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Q&A Forum - Review

What Does "I Need Space, I Need Time" really mean? 2008-05

Fellow Q&Aers,

Greetings! I hope your holidays are being blessed and that 2009 offers you many and varied opportunities for personal growth.

Here is an update on plans for our new newsletter which I mentioned in our last Q&A: I asked to be told if you did not want to be included in the mailing list to receive our new newsletter. To date, everyone has chosen to remain on the list! I have been thinking that I will publish our newsletter four times a year and will fill in the spaces between issues with a regular Q&A. Archives will still be maintained in the Q&A Archives section of our website and the most recent newsletter will also appear in the "news and events" section on our website.

If you have pretty decent computer skills and would like to volunteer to help with our newsletter please let me know. We currently have need of: a reporter (to do short interviews of our staff around pre-selected topics); two proofreaders; a photographer (must be able to take digital pictures and edit/size them & help us insert them properly into Microsoft Publisher).

Also, if you have a special interest in any of the following areas, we may be able to use your assistance in selecting hi quality, short material for inclusion: 1) addiction, recovery & 12-step issues; 2) Christianity & spiritual issues; 3) depression and anxiety issues; 4) relationship/marital/family/parenting/communication issues. All of the above can be done virtually using email, vmail, phone calls & the US mail, so do not let geography limit you in volunteering.

Finally, I encourage the submission of brief creative efforts (past or present) for possible inclusion. If written, (poems, comments, quotes, etc.) 200-300 words or less, or if, artistic, 4x4" or thereabouts. For original submissions, please include your name and phone number and email them to me.

Look for our first issue near the end of January. It will still come to you in an email with "Q&A" first in the subject line. The newsletter will be attached to the email, probably in .pdf format. There will probably also be a link to our website where you can view it, print it, etc. Black & white copies will be available for reading in our waiting rooms for those who do not have email or who have not yet signed up for Q&A. If anyone has a color printer and would volunteer to print 5-6 copies in color for us, that would be splendid.

A special thank you for our bonuses in this Q&A goes to Mike, Nancy and Charlie.

If you have any questions for future Q&As, now is the time to send them in. The hopper is getting low - only one question left as of this writing.

Have a Happy New Year! Peace, John

Q: When a person, who is in a relationship, says, "I need space, I need time," what does that mean really?

A: Taking the person literally, there may be two possible interpretations. First, what they may be saying is that they need to step back and look at the relationship and decide if they want to continue with it. Something may have happened, they may have heard something or felt/experienced something that is causing them to re-evaluate their whole investment in this relationship. Re-evaluating is healthy in relationships prior to making a full commitment. Second, they may be feeling smothered, imposed upon and may just be expressing a need for space and time to get adjusted and to see if the other person can get adjusted to a different, healthier relationship.

If you choose not to take the person literally then you can read all sorts of things into the statement such as, "I want to get out of this relationship but don't know how so I am going to get some space and time and gradually work from there" or, "I am not sure about my level of commitment and I want to play the field", or "I have already started to play the field and this is how I can reconcile the two and still live with myself. Another possibility is that it may mean, "I am commitment phobic and am being challenged and need to control the time and space in order to manage my fear/anxiety about being in a long-term, committed and exclusive relationship." This list of what it might mean could go on and on.

Two more thoughts on the matter. If you don't know what it means, ask them for clarification and listen carefully. Seek first to understand...

Perhaps more important than trying to discern what they mean by it, is to find a way to respond that is in your best interests. Perhaps repeating to them what you heard them say and then taking a step back in the relationship your self would be healthy. If they are trying to distance themselves from you and you start asking all sorts of questions, they are only going to run faster in the direction they are headed. Rather, step back a bit, hold your ground and watch and listen. You can give yourself a time frame, how long are you willing to do this - what is reasonable for you? If you have given them the space and time they asked for or which you consider reasonable, and nothing has changed, let go and go on with your life. There is much truth in the old saying "there is a time to either fish or cut bait." I hope these thoughts have helped. Peace, John

Quote: We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. --Winston Churchill

Bonus 1:

A MAYONNAISE JAR AND 2 CUPS OF COFFEE

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and the 2 cups of coffee.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him.

When the class began, wordlessly, he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls.

He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls.

He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous yes.

The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

Now, said the professor, as the laughter subsided, I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life.

The golf balls are the important things- your God, family, your children, your health, your friends, and your favorite passions----things that if everything else was lost and only they remained your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, and your car.

The sand is everything else -- the small stuff.

If you put the sand into the jar first, he continued, there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls.

The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you.

Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out to dinner. Play another 18. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal.

Take care of the golf balls first -- the things that really matter.

Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented

The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend."

Bonus 2:

THE "W" IN CHRISTMAS

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on nonessential obligations - extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even overspending. Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas.

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six year old. For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's Winter Pageant.

I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production, unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation. All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.

So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down. Around the room I saw several other parents quietly scampering to their seats. As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song.

Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas," I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer.

So, when my son's class rose to sing, "Christmas Love," I was slightly taken aback by its bold title.

Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads.

Those in the front row- center stage - held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song.

As the class would sing "C is for Christmas," a child would hold up the letter C. Then, "H is for Happy," and on and on, until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message, "Christmas Love."

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed her; a small, quiet, girl in the front row holding the letter "M" upside down - totally unaware her letter "M" appeared as a "W".

The audience of 1st through 6th graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, so she stood tall, proudly holding her "W".

Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together.

A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen.

In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a purpose for our festivities.

For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear "C H R I S T W A S L O V E"

And, I believe, He still is.

Bonus 3:

MOUSE TRAP STORY

A mouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife open a package. What food might this contain? The mouse wondered he was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap.

Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning: "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said, "Mr. Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it."

The mouse turned to the pig and told him, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The pig sympathized, but said, I am so very sorry, Mr. Mouse, but there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured, you are in my prayers."

The mouse turned to the cow and said, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The cow said, "Wow, Mr. Mouse. I'm sorry for you but it's no skin off my nose."

So the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap alone.

That very night a sound was heard throughout the house - like the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey. The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught.

The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital and she returned home with a fever.

Everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient.

But his wife's sickness continued, so friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig.

The farmer's wife did not get well; she died. So many people came to her funeral, the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them.

The mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness.

So, the next time you hear someone is facing a problem and think it doesn't concern you, remember - when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all involved in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to encourage one another.

Remember, each of us is a vital thread in another person's tapestry and that our lives are woven together for a reason.

END OF BONUSES - END OF BONUSES - END OF BONUSES

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