

**a book of answers  
by: jocelyn soriano**

# **mend my broken heart**

**the world breaks  
everyone and  
afterward many  
are strong at the  
broken places -  
ernest hemingway**



# **Mend My Broken Heart**

By: Jocelyn A. Soriano

***"The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places."***

***- Ernest Hemingway***

*Dear Reader,*

***There are many questions that trouble us when our heart gets broken:***

Why am I hurting so much?

What's wrong with me?

Could I ever have him/her back again?

Why do I always fall for the wrong person?

Must I forgive him?

How do I start again?

***We wonder if we could ever survive such pain.*** *We ask how such things could possibly happen to us.* We want to know why despite all our efforts, we fail to heal our broken heart. **MEND MY BROKEN HEART** is meant to guide you for 30 critical days with its rich words of wisdom, answering your *deepest* and *most painful* questions, and guiding you with *powerful* reflections and activities that are more than sufficient to fill your days *ONE DAY of Healing AT A TIME*.

***I sincerely pray for your healing,*** and may God guide you through these 30 days of intimacy and blessing with the One who truly *Loves* you and *Cares* for you.

Yours in Prayer,

**Jocelyn Soriano**

[www.itakeofftheface.com](http://www.itakeofftheface.com)

***"God can mend your broken heart, but He has to have all the pieces."***

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## *Why Am I Hurting So Much?*

I would like to begin by quoting a few lines from one of the prayers I wrote titled "**Prayer of Letting Go**":

"Dear Jesus, I come to you now with a broken heart and a weary spirit. I don't know how I can carry on each day knowing that a part of me had already gone, never ever to return. Can I ever be complete again? Can I ever smile again at the coming of a new day? Day after day I miss him more and more. Day after day my longing grows but it can never be fulfilled. How can I possibly live my life again? How do I overcome this feeling that I am now all alone? How do I let go? The places we've been to, the celebrations we've had together, those will never be the same. The emptiness in my heart is so big I can no longer breathe..."

**We hurt so much because we have lost a part of ourselves.** If we have loved much, we must have given much also, and when everything's over, we feel as though *we have lost everything*.

### **It's Unfair!**

Deep within us, we may really feel angry. Angry for tasting the bitterness we feel we don't really deserve. "It's unfair! I have loved much, but pain is all I get in return. ***"Why is it that the people who get hurt the most are the people who sincerely loved the most?"***"

### **But He Promised Forever**

We also feel hurt because at some point in the past, our loved one has promised us something. It could be a very simple promise like, *"I'll always be there for you"*, or it could be as profound as "I would share this lifetime with you and nobody else." In some cases, we may not remember the exact words, but we do remember ***a promise***, *implied perhaps*, but still a promise we held on to.

Now that it's all over, ***we feel betrayed***. We're not only left behind, we've been lied to, we've been deceived! And this feeling of *betrayal* multiplies our suffering all the more.

### **How Do I Make It Through Alone?**

Since we have given up everything for our beloved, we feel as though we have left nothing more for ourselves. ***We're not only alone, we feel naked!*** We feel as though we have been stripped bare of everything we needed in order to survive. This is especially true for those who have children to raise. Now that we've been left to ourselves without any concern for our needs, how do we find provision for our family? How do we carry on? *How could anybody do this to us?*

### **How Could I Have Trusted Him?**

After facing the reality of our pain, we may come to conclude that everything is our fault. "***If only I didn't make him the center of my world.*** If only I didn't trust him too soon. If only I met another man."

*We begin to blame ourselves.* We feel ashamed. We feel naked and then we feel the whole world pointing the blame on us. Looking back however, **haven't we already done the best we could?**

I would like to end this session by sharing the complete copy of the **Prayer of Letting Go**:

Dear Jesus, I come to you now with *a broken heart and a weary spirit*. I don't know how I can carry on each day knowing that a part of me had already gone, never ever to return. ***Can I ever be complete again?*** Can I ever smile again at the coming of a new day? Day after day I miss him more and more. Day after day my longing grows but it can never be fulfilled. How can I possibly live my life again? How do I overcome this feeling that I am now all alone and I may always be alone for the rest of my life? ***How do I let go?*** The places we've been to, the celebrations we've had together, those will never be the same. *The emptiness in my heart is so big I can no longer breathe sometimes.*

Help me O God! The pain of separation seems more painful to me than death itself. I don't know how much longer I can carry on. Help me carry on this day Lord. Help me to let go, I pray. Though I may not forget, help me to remember how you have always carried me through. ***Though the pain may not yet go away, assist me in carrying this cross with hope in my heart.***

**Let me not forget the people who love me and assist me in this hour of need.** May I find strength in them, consolation in the generosity of their hearts. And whenever I'm afraid, let there always be a hand to hold on to, a smile to brighten up my path. Send down your angels Lord and may I

recognize your hand upon your every gift and blessing. *Give me something to do that I may not feel useless, yet teach me also to rest knowing all will be well after the long dark night.*

You are my Rock and my Provider, Savior and Defender, Friend and Lover who will never ever let me down. **You will lead me through this day.** You will fill my every hour with peace, my every moment with thoughts of your love. I cannot bear the burdens of tomorrow but I will offer you all that I have today. Today is yours O God. This moment is yours. Embrace me and take my hand. ***I am in your heart. I am safe. I am loved***

Today's Activity:

Go over some of the reasons above why you feel so hurt. If there are more, try to write them down. You don't have to address them all today. You only need to begin trying to understand how much you've been hurt and why. After which, spend some quiet time in prayer. Tell Jesus everything you've found out. Tell Him all your hurts, *all of them*. He condemns no one but understands us more than any friend ever could.

## *What's Wrong With Me?*

Whenever a relationship breaks up, we can't help but wonder ***whose fault it was***. It's as though we could never find peace unless we can point out who really made the bigger mistake. *Was it me? Or was it him?*

### **If It's Me**

If it's me, I could adjust myself, correct my annoying behavior, plead guilty before my partner and request that I be given a second chance to make the relationship work. And it will surely work this time, right?

*Not so.* It's true that we can make certain changes in order to grow, but there are changes that won't be good for us because seeking them would mean departing from who we really are.

For example, if the reason why your boyfriend doesn't like you is that you couldn't engage into sports as much as he does, the natural change you'd think of making is to do just that, right? Even if you don't really enjoy sports, ***you'd pretend*** that you do just to *please* him. Will that please him? At first, we think that it could, it should! But after making all these changes, why isn't he pleased? Maybe because he is able to sense that you're not really enjoying that activity. *Maybe because in trying to conform to everything he wants, you have lost your own authenticity along the way, you have lost your own self and the ability to give the GIFT OF YOUR TRUE SELF.*

For all you know, he really wants you to be happy and to be the best of who you really are. He just can't see the both of you together, enjoying a life that would be best for you both. ***There are certain books in the market today promising strategies on how you could quickly get your ex back by doing so and so, with the overall theme of changing into a person you don't really want to be.*** Will you be happy if you could indeed have him back only because he thought you were *someone else*? Will you be content to always hide behind your mask and not be loved for who you really are?

### **If It's Him**

If it's him, maybe we could find it easier to forget him. We could ***put all the blame on him***, make him look bad in our minds, draw a scary caricature of his face and dump all the negative thoughts we could ever think of, right?

I wish I could say it were so. But putting all the blame in the other person keeps us from being responsible, from acknowledging our own mistakes, and from growing.

### **If You're Both Wrong**

There are many times when we have to look at both sides to see what really went wrong in a relationship. It takes two people to work things out, and it takes two people to end a relationship.

If we could see what mistakes each one has made, then it would be easier to understand what really happened.



## **If None Of You Were Wrong**

Though nobody's really perfect, there are times when both parties have ***tried their best*** to make the relationship work. Things just didn't turn out the way they wanted it to and they have to part ways (*temporarily or permanently*) in order to save what's left in the relationship. What are these things worth saving? **Respect, trust, good memories, the healing fact that you have been loved.**

More than blaming anybody, including yourself, what we need right now is the acknowledgment of things that have been done, of efforts exerted, of good intentions despite some shortcomings, and of truthful assessment of the situation in order to do better in the future.

### Today's Activity:

For a follow up of what you have written yesterday, try to write down your thoughts about today's topic. With all honesty, what do you think went wrong? What were your faults? What were his shortcomings? Do you think each one has exerted some effort in trying to save the relationship? What were the efforts you have already exerted?

"We cannot love a person

with an all accepting, transcending and encompassing love

without being hurt somewhat,

without being disappointed,

without being failed

of our expectations.

We cannot love

without being broken,

yet we cannot continue in love

without being stronger

than our brokenness.

It is only in Jesus

where we can find healing and strength

so as to continue in this love..."

- ***Loving Broken People, itakeofftheface.com***

## *Could I Ever Have Him/Her Back Again?*

You may or you may not want to have him back again.

### **If you don't want to have him back**

If you don't want to have him back again, and it is clear to you why not, you could use this time to give yourself the time and space you need to heal and to be whole again. Whatever happened, damage has been done, feelings have been hurt and hearts have been shattered by unmet expectations.

### **If you still want to have him back**

If you find it hard to achieve stillness even for a moment because of your intense fear of losing him, then the more you need to give both of you the space to clear things out. You may have depended on your partner too much for your happiness and such dependence isn't healthy if you desire to have a balanced and fulfilling relationship. ***Too much dependence often leads to too much expectation and demands, demands that couldn't be met by the other person.*** It could also lead to abuse as the dependent person is willing to do anything even if it would no longer be good for his/her wellbeing.

### **Why Healing Sometimes Requires Separation and Isolation**

We often complain that it is because we have been separated from those we love that we need to be healed. The truth however is that oftentimes we don't even know we're already wounded even before we got torn away from those we loved. *God has allowed such a separation to take place in order that He might heal us from those wounds.*

### ***Why do we need to be isolated in order to be healed?***

When a doctor needs to perform a critical operation upon his patient, he needs time alone with the patient in order to perform that operation. He needs to isolate the patient even from his relatives

and friends because they would only serve as distractions that might only interrupt the operation and hence, endanger even the life of the person they love.

The same is true with us whenever God wants to deal with us personally and heal our most deep-seated wounds. ***He takes us away from the people and things we have normally leaned on to.*** He takes us *alone with Him*, where we could only hear His voice, the only voice that truly mattered and that could bring about the healing of our wounds.

### **Which is God's Voice?**

Without such isolation, we just get confused with the noise of the other voices around us telling us what we should and shouldn't be doing. These people may have the *best of intentions* for us, but they don't know how to address our wounds, our hurts. What happens is that they may even cause us *more pain* with the words they're saying. They may also project their own fears at us, infecting us with their own anxieties.

***The more authority such people have over us, the more influence they will have upon our decisions.*** Parents, teachers and employers hold such powers over us that it's not easy to ignore what they're saying.

*Those closest to us, especially our life partners also hold a very significant influence upon us.* At times, we regard their opinion as something that ***almost equals God's opinion***, or in such a way that God's opinion almost fades away in the background.

This is one reason why we often find it so difficult to remove certain beliefs we have about ourselves even after the separation. At the back of our minds, we still hear their voices, and we still look at things using the perspective they have made us believe to be right. It's well and good if what we remember are the things that uplift us and support us. But what about in cases of abusive relationships or where the other partner has battered us with words that severely damaged our self esteem?

In our minds, we still hear them saying how disgusting we are, or how weak we have always been. ***What's worse is that we continue to believe such words to be true!***

It's not always easy to accept this, and separation always brings about some kind of pain. But there are times when some things need to be taken away from us so we could have the chance to be *healed and to grow*. ***Some things need to be removed first from our lives to give way for other things that would greatly benefit us and give us joy.***

*Not all separation is permanent.* There are relationships that are **restored in time**, when the people involved have already grown and healed. When such a restoration takes place, we'd be grateful for everything God has done for us, for isolating us for a while so we can later on enjoy the fruits of His guidance and of His healing.

### **If He Comes Back Again**

If you could have him back again, how would you like things to be different from the way things have been in the past? Would you like it as it was? Would you like to change some things so both of you could live happier and more fulfilling lives?

If you do not desire to have him back again, how would you desire your future relationships to be like? Are there some things you'd like to have differently from your previous relationships?

### Today's Activity:

If you could have the assurance that he would indeed come back (or that you would meet someone you like soon), how would you use this time that you have now for yourself? Write down the things you'd like to do for yourself today.

***"The best gift we could give to our loved ones is the gift of ourselves."***

## *Whatever Happened To Love?*

I used to wonder about this question, "*Whatever happened to love?*" ***I used to wonder how two people who used to love each other so much could eventually turn into hating each other so fiercely*** or suddenly become cold and uncaring towards each other. Where did love go? When did it vanish from sight?

