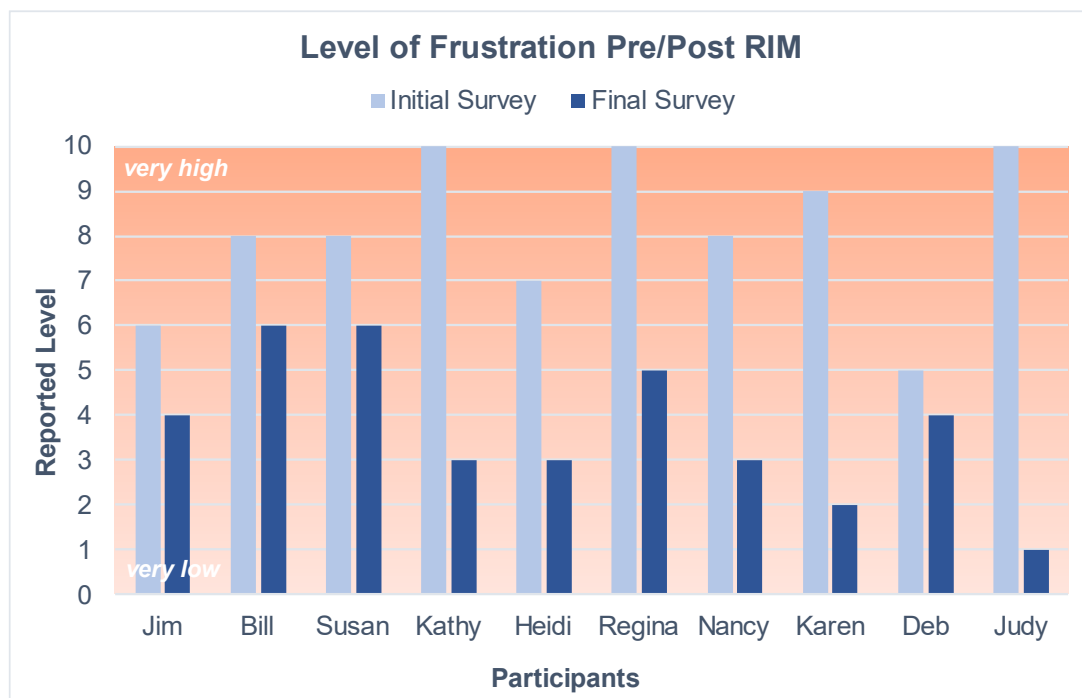


Figure 1, Question 3: *With this outcome, my current frustration level is...*

2. Perceived Level of Worthiness

All participants reported levels 6 or higher on a scale of 10 levels of perceived worthiness; six participants reported levels 8 or higher. Following two sessions of RIM, all participants either stayed the same or reported higher levels of perceived worthiness (see Figure 2). The four participants who reported a level 6 of perceived worthiness on their initial survey, reported an increase of 2 to 4 levels on their post survey. All participants reported a level 8 or higher of perceived worthiness on their post survey.

