



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Quirks, Flaws, and Grace

Ah ... young love ... early romance - is there anything like it? Excitement, investment, patience, power, discovery - so many wonderful things wrapped up with fluttering hearts and silly grins. We often speak of the "rose-colored glasses" worn by young lovers - those imaginary glasses that make love objects look rosy good. They tend to blur out flaws and explain them away as something positive. Her quirks and flaws make her cute; his make him exciting. Isn't it great? If only it would stay this way!

As most of us know, time, stress, failure, and growing familiarity tend to rub some of the gloss off young love. Our strength gets taxed, our resources are depleted, our patience is tried, and our humor is worn thin. The quirks and flaws that once made our love object "special" become less appealing. Truth is, they annoy us, frustrate us, and even create some distance in the relationship. We all know this can happen. Yet, when it does, we seem unsure of how to deal with it. We might ask the other person to change their behavior, and at times this works. Other times, they are offended or fail to grasp the importance of the request, and nothing changes. So, we decide to "put up with" the flaws. After all, we reason, the things that bother us aren't

that terrible. We might even feel a little guilty that they irritate us at all, so we try to ignore them. But the harder we work at it, the more we become aware of them. This just isn't working!

Fortunately, we have another alternative - *grace*. Grace is a word often reserved for religious circles and spiritual discussions. Yet, it applies so well to everyday life and love. By definition, grace is simply giving (or receiving) something good that is not earned or deserved. It is an act of love, a gift of the heart.

How does grace apply to our relationships? Well, since all of our relationships are with imperfect, quirky, flawed people (including us), we have a choice to make. We can criticize each others flaws and use them to set a tone of tension in our relationships, or we can bathe these flaws in grace and let acceptance and love dominate our relationships.

How is this done most effectively? Let's consider these points.

1. Grace works best in an atmosphere of openness and honesty about the realities of our relationship. Interestingly, openness and honesty are easier in an atmosphere of grace.

2. Grace is not weakness, avoidance, stupidity, ignorance, or blindness. We can only extend grace to cover what we dare to be aware of.

3. Grace is not "tolerance of" or "putting up with" flaws. It is the active embrace of them as part of the whole package that is the object of your love.

4. With grace, change is not required for love to be given. Grace, then, is an essential part of loving an imperfect person.

5. Grace is not a tool to build a delayed reaction "gripe list" designed for future attack. Acceptance in love does not permit this.

6. For the receiver, grace is not a permission slip to stagnate or not grow and improve. Rather, it provides the security and freedom to openly work on becoming an even better person and partner. (Don't hide behind the excuse "That's just me"!)

7. Also, giving grace does not free us of our responsibility to clearly confront that which is hurtful or destructive in our partner. Behavior that must change for the health of each partner needs to be productively addressed, or the relationship may become sick and die.

While grace is not the answer for all issues, it is the love oil that allows imperfect people to live alongside each other without excess friction or heat. Let's anoint each other liberally!



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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Spirituality and Grace

It's December, and Christmas has been the dominant theme of music, media, and money spent for weeks. Yet, there have also been heated discussions about whether it is even appropriate to greet others with "Merry Christmas" instead of "Happy Holidays".

Apparently, there is a fear that mentioning Christmas could be offensive to some people - not for its connection to Santa, presents, lights, and trees, but for its true meaning found in the birth of Jesus, God's gift to us. After all, we can't celebrate Jesus' birth without also recognizing the mission and purpose of His life on earth - to be a sacrifice of grace to restore our relationship with our God.

This is where we have our model of grace. It's God giving to us what we don't deserve - not just forgiveness for our rebellion, but a renewed relationship with Him.

Let's joyously and unapologetically celebrate the grace we have been given, and eagerly pass it on!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!



" Friendships aren't perfect, and yet they are very precious. For me, not expecting perfection all in one place was a great release."

- Letty Cottin Pogrebin