### **Caught By Surprise**

There are people who get caught by surprise for the sudden change in the hearts of their loved ones. It's like you just wake up one morning, and you suddenly discover your partner is no longer in love with you!

Yet is this really a case of sudden change? Could it be that small changes have been taking place through the years, *very small changes* that have been *undetected* or ignored one way or the other?

### **Tired of Trying**

There are those who have been trying for a long time to make the relationship work. These people had always been the one burdened with the relationship as though they were the only one trying to do something to save it. When this person's strength is finally exhausted, guess what happens? Since there is no effort from the other partner, the relationship breaks apart.

### **When We Outgrow Love**

Then there are cases where both people slowly changed through the years. They grew different interests, sets of friends and even priorities in life. One day they just realized that they were married to a totally different person from the one they knew before! They grew without being able to grow love into the new persons that they have become.

### **Unmet Expectations**



There are many cases also where people get together for certain expectations that couldn't really be satisfied. One may have expected their partner to provide well for them, but then they discover how irresponsible their partners really are. Others expected to be always praised and supported by their partners, but then they discover that their partners have great a disability in expressing their love for the other. Still others expected the perfect happiness of fairytale endings where one does not encounter problems or any sort of incompatibility with their loved ones. They wanted a prince, a knight in shining armour or an angel who could do no wrong.

### **A Neglected Gift**

Further, there are those who have been negligent of the love given them. They care not for fidelity. They think that being involved with other people for a short time would do no harm for their marriage. *Or there could be those who are negligent with words, words that hurt and that harm even their partner's self respect.*

***Love doesn't just go away without a sign or a reason.*** Things have happened along the way that caused it to grieve and to depart. *Like all gifts, love has to be taken care of.* It has to be cherished and protected by those to whom it is given, and not just by one partner but by both.

Most importantly however, God's help must be sought by all those who desire to protect their relationships. In times when our strength fails, in times when our patience isn't enough, only God's love will suffice and will be able to guide us towards finding love once more.

### **Today's Activity:**

What do you think happened to the love you have had in your relationship? Did it vanish all of a sudden and caught you by surprise? Did it die slowly through years of neglect? Or were you the only one trying to save the relationship but just couldn't do so anymore?

## *I Don't Know How I Could Go On Without Him/Her*

When we lose a loved one, whether by a broken relationship or by unexpected death, the most difficult part we experience is the ***vacuum of loss*** we feel in our hearts.

All of a sudden, a very significant part of our life, maybe the biggest or most important part is taken away. *There is no immediate replacement.* What we have left is just a **BIG VOID**, an empty space, a black hole we cannot understand. We feel hollow, like our hearts have suddenly been taken away.

### **Our problems therefore are two-fold:**

1. Lack of anything to look forward to for the next day and for the many many days to come.
2. No person to share with our thoughts, our dreams, our trivial problems, our discoveries, the funny experiences we have from day to day.

For the one thing that changed, that became absent in our lives, everything else seem to have changed as well, ***everything was BROKEN***. Maybe this is the compelling reason why people want to immediately get back with their ex. They feel this intense emptiness and could think of no other way to fill it but to get back to their previous relationship, even if that relationship be painful, even if it be degrading or damaging to their being. For many people, pain is preferable to emptiness.

### **How do we go on then? How could we ever begin to fill this emptiness in our lives?**

#### Activities

Think of your many activities, even simple ones at home like cooking or gardening. *How many of your daily activities are linked to your partner* not only physically but also emotionally?

For example, do you watch tv in the evening? When you were with your partner, do you watch tv together? Whose programs were you watching? The one you prefer or the ones your partner wants to watch?

Do you cook? For whom are you cooking for? Is it for your husband who'd be coming from the office? While you are cooking, are you anticipating his appreciation of you and the dish you'd be cooking for him?

If almost all your daily activities are linked to your partner, whether directly or indirectly, you'd find it hard to go on without him without making some realignment.

**Here are certain examples you could make:**

If you would normally spend the night watching tv with your partner and watching the shows he likes, why not try to watch the programs you prefer? And why not watch with a couple of your friends to keep you company? Or better yet, why not change your routine for the evening? Instead of watching tv, why not play a game with your nephew?

If you normally cook for your husband's dinner, why not try cooking for your mother? Invite her at home and cook for her your best dish ever! You could also do away with cooking for a while. Why not order some food from a restaurant and then invite your friends over for a pajama party?

Friends

Were you able to maintain ***your own circle of friends*** or have you lost touch with them already? Was your partner the only friend you've had for the last couple of years? Or were his own circle of friends the ones you also came to see often?

It may be time to get in touch with your old friends. Find them again, dine out, have some fun! Or you could make new ones. It's never too late to meet new people who could better understand you and share the things you really like.

Family

Have you been so close to the relatives of your ex that you rarely had time for your own family? It may just be the time to hear from them again. If you have had certain misunderstandings in the past, maybe it's the right time to patch things up. You might just discover how much you were truly loved!

### Dreams

***How much of your dreams were connected to your partner's dreams?*** If your dreams consist of seeing a future with your ex, it may be the time to dream again. Why not remember your childhood dreams? Or better yet, why not explore new things and places that might help you form new dreams? Dreams are those things we look forward to, without which life often seems meaningless and without purpose. Discover the plans God has in store for you. Find your dreams again.

### God

Was your partner the only one with whom you shared your most intimate thoughts and feelings? Was he the person you first think about whenever something big happens in your life? Was he the one to whom you devoted all the many aspects of your life? Now that he is gone, it doesn't mean you'd no longer have someone to offer all these things to. It doesn't mean you could no longer be as intimate with someone else.

**Try God.** All the while He was just waiting for you. He knows your thoughts and He shares your every tear. He rejoices with your triumphs, He supports you when you fail.

### Today's Activity:

How connected were the many areas of your life with your ex? How could you slowly fill each part with new things that could help you survive the days ahead? Write down some of the changes you could do. Also try to write down a prayer each day talking to God, expressing to Him all your concerns, even small ones, even those that other people wouldn't care so much about. ***God cares.***

## ***I Just Feel So Hurt!***

"Yes, I understand why things had to happen this way. I understand his reason for causing me pain. ***But mere understanding does not chase away the hurt.*** It does not call upon the sun when dark clouds have loomed over me. Let the rain come then if it must come! And let it wash away the dust that hurt my eyes!"

*There are times that no matter what we try to think about, no matter how hard we try to forget the pain, the pain still lingers and grips our very heart. We feel hurt, we're wounded, we just want to pause for a while and cry.*

### Today's Activity:

Honor your tears today. Let them fall. You need not understand them. You need not hide them. Present them all before God and let Him be there for you where you weep.

**Following are some touching quotes you could reflect on as you honor your hurts today:**

### **"Hurt Feelings Quotes"**

Strive always to be stronger than your fears and your hurts. -Joyce, [itakeofftheface.com](http://itakeofftheface.com)

*There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love." -Washington Irving*

**The world breaks everyone and afterwards many are strong at the broken places. - ERNEST HEMINGWAY**



He was better to me than all my hopes...better than all my fears; He made a bridge of my broken works, and a rainbow of my tears... Streams In The Desert

*..For He does not enjoy hurting people or causing them sorrow..-Lamentations 3:31:33*

For no one is abandoned by the Lord forever. Though He brings grief, he also shows compassion because of the greatness of his unfailing love.-Lamentations 3

**But if I speak, my pain is not relieved, and if I refrain from speaking- how much of it goes away? -JOB 16:6**

Although I have afflicted you...I will afflict you no more. - Nahum 1:12

***In my anguish I cried to the Lord, and he answered by setting me free. - Psalm 118:5***

I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. My eyes grow weak with sorrow; they fail because of all my foes. Away from me, all you who do evil, for the Lord has heard my weeping. The Lord has heard my cry for mercy, the Lord accepts my prayer. All my enemies will be ashamed and dismayed, they will turn back in sudden disgrace. - Psalm 6:6-10

*"Yes, I understand why things had to happen this way. I understand his reason for causing me pain. But mere understanding does not chase away the hurt. It does not call upon the sun when dark clouds have loomed over me. Let the rain come then if it must come! And let it wash away the dust that hurt my eyes!" -Joyce, itakeofftheface.com*

**It's Okay to cry**

hide not those teary eyes

for they are beautiful

just as they are. - Joyce, itakeofftheface.com

***The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. - Psalm 34:18***

Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none. - Psalm 69:20

*Does he who implanted the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see? - Psalm 94:9*

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. - Psalm 147:3-4

**The thought of my pain, my homelessness, is bitter poison. I think of it constantly, and my spirit is depressed. Yet hope returns when I remember this one thing: The Lord's unfailing love and mercy still continue, fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise. The Lord is all I have, and so in him I put my hope. - Lamentations 3: 19-24**

I, the Lord, the God of your ancestor Daniel, have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will heal you... - Daniel 9:18

*But when I am afraid,*

*I will put my trust in you...*

*You keep track of all my sorrows.*

*You have collected all my tears in your bottle.*

*You have recorded each one in your book.*

*-Psalm 56*

Melancholy is the burden that I have to carry, the cross I have to bear now and then so I can continue to be a bearer of JOY. That in my pain I may yet understand the pain of others. And that in receiving God's comfort, I may know how to comfort those who also bleed.-Joyce, itakeofftheface.com

My child,you are broken. Unless you know that you are broken yourself,it will be severely laborious to love the broken people around you. You will be harsh and exacting towards them. But because you want others to like you,you will always attempt to hide your weaknesses from others. Let me strip away your masks,so that you may know who you really are.And when this truth sets you free,then shall you be free to genuinely love. Before this occurs,your love will be offered by the flask,not by the torrents of a river.-BoSanchez,Embraced

***It is our wounds that create in us a desire to reach for miracles. The fulfillment of such miracles depends on whether we let our wounds pull us down or lift us up towards our dreams. -Joyce, itakeofftheface.com***

"Do not let your hearts be troubled.-John 14

*Your joy is your sorrow unmasked. - Kahlil Gibran*

He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows..-Isaiah 53

*When I had my sheep, I was happy, and I made those around me happy. People saw me coming and welcomed me, he thought. But now I'm sad and alone. I'm going to become bitter and distrustful of people because one person betrayed me. I'm going to hate those who have found their treasure because I never found mine. And I'm going to hold on to what little I have, because I'm too insignificant to conquer the world. - Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist*

Do we know our poor people? Do we know the poor in our house, in our family? Perhaps they are not hungry for a piece of bread. Perhaps our children, husband, wife, are not hungry, or naked, or dispossessed, but are you sure there is no one there who feels unwanted, deprived of affection? - Mother Teresa, Heart of Joy

**Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer. - Psalm 4:1**

Those who do not know how to weep with their whole heart don't know how to laugh either. -  
Golda Meir

*Unless a man be broken, he would never reach his limits. Unless he reaches his limits, he would never find the limitless God. -Joyce, itakeofftheface.com*

We are fragile beings,yet we often act as though we couldn't be hurt,and as though we couldn't hurt other people. -Joyce, itakeofftheface.com

Christ is building His kingdom with the broken things of earth. People desire only the strong, successful, victorious, and unbroken things in life to build their kingdoms, but God is the God of the unsuccessful - the God of those who have failed. Heaven is being filled with earth's broken lives, and there is no "bruised reed" that Christ cannot take and restore to a glorious place of blessing and beauty.  
- Streams in The Desert

**They were at their wits' end. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. - Psalm 107**

Before I was born, the Lord chose me and appointed me to be his servant. He made my words as sharp as a sword... I said "I have worked, but how hopeless it is! I have used up my strength but have accomplished nothing." Yet I can trust the Lord to defend my cause; he will reward me for what I do. -  
Isaiah 49:1-2,4

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.-Isaiah 40

*Greatness is not in being unbroken, but in being a blessing even after being broken, like bread, like a seed that dies yet rises again. -Joyce, itakeofftheface.com*

God has never led me through a difficulty in which there is no resulting joy that far surpasses the difficulty I've been through. -Joyce, itakeofftheface.com

"I prayed for strength, and then I lost awhile

All sense of nearness, human and divine;

The love I leaned on failed and pierced my heart,

The hands I clung to loosed themselves from mine;

But while I swayed, weak, trembling, and alone,

...The everlasting arms upheld my own....

..."I thank You Lord, You were too wise to heed

My feeble prayers, and answer as I sought,

Since these rich gifts Your bounty has bestowed

Have brought me more than all I asked or thought;

Giver of good, so answer each request

With Your own giving, BETTER than my BEST."