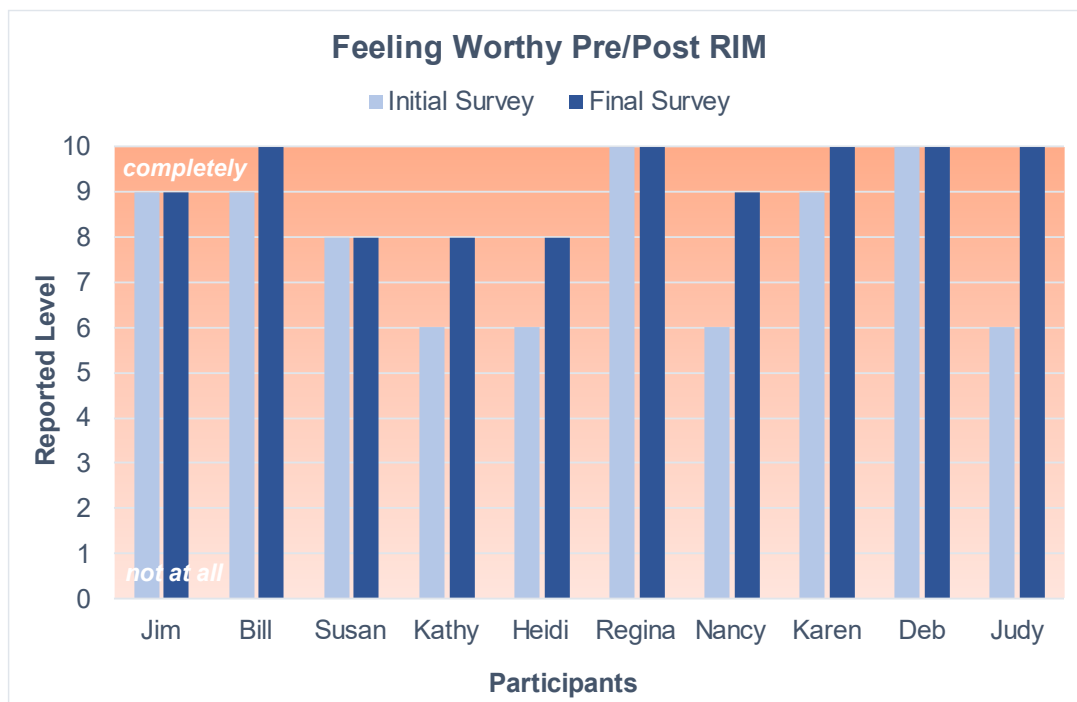


Figure 2, Question 8: *Perceived Level of Worthiness*

3. Perceived Level of Worthiness between prayers

Prior to the RIM sessions, all participants reported at least a level 5 of perceived worthiness between prayers; six participants reported levels 7 or higher (see Figure 3). Post RIM, all participants reported levels of 8 or higher. The three participants who initially reported the lowest level of perceived worthiness between prayers (i.e., level 5) increased their perceived levels of worthiness to levels 8, 9, and 10.

