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Q&A Forum - Review

Acceptance & Letting Go, 2005-02

Fellow Q&Aers,

Several quick announcements before the Q&A today.

First, I am pleased to announce that I will have a master's level student intern, Fernanda DeSousa, working with us until July. She is observing some sessions and co-facilitating the Tuesday night group I run. She will also be with us during supervision and helping on the phones with new intakes. If you should see her around the office, please say hi! and welcome her to our staff. This is an excellent way for me to spread the word about how we do what we do and what makes us better than the next counseling agency.

Next, I am pleased to announce that I will be running a 10 session Couples Growth Group on Sunday evenings starting on March 6th. I am attaching to this email a brochure with more details. Please look at it and, if at all possible, help me spread the word by forwarding it to others who might be interested. I believe this group is a great way to strengthen one's relationship by providing insights and skills with opportunities to practice. I am biased in this belief since I have designed the group! I have copies of the brochure available in the office; if you would like one mailed to you, please let me know as soon as possible.

Finally, a special thank you to Lionel, Sheila & Barbara for the bonuses used in this Q&A. Peace, John

Q: How do I attain acceptance and the ability to let go of someone or a situation?

A: The word "attain" implies that you have to work hard at something. The irony is that "acceptance" is a passive activity. "Working" at "acceptance" then becomes an oxymoron! Try: "This is the situation; it is what it is, not what I want it to be. I don't need to like it, but I have to accept it." Not accepting it becomes work.

Perhaps another way to approach your question is to look at what you are holding onto. Often it is the situation, or the situation the way you want it to be. Are you holding onto the person, preventing him or her from being the person they choose to be? Ultimately, the only thing you have to hold onto is your self. If you are holding onto another, you are limiting them from being what they choose to be and you are not taking care of your self!

If you are codependent, then you tend to look to people outside of your self for a sense of your own identity, and your okay-ness. If you are "holding on," what are you afraid of? Your self? The easiest way to go, and it defies the twisted logic of dysfunction, is to your self. If you can get clear, as the Serenity Prayer indicates, as to what is you, what is not you, and the wisdom to know where you end and everything else begins, then you may be on the way. You are powerless over all that is not you. If your focus has been external, i.e. on situations or people, then turn it inward and get grounded in your self. Learn about your feelings and how to handle them, your thoughts and your behaviors. Learn to accept what you are powerless over. Let go..... or be dragged.

One sidebar, where does God or Higher Power (HP) fit into this? God is within you as

well as in your world. Search for Him within. Learn to be at peace with your self and with HP who will never leave you. One of the 12 steps begins with..... "Sought through prayer and meditation....." Try it. Remember, you and God are a pair that will beat three of a kind any day!

If you continue to struggle with letting go of situations or someone, then get a good counselor who understands these issues and work with her/him for 2-3 months on issues directly related to these. I wish you peace in who you are and in all that you do.
-John

Quote: "Don't waste today regretting yesterday instead of making a memory for tomorrow." - Laura Palmer

Bonus 1

Things to Remember

"To the world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world."

"Going to church does not make you a Christian anymore than going to McDonalds make you a hamburger.

"Real friends are those who, when you feel you've made a fool of yourself, don't feel you've done a permanent job."

A coincidence is when God performs a miracle, and decides to remain anonymous."

"Sometimes the majority only means that all the fools are on the same side."

"I don't have to attend every argument I'm invited to."

"Lead your life so you won't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip."

"People gather bundles of sticks to build bridges they never cross."

"Life is 10% of what happens to you, and 90% of how you respond to it."

"Did it ever occur to you that nothing occurs to God?"

"Life is like an onion; you peel off one layer at a time and sometimes you weep."

"Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself."

"There are two things I've learned: There is a God. And, I'm not Him."

"Following the path of least resistance is what makes rivers and men crooked."

"Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace."

"When it comes time to die...make sure all you got to do is die."

"Friends are angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly."

"Everything in life has a meaning and a purpose. Life is too short, enjoy it with the ones you love."

Bonus 2

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

When in sorrow,call John 14.

When men fail you,call Psalm 27.

If you want to be fruitful,call John 15.

When you have sinned,call Psalm 51.

When you worry,call Matthew 6:19-34.

When you are in danger,call Psalm 91.

When God seems far away,call Psalm 139.

When your faith needs stirring,call Hebrews 11.

When you are lonely and fearful,call Psalm 23.

When you grow bitter and critical, call I Corinthians 13.
 For Paul's secret to happiness,.....call Colossians 3:12-17.
 For understanding of Christianity,call II Corinthians 5:15-19.
 When you feel down and out,call Romans 8:31.
 When you want peace and rest,call Matthew 11:25-30.
 When the world seems bigger than God, call Psalm 90.
 When you want Christian assurance,call Romans 8:1-30.
 When you leave home for labor or travel, ..call Psalm 121.
 When your prayers grow narrow or selfish, call Psalm 67.
 For a great invention/opportunity, call Isaiah 55.
 When you want courage for a task,call Joshua 1.
 For how to get along with fellow men, call Romans 12.
 When you think of investments and returns,..... call Mark 10.
 If you are depressed, call Psalm 27.
 If your pocketbook is empty, call Psalm 37.
 If you are losing confidence in people, ... call I Corinthians 13.
 If people seem unkind, call John 15.
 If discouraged about your work, call Psalm 126.
 If you find the world growing small and yourself great,.. call Psalm19.

Alternate numbers:

For dealing with fear, call Psalm 34:7.
 For security, call Psalm 121:3.
 For assurance, call Mark 8:35.
 For reassurance, call Psalm 145:18.

Emergency numbers may be dialed direct. No operator assistance is necessary. All lines to Heaven are open 24 hours a day! Feed your faith, and doubt will starve to death!

Bonus 3

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art.

When the Viet Nam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art. The young man held out his package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this." The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift."

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected.

The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection. On the platform sat the painting of the

son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?" There was silence. Then a voice in the back of the room shouted, "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one."

But the auctioneer persisted, "Will someone bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?" Another voice shouted angrily, "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Goghs, the Rembrandts. Get on with the real bids!"

But still the auctioneer continued, "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?" Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford. "We have \$10, who will bid \$20?" "Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the masters." "\$10 is the bid, won't someone bid \$20?" The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections. The auctioneer pounded the gavel. "Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!"

A man sitting on the second row shouted, "Now let's get on with the collection!"

The auctioneer laid down his gavel, "I'm sorry, the auction is over." "What about the paintings?" "I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets everything!"

God gave his son 2,000 years ago to die on a cruel cross. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is, "The son, the son, who'll take the son?" Because you see, whoever takes the Son gets everything.

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