(Excerpted from Streams in the Desert: L.B. Cowman/Jim Reimann)

**It is through the most difficult trials that God often brings the sweetest discoveries of Himself.**  
-Joyce, itakeofftheface.com

You never cry alone, for God is with you. He alone understands your tears and the wounds of your heart. - Joyce, itakeofftheface.com

*God's breath is like a fresh wind that renews us. Frail and weak as we are, we have hope. We find healing.* -Joyce, itakeofftheface.com



## *I Can't Understand What All These Could Mean*

### **What Saying Goodbye Doesn't Mean**

Saying goodbye doesn't mean

You don't love him anymore,

Nor that you no longer will.

It doesn't mean that you failed.

It doesn't mean you're unlovable.

It doesn't mean somebody's better,

And that someone else can take your place.

Saying goodbye doesn't mean

He doesn't love you anymore

Nor that he no longer will.

It doesn't mean he wanted to hurt you.

It doesn't mean you don't deserve to be loved.

It doesn't mean he isn't grateful he met you,

And that you've touched each other's souls.

Saying goodbye doesn't mean you need to forget,

It doesn't mean you were never loved.

It doesn't mean you're weak,

It doesn't mean you didn't try hard enough.

Saying goodbye shall never be easy,

And it shall never be without pain,

or without questions hanging at the back of your mind.

But for all the hurts and uncertainties,  
May it always lead you into a new hope and into a new life,  
May it lead you to new beginnings after all the endings  
That made you cry.  
May your goodbyes bring you peace,  
And may it bring you to healing,  
May it bring you closer to that sacred place,  
Where there are far more sunrises than sunsets,  
And where there are far more tears of joy than of goodbyes.

**What is the true meaning of a heartbreak?** Does it really matter to know that you have been loved before you can let him go?

Many times, it is not the process of separating from your partner that's hardest. ***What's really difficult is the meaning we need to give to such a separation.*** What will all these mean for us? Why do we have to undergo so much pain?

There are so many questions at the back of our minds but we're afraid to answer them for fear of not being able to face the meaninglessness of it all. As a result, we choose to hold on to the relationship however painful and unhealthy it has already become.

***What are these questions we're so afraid of? Rather, what are the answers we don't want to find?***

**1. That you have been rejected, and judged as "not good enough".**

*Rejection is painful.* It's like being disposed of as trash, as though there's nothing good or ever worth keeping in you.

When you experience a breakup, you can't help but feel you were never good enough. What did you lack? What could you have done to prevent this? Why has he left you for another woman?

To be rejected is to have failed to measure up to the standards and expectations of the other person. To be rejected is to feel that you have not been loved at all!

But is this the real meaning of our feelings of rejection? Did we really fail to measure up to someone who is better than us? Are we really so repulsive and worthless as a person?

### **What Rejection Really Means**

*Rejection does not always mean you were the one who failed to measure up to the standards of the other person. In reality, many people call for a breakup because they were the ones who felt they could never measure up to your standards.*

*Rejection does not always mean your WHOLE BEING had been rejected. It may be that only one trait of yours was considered as incompatible with your partner's character.*

*Rejection does not always mean that the other person who replaced you as the third party is better than you. It could be that your ex merely found someone who is more compatible with him considering his values and interests.*

**And even if your partner declares you have been rejected because of another person who is better than you, it doesn't mean he is right!** Remember that there are always three sides to a story: your side, his side, and the right side.

**To be rejected by someone doesn't mean you should also reject yourself or that you should think of yourself as a lesser person.** *It doesn't mean that nobody will ever love you anymore.* Remember that **only ONE** person has rejected you at the moment, and it only hurt so much because to you, that person's opinion symbolized the opinion of the whole world, of God.

In order to move on, you must **develop your self-confidence** and raise the self-esteem damaged by the rejection. *You must have a firm belief in your own self worth, in your own beauty!*

Further, rejection doesn't mean you were never loved. He may have really loved you at some point in your relationship, but something happened and that love has not been taken care of and protected. It takes a lot of work and courage to continue loving, and many people don't have the patience and the strength to persist in their love. People change as well, and the guy who is now hurting you wasn't the same guy anymore who took your breath away.

**2. That you have been betrayed, and you have wasted your time, tears and effort for the wrong person.**

*To be betrayed is be slapped in the face a hundred times and after which, you still couldn't believe he could do such a thing to you!*

**Why?** How could he have done this after all that you've been through? These are but few of the questions you ask as you try to understand his reason for hurting you.

You then remember all those years you spent together: all those happy moments, and all those rocky times you were able to overcome. What's the worth of it all now? All those wasted years you could have spent with someone who could have really loved you.

*Wasted. Wasted laughters. Wasted tears. Wasted love.*

That's how badly you felt. And yet, ***is love ever wasted?*** Where does love go when it gets sent to the wrong person?

No matter how broken and betrayed you may feel right now, **know that love is never wasted.** To be able to love another person is to be blessed with an opportunity to know the meaning of life, the real value of our existence. It's not the one who has loved the wrong person who has truly lost something. It's *to be given authentic love and not receive it that is the greatest misfortune.*

It's unfortunate how many of us fail to recognize the love that is being offered to us. We seek for love but never recognize it when it arrives. ***We crave for it only to reject it if it doesn't come in forms we expected it to be.***

If we only knew what's being offered us, we'd have respected it. But we are often not aware of it, and *we hurt the ones who really loves us so.*

In order to move on, believe that it was never a waste to love. It has enriched you as a person and has equipped you with the capacity to love the right person when he arrives in your life. The one who hurt you may not have intended to cause you pain, but he has yet to grow and learn what love really is so he can recognize it when it comes to bless his life again.

**To love is to risk, and to risk is to lose sometimes, to get hurt.** But let it not deter you from loving again, from being happy. We can't always understand everything that happened, but we can accept that not everything is perfect in this life. The people who have hurt you may not have intended to cause you pain. ***Hurt people hurt people***, and more often than not, *they hurt themselves most of all.* **Let God take care of these people.** Let God be the one to continue the love you have planted upon their hearts.

***Let go of what you can no longer keep. Protect what's still worth keeping. Believe in love most of all.***

Today's Activity:

Reflecting on the above, write down what this heartbreak really means to you. Was it a total rejection of who you are? Was it betrayal? Do you think it's possible that your partner may not always have the best judgment about who you really are?

## *Should You End a Relationship Even If You Still Love Each Other?*

**There will always be a pain in 'goodbyes'.** No matter how much we seem to understand everything, *it breaks our hearts to ever see anything beautiful die.*

It seems we weren't really made for sad endings, or any kind of parting. And yet ***it is only by allowing some things to end could we ever hope to start again so we can see even more beautiful things coming our way.***

**How do we know then when to say our goodbyes? Should a relationship end even if you still love each other?**

I used to think love is all we need in order to keep a relationship. *It sounded so simple, so tested, and so romantic.* Logically, it must still hold true. But few of us dare try to answer these questions: What kind of love do we really need? What kind of love can make a relationship work? Is it a love that lets the other person be true to himself? Is it a love that allows both people to grow? Is it a love that is received with gladness, a love that heals, a love that reminds us how beloved we are in the eyes of God?

For a relationship to still work, love must still be allowed to work in it. If it is blocked, or if unblocking it seems unlikely, then it may be better to let it go and give ourselves the chance to start again.

***What are the signs that love is no longer working in a relationship?***

### **1. You are being wounded more than you are being healed**

It's natural to be hurt, but if you are being hurt badly without being healed, you should seriously think about letting go of the relationship that causes you more harm than good.

An emotional wound takes time to heal, sometimes, it requires many seasons of healing. What happens then if instead of achieving this, your hurts pile up and your wounds get even deeper? There

will come a time that you can no longer give anything for the relationship, and it will crumble, along with the many broken pieces of your heart.

Good intentions aren't always enough. Your partner may claim that he has the best of intentions, the best plans for you, but if he can't actualize this and only hurts you through the years, he should allow you to find the right person who can assist you better in your healing.

**Only love heals.** Without this kind of love, the very people who should have helped each other heal would be the very same people who'd end up hurting each other most.

## **2. You are no longer being allowed to grow, to be the best of who you are**

*Our relationships are not there to cover up for our lack of identity.* Rather, it should reinforce our **uniqueness** and help us to discover the best in ourselves.

When the relationship is already turning you into a puppet, and when it constrains you instead of giving you the freedom to be cherished as you are, then it is no longer working for your growth.

We should have partners that will not stunt our growth, but will *support us* in our journey to improve ourselves and to be the best of who we are.

## **3. You have lost your laughter and/or your dreams**

Has your relationship become so serious it already drains all joy and hope from within you? *A relationship with no laughter is like a home that has lost its warmth.* Without this warmth, love slowly dies. For what is there to look forward to? And what is there to savor in the present moment?

**Protect your joy,** for therein is the strength that will carry you through the difficulties of each day. Protect your dreams, for many times, it is the only light we can see in the darkness of our griefs.

#### **4. You are not being helped to love yourself more**

Is your relationship the kind that helps you love yourself more? *Without this, love is being blocked or is not being given at all.*

And when our self esteem drastically fades later on, our ability to give love will also be affected because we'd start to be demanding, to get hurt more easily, and to lose our trust that our partner really loves us.

#### **5. What you're offering can no longer be received, you are not receiving what you need**

*A relationship is an exchange of love.* It is the kind of exchange where she is willing and grateful to receive what is being offered to her, and where he is able and more than willing to give what she needs in order to be happy.

There are times when a person may feel that she is actually giving more in a relationship. She feels she's always the one who is truly loving the person while the other is not giving enough in return. It really feels unfair, but we should realize that this love she is giving, this great outpouring of her love is not being received at all!

On the other hand, the other party may need a certain form of love, one that he is not getting from her, no matter how much she's already giving him.

**The reason why we're so fond of babies is that they're so OPEN to receiving love.** They don't filter out the love we're giving them. They don't expect a lot from us. They don't care how you look like or how old you are, or how good you speak. *They don't demand much, but they receive much.* They don't hinder the flow of LOVE!

***And when love is received like that, when it is truly received, it can't help but be given back.*** Let us not think that it is only the mother that gives. The love she gives is received *in full* by her child, and this child in turn sends out this love back to her mother. A simple smile from her baby is enough to brighten up her day, just one simple smile, and yet it's full of love being returned.

Maybe that's why Jesus told us that the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like little children. Because we need to be as open as they are in receiving everything God wants us to receive.

Is your relationship an authentic exchange of love? Or must you let the other person go so he can receive the kind of love he is looking for?

Today's Activity:

What are some of the things your partner could no longer give you in terms of love? Are there some things you're willing to give but he's not able to receive anymore?



## *I Don't Even Know How To Pray and Be Still*

### **What Stillness Means**

Stillness doesn't mean that your problems are already solved  
and that you have nothing more to worry about.

Stillness doesn't mean that you are already content  
with everything that you have.

Stillness doesn't mean that you have no regrets.

It doesn't mean you no longer have questions  
hanging at the back of your mind.

Stillness on the other hand, is that point

where you take a deep breath

to pause for a while,

and to find some rest,

amidst your days of toil.

Stillness is recognizing that you have your problems,  
but worrying about them now  
will do no further good.

Stillness is hoping to find your hopes again,  
and to find answers  
beyond those that didn't work.

Stillness is opening up one's heart  
to find that deep silence within,  
in that secure place  
untouched by raging storms.

Stillness is a plea for help.

It is a hand surrendered in prayer.

Stillness is an invitation for mercy

so that one may find its way to peace.

There are many times, when because of our utter brokenness, we yearn to find relief in prayer, but we don't even know where to begin. It seems as though we have forgotten how to pray altogether. In times like that, let us not give up. And let God Himself help teach you how to pray.

***Below are just very simple tips one can use to start with:***

### **1. Be Still**

Even for just a moment, find yourself some quiet time to pause. Give yourself the opportunity to hear God's gentle voice, comforting you, letting you know you are never alone. Remember how very long it was when you have listened to your own fears and worries, how very long since you've listened only to the noise and suggestions of the world around you. Give this moment to God. Be still, and let Him draw your heart to true prayer.

### **2. Be Honest**

God knows everything about you, your past, your present concerns, the future He has planned for you. He knows where you hurt, and He knows what it is you fear the most. He knows your suffering because He has already been there to meet you. He is Truth Himself. Tell Him everything you feel, even those things you dare not mention to your closest friends. Hide not anything so He may help you in all things.

### **3. Be Hopeful**

We come to prayer with the hope that Somebody good and true is listening to us. We hope to receive His Mercy, His tender Love. ***Prayer is not an imagined conversation or a meditation to calm our nerves. It is a true interaction with Someone, with Jesus.*** It is only with hope that we can get the most out of any prayer because with hope, we open up our hearts, and we believe that Someone is willing to fill our hearts with peace.

### **Let Stillness Be Your First Step To Healing**

How do you find stillness amidst the storm of all your daily concerns? How do you find peace when there are mouths that need to be fed, when there are expectations that need to be met, when people around you are hurting and counting upon you alone?