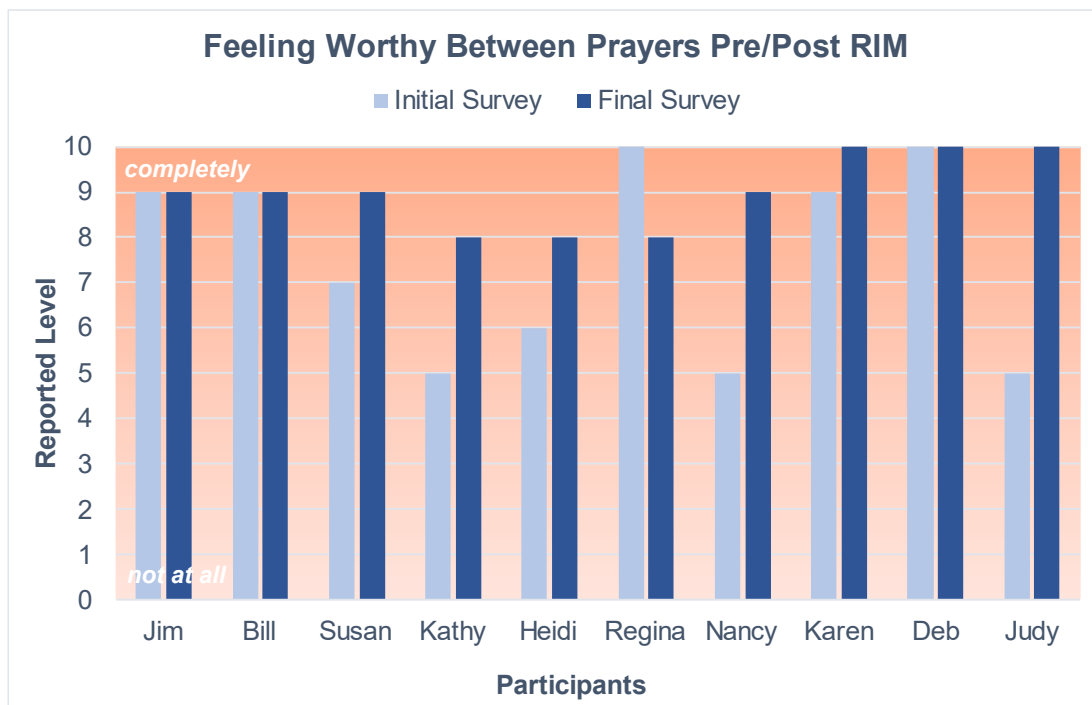


Figure 3 Question 9: *Between prayers, the level to which I feel worthy of receiving what I requested is...*

4. Frequency of Action Taken Toward Desired Outcome

Initially, four out of ten participants reported at least a level 5 in regard to the frequency of action taken toward desired outcomes; six participants reported levels 7 or higher (see Figure 4). Post RIM, all but one participant reported levels 8 or higher. Seven out of ten participants improved the amount of action taken by 1-5 levels. The four participants who initially reported the lowest levels of actions taken to support their desired outcomes (i.e., level 5) increased their levels of actions 2 to 5 levels.

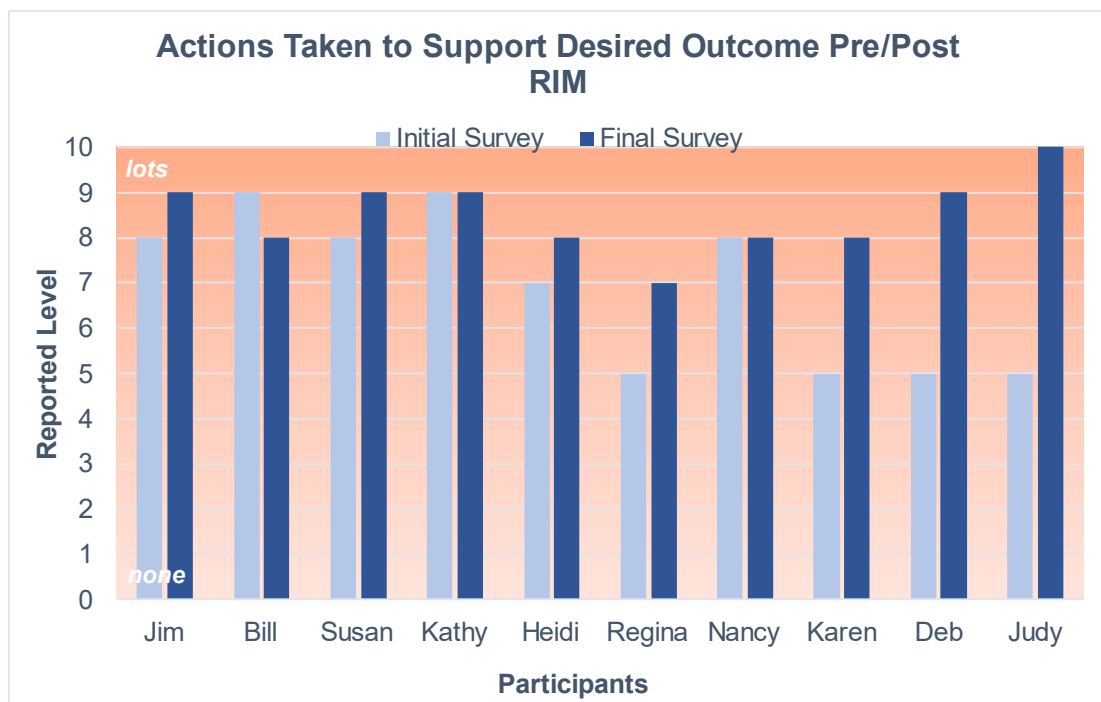


Figure 4, Question 11: *The amount of action I have taken to support my desired outcome is...*

Observations from RIM Sessions

Seven out of 10 participants said that RIM addressed underlying emotions or blocks. They were surprised by this.

