



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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The Good, the Bad, the Real

Funeral eulogies are interesting. Presented by a close relative or friend of the deceased, the eulogy typically highlights the positive qualities and accomplishments of the deceased. In an effort to honor the one who has died, it graciously recalls the good, the admirable, the enjoyable.

Most of us would agree, however, that we have both positive and negative qualities - our "good" and "bad", so to speak. We all have our areas of vulnerability, and in a given set of circumstances, we might show behaviors and attitudes that are weak, fearful, unkind, impatient, unruly, incompetent or frightening. A large part of the "growth challenge" we face during our life revolves around strengthening and expanding our positive qualities (e.g. - patience, love, joy, kindness, respect, gentleness, thankfulness, encouragement), while altering or decreasing our negative qualities.

Being relational creatures, we not only share our good and bad qualities with those around us, but we also are exposed to theirs. Some of us seek to focus on their good qualities; some of us prefer to criticize and expound on their bad ones. Consider the young lovers wearing their "rose-colored glasses", who see only the good and

positive in their love object. There is the "grumpy old man" who separates from others and "doesn't have a good word to say about anyone." Then there is the woman who sees positives in others, but is reluctant to see anything good in herself. Different people ... different attitudes ... different focus. But which is the better way?

To answer this question, we must remember why we relate in the first place. Simply put, we choose to connect with other people to enjoy their positive traits in a context of relative safety and security. This context, or relationship, is not free of everything negative or potentially harmful, since we all take our less desirable qualities with us wherever we go. But we expect these weaknesses to be harnessed and controlled to the extent that the relationship stays safe and invites openness and vulnerability.

How, then, can we build and enjoy relationships as people who are both whole and broken? How do we expose our heart to others, yet minimize the risk of being hurt by their weaknesses?

Perhaps a few suggestions would be helpful.

1) Realize that any life worth living, and any relationship worth having, includes some element of risk.

2) Be bold and real. Dare to see

both the strengths and weaknesses in others (and our self). Life, people, and relationships are seldom neat and tidy. Our "messyness" simply points to our need to keep growing.

3) Strengthen yourself. Our safety is a function both of our environment *and* our ability to handle our environment. Accordingly, we must continue to mature mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, so we can safely handle the messyness of life.

4) Consciously decide to focus on the positives of people and life. Since we are designed to relate, let's do our best to enjoy those we relate to. Life is more fun that way.

5) Be wise. Enter relationships gradually. Sadly, the negative qualities of some people are dangerous and generate abuse. While abuse takes on many forms, its ultimate outcome is wounding and loss of safety for the abused. In such conditions, the healthy relationship dies. It is important that we not ignore, deny, or excuse abuse, and if it continues, that we separate our self from the source of the harm.

6) Choose to love and be loved. Hiding behind the protective wall of a negative focus may seem like a safe place, but it's easy to starve behind that wall, bitter and alone. Be guided by your wisdom and empowered by your strength to bless others with your self. Embrace their best; offer yours.



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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 Goodness/Badness/Realness

Consider this. Given the existence of an all-knowing Creator God and the reality of our own imperfections, it is futile to work hard at being "good enough" to earn a relationship with this perfect God. Our failures, like those of all mankind, break the relationship and create distance that separates, rather than unites us.

Fortunately, our God values our relationship with Him so much that He provides the "Christ-path" of relationship renewal. Embracing this path, we have the opportunity to experience first-hand what it is to be loved with a perfect love, where only our strengths, our right choices, and our positive accomplishments of service and worship are recognized, while our failings are separated far from who we are in the eyes of our God.

Living in this love today, we can release our preoccupation with our failings, and instead focus on our strengths and gifts and the opportunities to use them daily for His glory.

Now that's freedom!

* Want to know more about the Christ-path? Get in touch with me and I'd be happy to share more!



"It was only a sunny smile,
And little it cost in the giving.
But like the morning light,
it scattered the night,
And made the day worth
living."

- Anonymous