### ***Why seek stillness at all?***

When we are faced with grave difficulties, our instincts often lead us to our fight or flight mechanism. We are alarmed, we panic, and we move just for the sake of moving, as though by worrying and keeping busy, we are already addressing the problem at hand. But are we?

***To seek stillness is to seek a solution first before wasting our time with useless efforts that only make us tired and exhausted later on.*** To seek stillness is to have a clear mind that can give us true guidance. It is to be able to tap into a source of power before spending our energies in futile tasks.

*It is said that worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but gets you nowhere.*

If you truly want to help the people around you, if you truly desire to find the answer to your problem, **you must begin from a place of power, not from a place of fear.**

It is foolish to set out on a journey to a place you've never known before without acquiring a map first, but that's what we do. We set about in our actions even before knowing the best thing to do, even before trying to be still.

To be still is not to waste precious time doing nothing. To be still is to spend useful moments contemplating and receiving the true answer to your concerns.

### **How Do You Know You've Entered Into Stillness?**

You will know that you have entered into a place of stillness when you are no longer preoccupied with your worries. Physical stillness is not enough, for your mind could be racing on so many thoughts even as you sit still.

If the raging tides of the seas symbolize your worries and anxieties, *it is the calm undisturbed waters of the deep that will represent your stillness.* Deep in the waters, there is a place that is **untouched** by all the raging currents at the surface. That's the place of stillness. It doesn't mean that every storm has subsided; it just means you've entered a place where you can be calm even amidst the many storms around you.

### **The Door To Stillness**

Sometimes we wonder why God had to wait until we're tired and worn out, until we've finally given up before He gives us what we want.

*And the answer is that we have made Him wait that long before we allowed Him to carry on His work and give us what it is we've been praying for.*

**We don't enter into stillness as a sign of our triumphs. We enter into stillness because we finally surrender.** We acknowledge our hurts, our fears and our disappointments. We acknowledge that we don't know what to do next. We acknowledge that we need to pause and to retreat for a while because our powers are no longer sufficient to carry us through the rough times ahead.

***To be still is to surrender, and there is great power in surrender!***

*"Be still and know that I am God."*

**Most people do not accomplish everything they are capable of doing because they have not come to the end of themselves and the beginning of their God-ordained destiny.**

Have you come to the end of yourself? To the ends and limits of your own powers? Then you have just arrived at the door of stillness. Go ahead. Open the door, and you will find the answer you're looking for.

### **There Are Rays of Hope Even In Our Darkest Hours**

*God has never led me through a difficulty in which there is no resulting joy that far surpasses the difficulty I've been through.*

Are you going through a difficulty that seems so hard you're wondering if you'd ever make it through? Do you feel you've already done your best, that you have fought so hard already and still the battle seems so far from being won?

Perhaps you've been hurt by another. Or perhaps you've lost someone so close to you that you wonder how you'd ever live your days again.

***Take heart for you are never alone. In your darkest hours, in your weakest, you'd find the strength you need to carry on.*** In the most hopeless of situations, a helping hand will be with you, and things will turn around in such a way as to make the most depressing of circumstances in your favor.

**Try not to think of the many days ahead, think only of today.** Think only of the moment. In this blessed moment, you have God with you, embracing you, whispering unto you: I have always loved you, my child. *That is all that matters.*

Every difficult task that comes across your path - every one that you would rather not do, that will take the most effort, cause the most pain, and be the greatest struggle - brings a blessing with it. And refusing to do it regardless of the personal cost is to miss the blessing. - Streams in the Desert

***It is through the most difficult trials that God often brings the sweetest discoveries of Himself.***

### **Fear Not, My Child**

Fear not my child

Fear not.

Rid yourself of useless anxieties,

There is more that you can do at rest

than you can ever do fretting about.

Let everything that you do

be done out of love

pouring out of a peaceful heart.

It is not how many ideas

that run through your mind

that matters.

It is the way that you believe.

It is the way that you surrender

to everything that is good

which heaven is showering you

in every moment.

Fear not my child

Fear not.

There is no need for you to hurry

nor for your hands to tremble.

Time stops for love  
and love alone.  
And I want you to enter  
the door that leads to forevermore.

### **When God Prays**

My beloved, why do you cry? Why do you fill your heart with gloom and hopelessness? Why do you hide from me? Why do you bear this burden that is not yours? Was the night so long you never thought it would surrender to another sunrise? Was the winter too cold you never thought you could feel warm ever again? I am deeply troubled with your troubles. I am utterly concerned that I could not sleep. I know your wounds for they are mine as well. I know your tears and I would like to take them away.

*No reply.*

My beloved, it's been so long since I heard your voice; so long since you poured out your heart to me. How I long to hear them once again. How I missed it! How I miss the songs you used to sing. How I miss you! How I yearn to enjoy your presence once more.

*No reply.*

My beloved, has the world deafened the ears that used to listen to my voice? Has the noise of the world been so loud you couldn't hear my gentle whisper? How I'd like to shout upon you like thunder! To reach out to you like the crashing waves! But it is not my way, beloved. I am not among the fire nor the lightning nor the storm. I am the soft breeze that whispers unto you with unfailing love.

*I do not have the love that you have, nor the patience that you have for me. I do not care if you bring me fire or thunder or rain for it is just the same! This life is not good to me. It would have been better had I not been born at all!*

Why do you despise life; life that I have given you? Have I not formed you in your mother's womb? Have I not chosen you before the birth of the earth? Have I not fashioned you intricately, passionately, wonderfully, uniquely, perfectly beyond any conceivable thought or miracle? Have I not breathed on you? Have I not given you my own heart? Have I not made you into my own glory and immortality?

*I can see no beauty whatsoever in the creature that I am. There is no hope for me for I am wretched and most unfortunate of men. Men will never look upon me with admiration or respect. Men would never even notice me, for who am I? Who am I that anyone should care about me?*

*You say you fashioned me. You say you breathed your life unto me, but I have none. Death has more mercy for one such as me.*

Why do you choose death? Why prefer darkness to light? Sorrow over joy? Despair over hope? Have I not given you freewill? Have I not given you a mind such as my own?

*Freewill belongs only to those blessed upon the earth. Men such as me have no choice whatsoever. Why hope when you will be frustrated in the end? Why desire light when you cannot prevail over darkness?*

My beloved, have I not given you strength? Have I not poured out Wisdom unto you? Have I not armed you with everything you need to face the battles of this world? And have I not come before you and claimed victory over the war you cannot win?

*Why do you talk to me? Don't you have any other business to take care of? Why waste your time on me when you can convince a multitude with your words? I am not your only love. I am not the only one you care about so be gone from me! I am nobody's beloved.*



Why do you not trust my heart? Do you not know the love I have for you? And why send me to the crowd when my beloved is here? I leave the ninety-nine sheep for the one I seek. For the one which can never be replaced. For the one whom I will hide in the shadow of my wings. For the one whose name is written forever in the palm of my hand.

*You speak so wonderfully as though it is the truth. As though you know how I feel.*

There is no truth but I. And the truth is that I have loved you so much that I despised my life so you can have yours.

*What is this life you're talking about anyway? If there is heaven, why don't you bring me there? It is different to walk the face of the earth. It is different to face the people that I face. To struggle with the problems I'm going through. To remain standing when a thousand await for me to stumble so they can trample upon me. So they can spit on my face when they have the chance. Where is the glory you're talking about? They do not even respect me. Where is hope when I don't even know which road to take?*

What is it that you want, my child?

*No reply.*

What is it that you desire me to give you?

*No reply.*

Why do you not knock upon the door which waits to be opened up for you? Why do you not ask for the grace that was meant to be yours? Why do you content yourself with garbage when you can seek a treasure, which nobody can ever take away from you?

*I am just so tired and worn out. I don't even have the strength to argue with you anymore.*

Then what is it that you want, my beloved?

*I'm just so lonely; I wish there could be someone to hold my hand.*

**He holds our hand. He carries us when we can carry on no more. He restores our strength. He renews us. He picks up the broken pieces of our hearts and mends it as though it were never broken at all.**

God speaks. God seeks us in the darkest chambers of our hearts. God longs to hear us, to touch us and comfort us at times when we needed it most. But we are cold and tired and deaf. We hear Him knocking, but we dare not open the door. We hear Him praying, but we pretend not to have heard it, and we turn away.

***"Unless a man be broken, he would never reach his limits. Unless he reaches his limits, he would never find the limitless God."-Joyce, itakeofftheface.com***

#### Today's Activity:

Find yourself a quiet time to pray and to be still. Lift up your every concern, your deepest heartaches to the One who loves you most. Following are also some quotes about stillness which you can reflect on for the day:

#### **Quotes on Stillness**

Learning how to be still, to really be still and let life happen - that stillness becomes a radiance. - Morgan Freeman

Take time each day to seek out stillness, to find that sacred spot. Let your mind and soul be at ease. Don't grasp and grab for the magic and miracles. When you reside in that place of stillness, the joy, miracles, and magic you're seeking will find you. - Melodie Beattie

"Within you there is a stillness and a sanctuary to which you can retreat at any time and be yourself." - Hermann Hesse

"I am glad that so much movement happens in this stillness." - Richard Land

"If a man would travel far along the mystic road, he must learn to desire God intensely but in stillness, passively and yet with all his heart and mind and strength." - Aldous Huxley

"The sound of 'gentle stillness' after all the thunder and wind have passed will be the ultimate Word from God." - Jim Elliot

"Blessed are the single-hearted, for they shall enjoy much peace. If you refuse to be hurried and pressed, if you stay your soul on God, nothing can keep you from that clearness of spirit which is life and peace. In that stillness you will know what His will is." - Amy Carmichael

"One's action ought to come out of an achieved stillness: not to be mere rushing on." - D.H. Lawrence

"Bring yourself back to the point quite gently. And even if you do nothing during the whole of your hour but bring your heart back a thousand times, though it went away every time you brought it back, your hour would be very well employed." - ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, ON MEDITATION

"You become what you think about all day long and those days eventually become your lifetime." - Wayne Dyer

Sshhhhh... Listen closely... Ever so closely and still. For even closed doors may whisper unto us a secret, and even dead-ends may point us closer to pathways we've long been searching for. - Joyce, itakeofftheface.com

You must rest, O soul, to receive your heart's desire. Slow the beating of your heart over concerns for your personal care. Place the storm of your individual troubles on God's altar of everyday trials, and the same night, the Lord will appear to you. His rainbow will extend across the subsiding flood, and in your stillness you will hear the everlasting music. - Streams in The Desert

I am Your Rock, higher than the brutal billows of the sea. Stand on Me and no storm shall cause you to fall. I shall be your fortress, your high tower, your ever present shield. Walk by faith, not by sight. Your eyes shall see turmoil all around you, but your faith shall feel the calm that I bless you with today. - Bo Sanchez, Embraced

Surely he will save you

from the fowler's snare

and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his feathers,

and under his wings you will find refuge;

his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

You will not fear the terror of night,

nor the arrow that flies by day,

nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,

nor the plague that destroys at midday.

A thousand may fall at your side,

ten thousand at your right hand,

but it will not come near you.

-Psalm 91 (NIV)

"Be still, and know that I am God..."-Psalm 46

## *How Do I Know God Loves Me?*

***We crave for love, so much so that we look for it even in the worst of people who only hurt us and fail us constantly.*** Somewhere at the back of our minds, a voice tells us we can find that love in God, that He has loved us ever since, and that He is the One who has really loved us most. But we doubt this voice. We feel it isn't real, nor is the love of God which we cannot see. *How can we know He loves us when we cannot even see Him?*

***Below are some of the things that made me realize how much I am loved, and how real God's love really is:***

### **1. He created me with awareness and the ability to love and be to loved.**

I am not a stone that does not know the things happening around it. I am not a shell that gets tossed about by the waves, unaware of whatever shore it lands upon, without consciousness of all the beauty surrounding it.

I am aware and alive. I hear the sound of the waves crashing upon the shore and it soothes my soul. I see the sunset and I marvel at God's fingers painting that beautiful scenery everyday. I smell the flowers and I feel at peace. I walk upon the sand and their warmth comforts me.

When I hold a baby upon my arms, I feel an ability to love and to give. I feel that I can make other people happy, and their happiness makes me glad in return.

### **2. He witnesses my life, my life isn't meaningless**

We look for partners in life not only so that someone might love us and take care of us. We look for them because we want them to witness the life we're living.

How important is it to have a witness to one's life? For many, it's the very difference between a life well lived and a meaningless one.

We all want somebody to see how far we've already reached, how far we've already grown. It's not enough for us to be able to achieve something. We want our achievements to be remembered, to be seen, to be the cause of inspiration of another person's life.