Below are a few direct quotes from the participants in reference to their experience of RIM and setting mindful intentions to support their prayers (please note that names have been changed to preserve participants' privacy):

Deb: "I've never prayed consistently to process through my own fears and hesitations. I have a desire to know even more; I want to feel abundance, not just know abundance."

Nancy: "I noticed a heightened awareness of my emotions, it seemed like an expansiveness."

Susan: "I feel lighter, like I have more inner strength."

Heidi: "I feel vibrant, purposeful – very light and content."

Karen: "Looking at habits that prevent me from reaching my goals – it feels freeing."

Regina: "I noticed that I had been a hostage to fear. I'm feeling strong."

Linda: "I feel that I am being more authentic to myself."

Example of a Detailed RIM Session Experience

In this RIM example, the participant identified as Nancy went into the study saying that she'd experienced back pain for some time without relief. On the pre-survey, she reported a high level of frustration (8 out of 10 with 10 being highest) because of lack of comfort. She expressed that she had been living with a belief that she had to just live with sciatica.

This RIM session took her back to childhood where she sensed her stomach was in tight knots. As she unraveled the knots, she realized that she felt she looked different from her classmates, as she was a "bookworm" and had to wear glasses. When she went to her mother to gain comfort, she was told, "She just had to live with it." During the RIM session, she expressed to her mother how frightened she was. Her mother (who imagination turned into a Universal Mother) expressed how she wanted this shy, introverted child to know she was loved for who she

was and who she had become. The participant began to feel free of needing to be perfect, to be loved, including self-love. She described a sense of peace in her body and a comfort with her body's aging process. By the end of the session, she felt energized and surprised that so much had been blocked out of her conscious awareness.

At the end of the study (4 weeks later), her frustration level decreased from level 8 to level 3. (On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being highest.)

Discussion

All study participants were individuals who were committed to their studies and their work in the field of prayer and healing. The participants had strong tendencies and belief systems when they rated their worthiness. Those who reported very high initial levels stayed very high. Those who reported slightly lower levels gained in perceived feelings of worthiness by the time the study was completed. At the end of the study, they reported that rather than intellectually believing it, they now emotionally felt it to be true in their bodies. With the RIM process, the belief becomes a felt experience, which can inspire new habits that produce the desired results.

Although we may feel that we are mindful when we pray, by clarifying and focusing our intention of the desired result, dissolving emotional blocks, and taking action toward our desired outcome, we can experience the declaration in Matthew 8:13, "That as thou believe, so be it done unto thee." What stands out about Nancy's experience is when she experienced the release of an old emotional hurt and allowed the old 'tied up in knots' pain to dissolve; she spontaneously experienced compassion and love.

In this study, the addition of two RIM experiences allowed participants to become aware of unconscious emotional blocks and dissolve them, which turned their knowledge of spiritual concepts into an embodied experience. Based on the survey results, all participants experienced

notable increases in both actions taken to support desired outcomes and their confidence (in general and between prayers) that they deserved to have the outcome they wanted.

Suggestions for Further Research

Since this study showed that two RIM sessions can have a measurable impact on affirmative prayer outcomes, it would be interesting to extend the study by applying a monthly 1-on-1 participant consultation and RIM session, to explore the potential of transforming issues more immediately when they arise.

It would also be interesting to do a study, as Rev. Josh Reeves describes, “Where science and spirituality can meet,” (Reeves, 2022) to further explore the impact of how our emotions drive our results. These findings suggest that focused intention + RIM emotional processing + physical action can produce a better life. A study evaluating upon this formula would be a helpful next step.