With God, I know that Someone's always watching. Even if men do not understand, even if they don't see the good that I do, Someone always does.

### **3. He gives me respect and allows me to be myself**

God respects me and allows me to be me. *He loves me enough to allow me even to make mistakes.* He knows that I could learn from them, and that even the hurts I would experience in life would make me a better person.

Sometimes we think that if we really love a person, we should always interfere in what they do so that they won't make any mistakes. ***But by not letting them decide on their own and own the consequences of their actions, we are also not allowing them to grow.*** We're also not expressing our belief in them, that they can rise up after they fall, that they can later on have the wisdom to choose what's right.

### **4. He communicates with me, I know I'm not alone**

To be able to have someone to communicate with is to not be alone. It is to know that someone else understands what you're saying, and that someone can respond according to His own awareness and understanding. It is not commanding an inanimate object to move according to your will. It's being part of an intelligent and conscious exchange between two consciousness that is aware of each other.

Nobody falls in love with a puppet. A puppet merely says what you wanted him to say and moves where you wanted him to go. We want someone who has a mind of his own, someone who is just like us.

"God is an ocean, a fire, a living fountain...That is the essence of prayer: this contact with a living God, a God who reacts, not like a simple inanimate being but like a living person, with a thrill of joy, with the gift of Himself." -Where The Spirit Breathes

**5. He gives me something to look forward to, my life is far from boredom**

The person who is in love is far away from boredom. To her, every moment is meaningful, and every next moment is something to look forward to.

She does not know what her beloved would do next. Will he invite her out to dinner? Will he give her a bouquet of flowers? Will they watch a movie together?

It's the same with God. We know God loves us because He forms a relationship with us. In that relationship, He gives the gift of Himself. He pours out from a heart of love such surprises we could never have dreamed of!

**6. He enlightens my mind and gives me wisdom**

*Life is a continuous discovery of the mysterious.* And when we have a relationship with God, He allows us to discover a part of Him. He reveals Himself and gives us spiritual wisdom we could never learn elsewhere.

This wisdom enlightens our mind and satisfies our thirst for spiritual food. We continuously learn new things that benefit us and other people. We are delighted with what we learn and such things can never be stolen away from us.

**7. He heals my wounds and helps me love myself more**

Only God knows me. Only He can understand my innermost wounds and fears. With His guidance, I am healed, and I am able to love myself more.

Other people have their own wounds that may cause them to avoid me when I hurt. They have desires which I cannot satisfy, expectations that I may fail to meet. With God, I am loved even if I fail,

even if I can't always be strong enough or beautiful enough. In truth, it is His love that makes me beautiful in time.

#### **8. He receives with gladness everything I offer Him**

Other people may not need what I can offer them. Others may be too proud to accept help from someone like me. But God, even in all His greatness and glory receives with gladness every little offering that comes from me.

He knows what I can do. He knows the love with which I've made the gift I'm offering Him. And He receives the same with love and gladness, He honors me by receiving and appreciating all that I do for Him.

#### **9. He directs my path and leads me back whenever I go astray**

If I were the only one who's trying to maintain my relationship with God, I'd be in great trouble. I know my limits and imperfections. I know how often I change my mind and lose heart.

But God is so good. He cares for His sheep, and He will not allow any to be lost or stolen away. Whenever I start to lose my way, He is there to remind me of His love. He pursues me. He lets me know how much I matter. ***He leaves the 99 sheep behind just so He can find me and take me gently upon His arms.***

#### **10. He saved me and gave me eternal life and lasting joy**

Is there a greater act of love than to lay down one's life for His beloved? There is no greater love, and this is just what God has done.

He could have just offered me the world and I would have been overwhelmed. He could have given me the entire galaxy, or a constellation of stars, but He did not stop there. I receive joy of the most precious kind, one that lasts unto eternity, one that comes from the offering Jesus made upon the cross - the offering of His own Self!



God's love is like a mother's love. To a mother, each child is loved, each one important, each deserving to be saved and protected from all harm. Even if a mother has ten children, it is not enough to save only seven, or even nine. She has to save them all. She cannot rest until she has saved them all!

Indeed, nothing can separate us from the love of God. His love for us does not only manifest with the material things He provides for us, nor in the relationships we have with the people we love. His love is greater and far surpasses all our needs and expectations.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 8:38:39

Today's Activity:

What were the signs you previously looked for that God loves you? Is it in giving you the riches of this world? Is it in giving you people who praise you and always support you? Compare them with the above list and then make your own list of the many ways you believe God is showing you His love.

## *Did I Need Him More Than I Loved Him?*

***Is there a difference between loving somebody and needing somebody?*** Many times, these words seem interchangeable. We believe that if we love somebody, we must certainly need him. Similarly, if we need someone, we must also necessarily love him!

This may be the reason why whenever we feel a person doesn't need our help anymore in certain things, we also feel that we're already losing that person's love. *But is that true?*

God's love for us is certainly something no one could ever deny. But does God really need us? Does He beg for us just to love Him and to appreciate everything He has done for us? On the contrary, God has no need of us. He is already happy! He is complete! But that doesn't mean He doesn't love us. He even showed His great love for us by suffering so much for us and even dying with all humiliation at the cross just to give us life.

We may argue however that we are different from God. We are weak. We are mere human beings who have certain needs that should be met. This is also true. But there are times when the imbalance becomes so great between loving and needing a person that it not only destroys the relationship but harms our wellbeing as well.

### ***What Problems Arise When We Need Someone More Than We Love Him/ Her?***

1. Needing someone too much makes us ***vulnerable to abuse***. Since the other person knows that our need for him is so great, he does with us as he pleases, giving us neither true affection nor respect. And since the needy person just **CAN'T** lose the other, it's most likely the abuse is going to continue for a very long time.

2. Needing someone too much doesn't give the other person the kind of love he really needs, the kind of love that can give constructive criticisms when the other person is no longer doing what is good for him, and the kind of love that makes him feel he is loved even when there is nothing that is expected from him in return.

3. Needing someone too much makes the process of letting go more difficult because the needy person believes she could never find another person who could fulfill her needs.

4. Needing a person too much demands from the other person so many things he couldn't continue to fulfil in the long run. For example, if one sees her partner as being lover, mother, father, brother and friend to her all at the same time, then that person has to fulfill all those roles demanding not only most of his time, but also much of his emotional resources.

5. Needing a person too much creates in the other person a role that **only God Himself** can fulfill.

Today's Activity:

In your honest assessment, did you need your partner more than you loved him? On the other hand, do you think your partner needed you more than he ever loved you?

## *Can I Ever Be Happy Again?*

There are times when we just want to ask ourselves this question, "**Can I ever be happy again?**" It seems as though all that we could see are our own tears and we have almost forgotten how to be happy again. *Happy*. Could you still remember the last time when you were really happy with all of your heart?

### ***Were you happy before you met him?***

Could you list down some of your happy memories before you ever met him? What were the things that made you happy? Little things like a new dish you learned to cook? A starlit night? A beautiful sunset? Christmas perhaps? Thanksgiving?

Who were some of the people who experienced those happy days with you? Your childhood friends? Your parents? Some friendly strangers?

If you have been happy then, don't you think you could really be happy again even without him?

If on the other hand you think you couldn't really remember being happy before meeting him, then you seriously have to reflect on a lot of things. Could it be that you still have some issues you have to resolve on your own? Could these issues be possibly affecting your relationships?

### ***Were you really happy while you were with him?***

This may be quite painful, and I understand if you're not yet ready to do this. But if you're willing, could you remember those times when you have been happy with your partner? What were those moments? Was it when you were just beginning to know each other? Was it when you have learned you have common interests that you enjoy?

*How long was it before you felt something wrong in your relationship?* Have you really been happy with your relationship with him recently? What were some of the things you could have wanted to change?

## **How Do You Define Happiness?**

How do you define happiness? Is it pleasure? Being able to do all the activities you enjoy doing? Is it comfort and having all the material things you need? Is it a fleeting emotion that could change and vanish at any moment? Is it the security of having many friends who like you and respect you? Is it in having an intimate relationship with someone who really understands you yet still respects you and accepts you for who you really are? Unless we could define what happiness really means to us, we might truly find it difficult to find it.

## **What Would You Need To Be Happy?**

Reflecting on the above, what do you think are the things you need right now to be happy again? Do you just need enough time to rest your broken heart, knowing that you'll soon be able to smile again? Or do you need to address some serious issues that could just be repeated in your future relationships?

## **Where Is Our Joy In The Midst Of Our Sorrows?**

*Some of you say, "Joy is greater than sorrow," and others say, "Nay, sorrow is the greater." But I say unto you, they are inseparable. - Kahlil Gibran*

We seek for happiness all our lives. We seek for it in things that bring us pleasure. We seek for it in people who could love us and accept us for who we are.

When things go wrong however, that same happiness turns into grief, and we are heartbroken once again. We ask ourselves, "Is happiness really that fleeting?"

A little voice within answers, "Yes, for happiness depends upon events and things that change. If you want something that lasts, seek for joy instead."

We ask in turn, "How can it be? Can joy still exist even in my sorrows?"

I believe that joy and sorrow can definitely exist at the same time. Yes, we are hurt. Yes, we're broken. But yes, we know we're going to make it. And yes, we know we'll get out of it better persons than we used to be.

Somewhere in our hearts, there is a chamber of joy that should remain intact and untouched, forever guiding us in our most troublesome paths.

**"I have deep sorrow today, and an unclear vision of the future. But nobody ever died of loneliness - only of hopelessness! As long as I have hope, no problem is ever too difficult, no night ever so dark that it can prevent the rising of another day!"**

***The key to joy is hope.*** It is the belief that the pain we're suffering from at the moment cannot last forever and shall one day pass away. *It is a certitude that things are always turning out for the better, for our own good, because God is still in charge of our lives, and God will never let us down.*

*We rejoice then, not because we are wounded, but because we are in the process of being healed.* We rejoice not because we are experiencing tough times, but because we are being made stronger and braver than we used to be. Where is joy then in the midst of all our sorrows?

## **1. JOY is in our hope that God's Plans for us will come true, and it's just a matter of time.**

God has the best plans for us, and they will come true in due time. For the meantime, we can relax and stop stressing ourselves over fears caused by our impatience, our envy and our lack of faith.

## **IMPATIENCE**

Sometimes, it is not our current situation that really causes us stress. It's our impatience that things are not yet how we wanted them to be. We want to be rich NOW. We want to find our life partners NOW. We want to be stronger NOW.

But there are things that require time. An oak tree must start from a little seed. A person must start out as a little baby. A business empire must start out as a small enterprise. And a soul must undergo many seasons of testing and pruning before it becomes holy and strong.

If we could only trust the process we're going through, we'd feel less impatient, and more hopeful for the beautiful things coming our way.

## **ENVY**

One reason why we want to have everything we want at the moment is that we envy other people who have already reached what we want to achieve in life.

It hurts our ego that we are not as blessed as others are. We can't accept that we're still in the process of reaching for our dreams while others have already made theirs come true.

Oftentimes however, we do not know how many years those people spent before they were able to reach their current status in life. We don't know how many times they cried or how much pain and rejection they had to go through in order to be the successful people we now know them to be.

Let us trust God's own process with us and let us not be impatient because we are certain to receive our rewards in due time.

## **LACK OF FAITH**

The answer to what we're praying for may already be on the way - a pending job application is soon to be approved, a potential life partner is just about to be met, an apology is to be accepted. Yet even if these things are about to happen soon, if we don't currently believe they could happen, we'd be in great misery and hopelessness for the moment.

If we could only believe that prayers are still answered, and it shall be answered in the right time, we'd be less anxious and more secure that the best things are already on their way.

When God says, let me take care of this, let Him. Don't try to work your way for His blessings when He wants to shower you with His Gifts.

**2. JOY is in our hope that whatever our current sacrifices are, it will redound towards the good of others.**

There are times when our suffering is voluntary. We know we're doing certain things in order to help other people. Times such as these, our joy rests in the vision we have of the good change our sacrifices will yield in the lives of other people.

There are three things we much remember so as not to lose our joy within our current difficulties:

### ***OUR SUFFERING ISN'T MEANINGLESS***

A lot of our troubles fade away whenever our difficulties take on some meaning. What's really difficult are those sufferings that don't make sense for us, those that drain us with pain without any accompanying fruit commensurate to our hurts. When you are making a certain sacrifice for another person, always remember the meaning of what you're doing. Are you working hard in order to send your children to school? Are you trying to bear the loneliness of being away from your loved ones in order to give your family a better future? Remind yourself always that your efforts are not in vain.

### ***OUR SUFFERING WILL ONLY BE FOR A WHILE***

We should also remember that our sacrifices would last only for a certain period of time. We may need to count several months or even years, but it doesn't change the fact that the time will come also for our sufferings to end.

### ***OUR SUFFERING WILL BRING A LASTING GOOD***



Our difficulties are only for a moment, but they shall bring a lasting good for those we love. We may need to work overtime for several years, but the reward could be the education of our children. There is a lasting good in exchange for our momentary troubles, and this is what we should always keep in mind.

We are not here to be entertained, but to live a meaningful life that makes a lasting difference.

### **3. JOY is in our hope that God can and will transform us into the best that we could be.**

We may not be happy with who we are today. We may even feel ashamed of our weaknesses. Our sorrow is that we have been rejected many times, and it came to a point when we may even reject ourselves. We no longer feel worthy of being loved. We can't believe we'd ever be happy with ourselves, how could other people then be happy with us?

But that is not how God works. *God takes us in our weakness and transforms our shame into strength, our brokenness into a glory we could never even imagine.*

***We all want to be beautiful because we want to be loved. In truth however, it is because God loves us that we become beautiful.***

The Bible is filled with many stories of how God transformed a number of men from fear to courage, from cowardice into greatness. That's how God works, and that's the source of your joy!

-JEREMIAH

"They will fight against you like an attacking army,

but I will make you as secure as a fortified wall of bronze.

They will not conquer you,

for I am with you to protect and rescue you.

I, the Lord, have spoken!

Yes, I will certainly keep you safe from these wicked men.

I will rescue you from their cruel hands." - Jeremiah 15:20-21

Such was God's assurance to Jeremiah, imagine being compared to a fortified wall of bronze!

-GIDEON

Then the Lord's angel came to the village of Ophrah and sat under the oak tree that belonged to Joash, a man of the clan of Abiezer. His son Gideon was threshing some wheat secretly in a wine press, so that the Midianites would not see him. The Lord's angel appeared to him there and said,

The Lord is with you, brave and mighty man!

Judges 6:11-12

Gideon wasn't at all being brave by threshing some wheat secretly and hiding from the Midianites (their enemy). But it was God who willed to transform him into a brave and mighty man.

-JACOB

Fear not, you worm Jacob,

...I am the one who helps you, declares the LORD;

...Behold, I make of you a threshing sledge,

new, sharp, and having teeth;

you shall thresh the mountains and crush them,

and you shall make the hills like chaff;

you shall winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away...-Isaiah 41

Jacob was so weak he was even compared to a worm! But see God's message for him: I make of you a threshing sledge, new, sharp, and having teeth. How different is a little worm that easily gets bruised and crushed from a sharp instrument which God has intended him to be.

Even the apostles of Jesus were all fearful when Jesus had been captured and crucified. How different they have been after receiving the Holy Spirit of God. They were transformed from men of fear

to men of courage who were not afraid to proclaim Jesus' message even if they are risking their very lives in bearing witness to His truth.

God transforms us and helps us become the best of ourselves. In this we find hope, and our joy is made complete!

It is through the most difficult trials that God often brings us the sweetest discoveries of Himself.

**God comforts us in our sorrows. He gives us hope to carry us through even the darkest night. Our happiness may have been lost, but our joy need never fade. Joy should be kept safely in the innermost chambers of our hearts.**

He has sent me to comfort all who mourn,

To give to those who mourn in Zion

Joy and gladness instead of grief,

A song of praise instead of sorrow.

Isaiah 61:2-3

Our weeping is but for a moment, but our joy shall last forever! Rejoice then and keep your hopes up, we are far more blessed than we believe.

### **A Time For Joy**

This may not be a time for dances,

but this is a time for prayer.

This may not be a time for clapping,

but this is a time for songs.

This may not be a time for merriment,  
but this is a time for awakening.  
This may not be a time for running,  
but this is a time for rest.

This may not be a time for kisses,  
but this is a time for hugs.  
This may not be a time for laughter,  
but this is a time for smiles.

This may not be a time for parties,  
this may not be a time for noise,  
But this is a time for healing,  
and this is a time for joy!

A Thought To Ponder:

***God is a good, just and merciful God. Do we believe that God has merely put our happiness dependent upon one imperfect person who can so easily lose it or trample it upon the ground?***

Today's Activity:

Define what happiness is and how that happiness could be achieved.

***And you will hear a little voice within you saying:***

Your joy is not in your sadness nor in your confusion.

Your joy is not in the darkness where you are.

Your joy is not lost.

Your joy is not broken.

It is stored somewhere safe,

protected against all harm.

God Himself protects it!

God keeps it secure,

where not even the most piercing grief could touch it.

Your joy is in GOD'S LOVE

and God's Love is always upon you.

LOVE NEVER FAILS.

### **What Fills My Heart With Joy**

My heart is filled with joy because of God's wonderful love for me.

Weak and small that I am, He takes notice of me and witnesses my life.

He takes me as I am and fashions me after His own glory.

He takes away my shame and my brokenness.

He heals my wounds.

He makes me beautiful and strong.

I will always look forward for that morning when He makes everything new.

Within my heart shall always dwell His voice, and I shall never be alone.

Wisdom is His constant gift, and respect, an eternal blessing as love.

Who would appreciate my small tokens of love? It is He who does not disregard my smallest efforts and my meekest prayers.

Who has planned the best things for me? It is He who has my welfare in mind for all eternity.

My short life is but a vapor that fades, but He grants me a life that never ends.

I am poor and have nothing, but mansions He has prepared for me where He is.

I cry and He wipes away my tears.

I run in grief, but He pursues me, and He wins me back with His words of love.

He shows me the value of each heartbreak,

the cost of every tear.

He shows me how each sorrow can turn to joy

a joy that never fades.

People may hunger now, but they shall be filled.

People may mourn, but they shall be comforted.

We shall receive far more than what we have lost,

and far more than what we could ever dream about.

He is just, but He is also merciful.

He reigns from on high, yet He is never out of our reach.

He is my Father, but He is also like a Mother who loves her children

each one is valuable, no one is dispensable,

each one loved as though she were her only child.

I have my questions but He answers them one by one,

I have my doubts, but He fills my soul with faith.

Where can I go that He cannot follow?

What wrong can I do that He cannot forgive?

There is nothing that can ever separate me away from Him,

and there is no one who could take away these things that fill my heart with the Joy of Him!

## *Must You Forgive Him?*

There are times when the love we feel in our hearts is so big that we're willing to forgive even those people who hurt us the most. Is this how you feel right now? Or is it that what he did was so painful you just couldn't find it yet to forgive him?

### **If You're Finding It Hard To Forgive Him**

You may be in that very difficult point where you still feel so hurt and betrayed that forgiveness is something that seems so early to think about. If you're in that stage, there's no need to be harsh with yourself. There is a time for everything, although it's never too early to start trying to lessen your burdens. For now, just think of forgiveness as something that is not merely for the one being forgiven, but also for the person who is willing to forgive.

### **If You're All Too Willing To Forgive Him**

If you're all too willing to forgive him, you may have to think about what forgiveness means for you. ***Is forgiveness to you the same as the immediate restoration of a relationship?*** You also need to bear in mind that in order to have forgiveness, one must first be aware of the damage done against you. There are some of us who have been so used to hurt that we didn't know anymore how we have allowed ourselves to be hurt so much by other people. *If that has been the case, maybe the person we first need to forgive is ourselves.*

### **The Path To Forgiveness As The Path To Freedom**

*"My idea of forgiveness is letting go of resentment that does not serve your better interest, ridding yourself of negative thoughts. All they do is make you miserable. Believe me, you can fret and fume all you want, but whoever it was that wronged you is not suffering from your anguish whatsoever."- Della Reese*

Why is it so hard to forgive? Why do we feel as though by forgiving someone, we're doing ourselves some kind of injustice? Is it really fair to just forgive someone who caused us so much pain? Don't they deserve our hatred instead of our forgiveness?

It seems as though only anger is instant and well justified. It alerts us of danger and gives us the power to protect ourselves. Forgiveness on the other hand is something we couldn't easily understand and seems to benefit the offender more than it would benefit us. But if such is the case, why even think about it? Could it be because there comes a point in our lives when anger is no longer enough to help us?

### ***What Forgiveness Is NOT:***

#### **1. Forgiveness is not about denial**

One of the first things we must realize is that forgiveness is never about denial. To deny our hurt is to also deny that there is any need for forgiveness.

There are some people who find it easier to deny rather than to go through the whole process of forgiveness. They deem it easier to pretend as though nothing has ever happened, no one has ever offended them and they therefore have no responsibility anymore whether to choose forgiveness or not.

*Denying however does not really take away the wound caused by the offense. It doesn't take away the anger. The anger and the hurt just gets buried, concealed well from sight and hence, hidden away also from healing.*

"When a deep injury is done us, we never recover until we forgive" - Alan Paton quotes

#### **2. Forgiveness is not about forgetting**

Forgetting is almost the same as denial such that they are both mechanisms for escape. While denial doesn't even entertain the idea of getting hurt, forgetting finds no way of dismissing the hurt without also dismissing the lessons learned from one's pain.



***If you say that forgetfulness is all that you need to forgive, it's like saying your wounds have healed just because you forgot you had them.*** Wounds don't heal by forgetting. On the other hand, we need more awareness and consciousness in order to bring about the healing we desire.

*"The stupid neither forgive nor forget; the naive forgive and forget; the wise forgive but do not forget."*- Thomas S. Szasz

### **3. Forgiveness is not about remaining in an abusive relationship**

*To forgive someone is not the same as to restore one's relationship to that person.* It is not the same as remaining in an abusive relationship that causes us harm.

To forgive is to recognize an offense and to seek healing from the wounds caused by that offense. If we have truly recognized the cause for our wounds, we wouldn't want to just forget about everything and continue in a relationship that only causes us pain. ***We can forgive but we are not obliged to continue trusting in the person who cannot respect us and give us the love we truly deserve.***

### **4. Forgiveness is not about the absence of justice**

*Being able to forgive someone doesn't mean that the person would no longer suffer the consequences of his actions.* We may let go of our anger for that person, we may understand, but that doesn't mean the offender can continue to enjoy our friendship the way he used to. The restoration of a relationship is very different from the healing of a wound that needs to be forgiven.

Justice is letting that person suffer the natural consequences of his actions in order for him to learn and make way for change. Even if we do not impose punishment upon them, even if we forgive, justice will still find its way. The first consequence is the loss of our friendship. The succeeding consequences are the loss of his other relationships if he continues to be the way he is.

The other form of justice benefits the one who is offended. How? By forgiving and letting go of one's hurts, the offended renders justice unto himself. He becomes good to himself and does not remain unfair to himself by carrying all the emotional weight caused by the offense.

*"Never does the human soul appear so strong as when it foregoes revenge and dares to forgive an injury" - Edwin Hubbel Chapin*

***What Forgiveness Is:***

**1. Forgiveness is seeking healing from someone who can give it to you.**

The problem with unforgiveness is that it seeks healing from the same person who caused us pain. We think that with our anger, we can force the offender to apologize and to make up for all the wrong things he has done to us. But such a path of thinking only gives our power away to someone who is least capable of healing us. How can we expect him to change in a very short span of time and make a complete turnaround from being a villain to being an angel of healing?

What if he doesn't change? Does it mean we're already doomed in our pain? Does it mean our happiness depends upon his hands alone?

***"Forgiveness is no longer expecting healing from the same person who caused you pain."***

It is not about denying your hurt; it isn't even about forgetting the wrong done against you. But it's in ceasing to ask something from someone who isn't capable of giving you what you're asking for.

Forgiveness does not start with the offender. It doesn't start when he says he is sorry for causing you pain.

***Forgiveness starts when you choose to forgive that person without any cooperation on his part.*** Forgiveness starts with acknowledging that it is within your power to forgive and to seek healing from the right people God sends your way.

*"Sincere forgiveness isn't colored with expectations that the other person apologize or change. Don't worry whether or not they finally understand you. Love them and release them. Life feeds back truth to people in its own way and time." - Sara Paddison*

Quite often, we couldn't recognize the support available to us because we're only focused with the offender. When we decide to forgive, we take our eyes off of him and begin to see other sources of healing and even love. **There is always help available for us.** Even in times when we think nobody is there for us, God is always there, ready to comfort us in our darkest hours and guide us towards healing. Who else could know the path of healing other than Him who also knew pain? When Jesus suffered for us, didn't he open the way for us to approach Him in our hurts?

*Could anyone nourish anger against his fellows and expect healing from the LORD? - Sirach 28:3*

## **2. Forgiveness is an act of mercy (towards self and the offender)**

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Matthew 5:7*

**What is an act of mercy?** It is to give someone that which he doesn't truly deserve. It is to acknowledge that power comes not from the one who receives but from the one who is able to give.