Conclusion

The practitioners in this study demonstrate that though they felt like worthy human beings, they still had unconscious doubts about it. In this study, all participants reported remarkable results with the addition of focused intention and two RIM sessions including reduced frustration levels, increased levels of perceived worthiness and more actions taken to support desired outcomes.

The data suggest that lowering frustration and increasing a sense of worthiness affect results and that RIM is an effective way to quickly do so.

By adding RIM, which employs spontaneous imagination and body awareness to identify the source of emotional blocks, the participants processed unconscious emotions, noting how

surprised they were that some of these blocks were still present even though they'd been doing years of personal growth development, many over 10 years.

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Appendix 1

Survey 1 Questions

1. Currently, I would best describe my practice as...
 Unceasing prayer
 Daily
 Weekly
 Once or twice a month
 Active at the time of crises
2. The outcome I have been praying for that I have not received is...
3. With this outcome, my current frustration level is...
 a scale of 1-10 1=very low, 10= very high
4. How much I want this outcome is...
 a scale of 1-10 1=not at all, 10= most desired
5. I have been praying for this outcome for...
 1-3 weeks
 1-2 months
 3-6 months
 more than 6 months
6. How often I feel confident this prayer will be answered is...
 Never
 Occasionally
 Sometimes
 Often
 Always
7. How often I have asked others for support to make this outcome happen is...
 Never
 Occasionally
 Sometimes
 Often
 Frequently
8. The level to which I feel worthy of receiving what I requested is...
 a scale of 1-10 1=not at all, 10= completely

9. Between prayers, the level to which I feel worthy of receiving what I requested is...
a scale of 1-10 1=not at all, 10= completely
10. The strength of my belief in the possibility of my desired outcome is...
a scale of 1-10 1=very weak, 10= very strong
11. The amount of action I have taken to support my desired outcome is...
a scale of 1-10 1=none, 10= lots

Appendix 2

Survey 2 Questions

1. Currently, I would best describe my practice as...
Unceasing prayer
Daily
Weekly
Once or twice a month
Active at the time of crises
2. If any, the variance I made to the 4-step protocol was...
3. In regard to praying on this outcome, my current frustration level is...
a scale of 1-10 1=very low, 10= very high
4. How much I want this outcome is...
a scale of 1-10 1=not at all, 10= most desired
5. How often I feel confident this prayer will be answered is...
Never
Occasionally
Sometimes
Often
Always
6. Since the last survey, how often I have asked others for support to make this outcome happen is...
Never
Occasionally
Sometimes
Often
Frequently
7. The level to which I feel worthy of receiving what I requested is...
a scale of 1-10 1=not at all, 10= completely
8. Between prayers, the level to which I feel worthy of receiving what I requested is...
a scale of 1-10 1=not at all, 10= completely
9. The strength of my belief in the possibility of my desired outcome is...
a scale of 1-10 1=very weak, 10= very strong

10. Since the last survey, the amount of action I have taken to support my desired outcome is...

a scale of 1-10 1=none, 10= lots

11. The differences (e.g., subtle or big), if any, that I've noticed in my life since I started this study are...

12. Currently the status of my desired outcome is...

Unchanged

Some movement

Significant progress

Very significant progress

Fully manifested

13. How I feel about the current status of my desired outcome is...

Discouraged

Hopeful

Encouraged

Empowered

Incredibly happy

14. My experience during this study and how it influenced me is...

15. What I have learned about myself during this experience is...

16. What I have learned about supplementing affirmative prayer with RIM is...

17. After completing the 4-step study protocol, how I rate the impact of the addition of RIM to my prayer practice is...

N/A

The addition of RIM did not make a difference

The addition of RIM made a slight difference

The addition of RIM made a noticeable difference

The addition of RIM made a major difference

18. Additional thoughts I have about this experience are...