*"He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass if he would ever reach heaven; for everyone has need to be forgiven." - George Herbert*

Everyone has faults and imperfections. It may be true that in our eyes, the offender has greater faults and deserves just punishment, but aren't we all guilty also of sin one way or the other? If our perspective about sin is that it should always be punished, then we are only condemning ourselves.

Notice how harsh we've often been not only to others but to ourselves. When we give no room for people including ourselves to make mistakes, we give ourselves no room to breathe or to be loved. Justice is but the minimum requirement for relationships, but it is only in mercy and forgiveness where we can find the fullness of love.

*"He who is devoid of the power to forgive, is devoid of the power to love." - Martin Luther King, Jr.*

### **3. Forgiveness is letting God, trusting both in His justice and His mercy.**

When we forgive, we let go of a lot of our burdens, and this includes our desire to render to our offender what he deserves. Does he deserve punishment for his offense? Does he deserve mercy? Does he deserve a new opportunity to change? Only God knows.

If we concern ourselves about such things, we'd only be carrying a weight we couldn't bear. All that we should care about is our healing, trusting that God would be the one to take care of the other things, including the life of the one who hurt us.

*"Forgiveness is the answer to the child's dream of a miracle by which what is broken is made whole again, what is soiled is made clean again." - Dag Hammarskjöld*

### **4. Forgiveness is moving on towards freedom.**

*"When you hold resentment toward another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free." - Catherine Ponder*

**Forgiveness is freeing yourself from all the negative emotions that bind you to your offender, to your past, and to your wound.** Without forgiveness, you would always be looking back to that time of pain and suffering. You would live your life as if all your days were days of anguish spent with the one who hurt you.

**No matter how you want to, you could no longer change the past.** We could only learn from it and hope that we become better people who are now stronger and wiser to face the new challenges coming our way. Our fate doesn't stop with one tragedy. As long as we're alive, we have the chance to move our lives closer to our desires. We can do something. We can set ourselves free and move on.

*"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you." - Lewis B. Smedes*

***We start to think about forgiveness when everything else we've tried including hate and revenge could no longer work for our good.*** Our health may have suffered. Our relationships may have been affected. Our dreams may have been put on hold all because we couldn't let go of our past hurts.

**The first step to forgiveness is not to deny that we've been hurt but to acknowledge how wounded we were.** It shouldn't stop there however. We should then seek for healing from those who are ready to support us until we're able to start again.

*To forgive is to be kind to ourselves and to all of those who truly care for us.* It is to release ourselves from burdens God has already decided to place upon His shoulders.

***Forgiveness isn't easy, but it's more difficult to continue living in a downward spiral of negative emotions where there is no hope for change nor redemption.*** The path to forgiveness is the more courageous path. It is taking one brave step at a time towards freedom and true happiness.

**Heaven is forgiveness. Being forgiven. And being able to forgive.** Forgiveness brings peace. Forgiveness unites us and builds bridges where we once built walls. Forgiveness allows us to lay down our burdens, our guilt, our anger. When we finally find healing and wholeness, we find forgiveness as well. Forgiveness is what we call as heaven.

*"To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love. In return, you will receive untold peace and happiness." - Robert Muller*

Today's Activity:

Write down what forgiveness now means to you. What do you think are the benefits you could gain from true forgiveness? Have you already felt how hurt you really were so you could find the necessary measures needed for authentic forgiveness?

## *How Did We End Up Hurting Each Other So Much?*

**There is something in each and every one of us that needs love.** It is that kind of need that urges us to meet people, to be known, to form friendships, and to find that special person with whom we can be most intimate with. To some people, this need is somewhat fulfilled more or less with the right *balance* of relationships one has and has had since childhood. One has built a network of friends one can count on to, one has felt the love of his parents, and most of all, one has been able to fill that deepest void through God's love which only He could possibly fulfill.

For some people however, there is this *very deep craving* that has been left unfulfilled for so long. There is this unusually deep thirst for love and attention and self esteem that seems to have created a hole within one's own heart that became so big it became very difficult to quench it, even with a very sincere affection from someone. In truth, this hole has become a wound that hurts so much not only the person concerned, but all those with whom one has tried to form deep relationships with. Could it be possible that the one you love is suffering from this wound? Could it be possible that you are suffering from it as well?

### ***Signs of Wounding***

#### **1. Very low self esteem**

People who have been wounded so deeply for lack of affection have very low self esteem. They don't feel important. They have been neglected for so long that they feel nobody could ever value them anymore. *They feel so unworthy, especially for love, even if they crave for it the most.*

#### **2. Fear of being abandoned**

People who have not experienced love their whole lives and who suddenly found someone who's willing to give them the attention they need don't suddenly become secured and thankful that they've found someone. On the contrary, most feel this intense fear that they would lose that person, the only person they think who could possibly love them.

#### **3. Unusually high demands of love**

Since their need for love has been unmet for so long, they form unusually high expectations for those who wanted to be involved in a relationship with them. They demand everything from them, all the love that has been kept from them, all the attention they lacked, all the pampering and the caring they craved for all their lives.

#### **4. Pushing away those whom they love the most**

Even if they fear most the thought of being abandoned, they often end up pushing away the people whom they love the most. This may be due to their unusually high demands which their partners couldn't satisfy, or this may be due to their overwhelming anxiety that drives them to push away people even before these people casts them away.

#### ***Destructive Effects of One's Wounding***

Given the above intensity of one's needs, it is clear how one could suffer from relationship breakups again and again. One also become vulnerable of abusive relationships, either as its victim or as the one who unknowingly causes the suffering of others. Below are some of the possible destructive effects of such wounding in one's relationships:

##### **1. Perfectionism in Oneself and in Others**

One's very low self esteem could become cloaked in a high degree of perfectionism thinking that unless one becomes so perfect, one could never be worthy of love.

##### **2. Inability/ Unwillingness to Admit One's Mistakes**

One may become so stubborn to the extent that one wouldn't want to admit one's mistakes for fear that if someone finds out that they made one, that would make them bad and the more unworthy of love. They have very little self esteem and whatever self esteem they have may have become dependent on their outside behavior that if even such becomes stained, they would have nothing more left.

### **3. Black and White Thinking**

In his confusion, one may decide to see the world only in terms of very clear principles. He doesn't want to see vague shades of grey. He merely wants to see things in black and white! Hence, he uses the same categorization among people such that people could only be either evil or good. If you're not good or perfect, then you are evil. If you are evil, you are among those people who have deserted and hurt him, and sooner or later, he knows you would leave him, too.

### **4. Lack of Object Constancy**

Object constancy should have been formed in our childhood. It is the belief that an object still exists even if one cannot see that object for a while. For example, even if a parent leaves for a while, the child should have a firm belief that the parent would come back for him, and he hasn't lost his parent just because he couldn't see him for a while. But what if that kind of bonding did not exist in one's childhood? What if his mother or father left him, never to come back for him again?

The results for the grownup adult would be devastating because he'd always have that fear that if he couldn't see his loved one, she might not be there anymore for him! This is the reason why some people monitor so closely where their loved ones are. This is the reason for the frequent phone calls, for the constant demand of attention, for the tantrums whenever one becomes even a few minutes late for a date.

### **5. Controlling Behavior**

One who has lived most of his life feeling empty and without the things he desires the most could grow as a defense mechanism a controlling behavior. He doesn't want more uncertainties, he wants to be on top of things. If in case he finds someone who loves him, he'd do anything to keep her, even to the point of controlling her. What are some means of control?

#### **Isolation**

One strategy in order to control someone is to isolate her especially from family and friends. Without their support, she becomes dependent on him alone. He becomes her world.

#### **Financial Control**



Without having the financial means, his partner will not be able to do much for herself. In order to ask for money then, she must comply to the rules of the one controlling the money.

### **Verbal Abuse**

Verbal assault or abuse is a means of degrading the self esteem of another person. He could tell her how worthless she is or how nobody could ever fall in love with her so she should be thankful he is still there.

### **Physical Abuse**

When all else fails, he could even use physical violence just to make her comply to his wants. He also uses a previous incident of violence to threaten her whenever she starts to act in a way that is displeasing to him.

## **6. Inability / Unwillingness to Empathize with Others**

Because he is very much wounded and cannot manage even his own emotions, he has no ability or willingness to sympathize with the needs of others. He may appear sensitive, but not to your own needs, only to his needs, his hurts, his feelings.

## **7. Lack of Trust**

One may have been hurt and rejected so many times that one finds it very difficult to trust others anymore. This lack of trust creates tension in a relationship because the other person always feels the need to gain the other person's trust but couldn't get it.

## **8. Inability to Remember the Good that You Have Done**

One suffering from too much woundedness seems unable to remember all the good you have done for him in the past. All he could remember is your present deeds, whether good or bad. Hence, if you have done something wrong today, you are evil! It's exhausting to live in such a relationship because you always feel the need to prove yourself, you almost can't breathe because a slight imperfection could cause the ruin of the entire relationship.

## **9. Inability to Observe One's Personal Limits**

One who has felt so alone and empty could have trouble in respecting other people's limits. For them, if they are able to find someone to have a relationship with, the other person is merely an extension of themselves, not another person with her own beliefs, priorities and interests.

## **10. Unpredictable Moods and Anger**

Due to very deep wounds, fears and unaddressed feelings of insecurity and worthlessness, a person may exhibit certain moods that would surprise other people in their lives. They may even have illogical bursts of anger that are so extreme that his partner may often wonder where they ever came from.

Have you been living with a person exhibiting certain behavior such as the above? Or have you yourself felt similar reactions you never wanted to do in the first place? Then you may have very deep woundings in your heart and very deep cravings for a perfect love you may never find in just one person, especially an imperfect one.

Today's Activity:

### **Possible Measures For Healing**

#### **1. God's Love and the right balance of relationships**

It is rare that one person could ever fill all the longings of our hearts. Expecting him to fill all our needs is like putting him in a pedestal as a god, an idol that would only crush our hearts sooner or later. Try to have a balance in your relationships so that your deep longing may be filled by other people who are more than willing to be a part of your life. Most of all, fill that deep void in your soul with God's love, Someone who could really be there for us all the days of our lives.

## 2. Psychological and medical help in extreme cases

If you notice that your wounding is too deep and that you are already causing damage to yourself or to other people, especially those whom you love most, you may decide to seek for professional help so you could undergo a process of healing supervised by an expert in that field. If it is your partner who needs professional help, realize that you cannot force him to seek it unless he also decides to. Realize also that there are cases that are beyond your control. You cannot always help him fill that very deep void in his heart, especially if he doesn't want to seek help for himself. For now, all you could do is pray for Him, that he may be enlightened, and when the time comes that he is willing to ask you what went wrong, that he may be able to recognize what he needs for healing and change. If you are already in physical danger, you need to distance yourself from your partner for a while. If you have kids, you need to protect them both from physical harm and from emotional trauma.

## *Why Couldn't He Try Harder Like Me?*

There may be times when you feel that you could still try harder. You feel that something could still be done in order to save the relationship. The only problem is that he doesn't want to anymore. ***Couldn't he try harder? Why does he seem so selfish?***

The truth is we couldn't really force other people to do something, even if we truly believe it's the right thing to do. And if it is apparent that we're the only ones trying to hold on to the relationship, how could this relationship still exist?

### **It Takes Two to Make a Relationship Work**

I've realized that in order for a relationship to work, both parties must be willing and interested to work out the relationship. It can never work when only one person cares about it.

This is the reason why God respects our freewill, because He doesn't want to force us just to love Him back. It can never work out that way. Even if God is all too willing to give us the best things, His love wouldn't be able to form a relationship with us unless we are willing to receive that which is being given us.

### **Even The Sincerest Affection Can Be Ignored**

In human relationships, our love, no matter how sincere it may be could also be rejected or ignored. Though we do not love as unconditionally as God loves, we have a certain capacity to go on loving another person even if that person doesn't love us back. Still, without being able to respond to our love, a relationship is not truly forged, and both could not reap the sweet fruits of a truly meaningful and mutual relationship.

### **Why We Fall For Another Person**

It can happen that we fall in love with a certain person because we see something beautiful in him, something he may not even see in himself. Seeing this beauty that we may also have failed to find or develop in ourselves, we transfer all our love to that person who has it, and that person becomes our world, the very meaning of our lives.

### **Why The Relationship Doesn't Work**

That person however may not support us back, he may not even love himself the way we love him. Thus, his actions do not produce a return flow of love either towards himself or towards us. He is like a cistern with many holes that never gets filled, and that never really gets happy and satisfied.

For this reason, we don't feel satisfied too, for all that we want is his happiness, for we have anchored our happiness upon his.

One question would be, ***"Why does he still maintain the superficial relationship if he doesn't care so much about it?"*** Maybe he still derives some benefit from it, like someone who can always listen to his complaints or someone who could keep him company or maybe he just feels obliged somewhat to return the favor.

But he is not as attached to the relationship as the other person is because he may not have seen the beauty in the other person to really capture his heart. His heart may also be closed such that he can't accept anybody in it. Or he could have a lot of filters, he wants some form or type of love which the other person couldn't offer him.

Not having found his pearl of great price, he has the tendency to desert the relationship anytime. Note that even while he is in the relationship, he is not happy and is not able to avail of the full benefits of the relationship. He could then threaten to leave anytime whenever he finds another relationship that gives him the same benefits or even more, or whenever he already feels uncomfortable, irritated or guilty by being unable to meet the demands of the other person.

Did you have a true relationship with both people mutually working out for its good?

Today's Activity:

If your partner is no longer willing to work things out to save your relationship, are you willing to accept his decision even if it's not in accordance with your own opinion of what should be done?

## *I Don't Know If I Could Ever Forget Him*

Sometimes, we feel we have understood many of the reasons why things happened or had to happen as they should. However, it doesn't lessen our pain of being deserted by those whom we love. We still miss them, we miss the days when we were with them. However, remembering those days also brings us sorrow, because all of those days seem only to lead us to that painful moment of saying goodbye. Hence, we feel as though we just want to forget everything. But must we? Was everything just a waste?

*There are reasons why God allows some things to happen in our lives, even those that seemed like very dark times for us.*

For example, one reason why we find it so hard to forget a previous relationship is that we can't accept the fact that it could all just end that way and all our efforts, all our time, all our tears and suffering had just gone to waste.

God wastes nothing however, especially our tears. We don't know the end yet, especially within the broad perspective of eternity.

***The other person may not appreciate everything you have done for him now, but it is certain that you have made an impact in his life. That impact will play a part in the grander scheme of things.***

You'll never know how he shall one day remember everything that has been done for him, how he was loved. At present, he may really feel such a deep craving to be loved but fears so much to be abandoned such that he consequently pushes away those who desire to love him.

But if you were able to show that person that you have been there for him at one point in his life, one day, God may let him see all the blessings sent his way, including the people who loved him even though his heart was still closed and unable to receive the love being offered him.

**It is never a waste to love.**

## To Separate The Good Memories From The Painful Ones

*When a relationship ends, it's hard to separate the good memories from the painful ones.* It's hard for us to let go because we don't want to put to waste all the good things that has happened to us all those years. At the same time, we can't just discard the painful memories, we can't pretend that those things never happened because they have, and they have taught us things we just can't leave behind.

***Maybe one way to reconcile this is to think that even our painful memories have turned out to work for our good.*** We are now wiser and stronger because of them, and they're as much a part of us as all the other good memories we had with the people we loved.

One relationship may end, but a new one may still begin, a new relationship formed by two people who have already changed and become better from everything that they've been through, both the good ones and the bad.

### What Are The Things We Can Remember?

1. That we have loved
2. That we have tried our best
3. That we have opened up our hearts
4. That we shared our life with another person
5. That we have taught another person what we know
6. That the other person has taught us what he knew about life
7. That we have found something in common with another person or that we appreciated a person so different from who we are
8. That we have been loved
9. That somebody tried to make things work with us
10. That even if that somebody failed, we have understood another person or that we tried to understand his hurts, his joys, his past, his dreams



### **What Are The Things We Can Forget?**

1. We can forget the harsh words said, those hurtful words he uttered about us, and those things we mentioned that we'd rather take back.
2. We can forget the dreams that didn't work out. In their place, we can build new dreams with the new people in our lives.
3. We can forget the expectations that have not been met.
4. We can forget our need to take vengeance and our desire to hurt him back.
5. We can forget our promise to ourselves to never love again and to never trust again.

What we need is a proper **realignment** of our thoughts, *not total amnesia*. We can't escape from the past, but we can learn from it and become better.

Further, it is not the happiness in the past that keeps us back. It's our fear of not being able to have that kind of happiness again, and our failure to let go of the other person, thinking that having him back is the only way to regain our joy.

Learn to let go of the past the proper way.

### **Let Go**

Let go of your tears,

and you will see the light.

Let go of your worries,

for tomorrow is alright.

Let go of your troubles,

or you might lose your peace.

Let go of your fears,

and you will find your dreams!

You will find your life,  
is more meaningful to live.  
You will find your burden,  
getting lighter like your soul.  
You will find happiness,  
always waiting on your way.  
You will find heaven,  
getting nearer each day!

Today's Activity:

What are the things in the past that has enriched your life today? What are the things you can keep? What are the things you need to let go? Write them down.

## *Is There Anyone Who Could Ever Love Me?*

**Why would you ever think nobody else could ever love you?**

- Is it because of the hurtful things he said about you?
- Is it because of the people in the past who let you down?
- Is it because you believe you're a bad person?
- Is it because you think you don't have anything to offer to another person?
- What do you think is the reason why people fall in love with another person?

***Who Made You Who You Are?***

*"When I had my sheep, I was happy, and I made those around me happy. People saw me coming and welcomed me, he thought. But now I'm sad and alone. I'm going to become bitter and distrustful of people because one person betrayed me. I'm going to hate those who have found their treasure because I never found mine. And I'm going to hold on to what little I have, because I'm too insignificant to conquer the world." - The Alchemist, Paulo Coelho*

**What made you into the kind of person you are today?** No doubt, your past experiences have had a significant influence on you, and so are the people who've touched your life.

But what if we experience difficult situations? What if we give our hearts to people who'd only crush it and throw it carelessly away? Would such people define who we should become? Should our bitter experiences make us into bitter persons as well?

***Let no betrayal hinder you from trusting yet again.***

*Let no foolish word damage the way you see yourself.*

***And let no hurt, no matter how painful, make you shrink from achieving your God-given destiny!***

Who made you who you really are?

### **Three Things That Contribute To Criticisms That Hurt Us Deeply**

*Words are powerful.* They could lift us up towards healing, or they could wound us like sharp swords that pierce our hearts.

Which words have such a painful effect upon us and that leaves us feeling worthless and shattered after hearing them? Which people have the power to utter those words that often leave us broken and defeated?

***There are three things that contribute to criticisms that hurt us deeply:***

#### **1. The Criticism That Touches a Wound**

Words that are totally untrue rarely have the power to hurt us. We hurt because we felt some truth to the criticisms hurled against us. Such criticisms may not be totally true, but they may point towards a truth we've always wanted to hide or to some related weakness that we haven't been able to address so far.

Note that some of these weaknesses may not even exist in reality, but if we perceive them to exist or to matter to us, the wounds exist, and they hurt whenever they are touched.

For example, we may think we're not good-looking enough and words said about our appearance trigger some feelings of insecurity. In truth, we may not really look that bad, but when we believe that we're not attractive, we'd always feel attacked whenever somebody tries to make fun of our appearance.

## **2. The Criticism That Comes From a Person Valuable to Us**

It is the people who are closest to us whom we count on the most. We expect them to protect us, to defend us from people who may look down on us, and to guard the vulnerabilities we have revealed to them.

Once they start criticizing us, we immediately feel the intensity of the impact of their words. We may feel like we're being attacked by those whom we trusted with our greatest secrets, including the weaknesses we have hidden from everyone else.

Weren't they supposed to be the ones who would understand us the most? Weren't they the ones who should believe in us despite the imperfections that they see in us?

## **3. The Criticism That Comes From Someone Credible**

Criticisms have a greater impact when uttered by those we deem as credible in the area where we are being criticized. For example, if we are joining a singing contest, it is the judge who also happens to be a great singer, who has the power to affect us with her words of praise or disapproval regarding our singing ability.

They may not always be right, but since we have already given them our belief in their particular area of expertise, we easily consider their words as true.

Once all three factors exist at the same time, the more will be our hurt and our difficulty in trying to move on from said criticisms. For example, maybe we feel insecure about our intelligence, and we have been criticized as being stupid or shallow. What would make it worse is when that criticism comes from a person we love, such as a life partner, and more so if that person is one whom we consider as possessing a high degree of intelligence.

***In such instances, how do we deal with the criticisms that deeply hurt our self-esteem?***

## 1. Find Healing For Our Wounds

Hurts caused by criticisms may be opportunities for us to discover the wounds we have. This in turn may give us the chance to heal and to be more at peace with who we are.

## 2. See the Intention of the Person Criticizing Us

If the person criticizing us is someone we love, let us try to look at their intentions for doing so. In truth, they may only want us to improve so we can have better lives and because they really care about us.

If however, we find out that the people criticizing us have all the wrong intentions, such as really feeling envious and desire only to put us down, then we can learn to protect ourselves from them and not let their words affect our self worth.

## 3. Know That Nobody's Perfect

Even if the people who criticize us are credible, let us remember that nobody is really perfect. They could be wrong. Or they could also have the wrong intentions. If they are right however, let us use their criticisms constructively so we could grow and reach our full potential.

### ***A Different Way to Heal Your Self-Esteem***

This article should have been titled "*How To Increase Your Self-Esteem*", but I decided that instead of merely INCREASING one's self-esteem, one should **HEAL it completely** in such a way as to forever cast away one's futile efforts of increasing something that can never really be increased enough as to satisfy our wants.

To say that our self-esteem is low is to compare it to something higher. But to be able to attain that higher degree could only mean that there is still something beyond that. *How high is high enough?* How much increase is really necessary? In truth, it is not an increase in self esteem that we should aim for, but a complete healing of our wounded sense of self worth.

## **You Need To Rebuild From The Ground Up**

Before we could attain true healing, we must first recognize our wounds. Before we could rebuild our sense of worth, we must first acknowledge how broken it really is.

*Where is your self esteem founded?* How firm is that foundation from which it is currently built?

**Are you confident because you are beautiful?** But what if you mingle among others who are more beautiful than you? And for how long will you stay that way? What happens when you grow old and that beauty fades?

**Are you secure with your success?** What if the business or the reputation you've built suddenly falls? What are you worth by then? For how long could you hold on to your riches? Can you still enjoy any of it as your body rots in the grave?

All our efforts of increasing our self esteem is futile for in the end, all such efforts lead only to fear, the fear of losing everything we have ever gained.

## **There Is a Different Way to Heal**

The healing of our wounds can no longer depend on the external actions we take such as working harder, eating healthier, or studying longer hours. ***The only way to healing is to be healed from within because our wounds are not wounds of the body, but of the soul.***

Deep in one's soul, we feel a great emptiness and uncertainty. We feel compelled to measure up to the standards of other people while at the same time, not being able to measure up to our own sense of wholeness.

We try to be strong, yet it seems we could never be strong enough. We even try to be good, but we could never be holy enough. We are always followed by our sense of shame, and so we hide

ourselves with masks of perfection and of beauty. Beyond that mask however, we feel inadequate, and we feel tired of trying over and over again.

### **How We Could Achieve Healing**

***Healing begins when we STOP our frantic efforts to keep up with others.*** Healing begins when we are able to face our worst pictures of ourselves and still believe that we are worth something.

*What are you worth?*

You are worth more than you ever thought yourself to be. You are worth more than your body or your intelligence or your strength. You are worth more than your success and your riches. These things are given you but they are not the essence of who you are.

Your real worth is your likeness to God Himself. It is that spark which came from ancient times, that breath which made you think and move and love.

Because you can be a vessel of God's joy, you are worth something. Because you can be an object of His love, you are worth so much more than all the stars combined.

***Your worth is not in what you possess, but in Him who possesses you.***

Your worth is not in how you can cover up your imperfections, but in how God can make you perfect by receiving all that He could ever give to you.

**Only in losing everything can you realize how broken you are. But only in being broken can you be healed by knowing how valuable you are to the only One who can heal you.**

Below are common areas of our self esteem's woundedness. Let us try to find their healing by bringing them to the light of God's love for us.



## **Common Areas of Our Woundedness**

### **1. Beauty**

Even the most beautiful among us will grow old someday. The beauty that we envy now is but a fleeting joy. Others are not more worthy to be loved just because they are beautiful. We become beautiful because of God's great love for us.

### **2. Intelligence**

Our intellect, no matter how advanced it may be is nothing as compared with the minds of angels. And angels, no matter how great their wisdom may be are nothing as compared to the depths of God's wisdom. God can grant us an insight we could never find in all the books of the world, but this is not the reason why we should feel more worthy or less worthy in His Presence.

### **3. Strength**

We have but a limited time on earth. The healthiest and the strongest among us cannot even live beyond two centuries. To base our worth with our physical strength is to look down on people just because they are disabled or sick or dying. Every man has God's dignity in him no matter his physical strength.

### **4. Wealth/Success**

The material things we own will someday rot and decay. Nothing can last forever except God's love. Wealth does not indicate that one man is better than the other for we know not where such wealth has come from. One man may be silently accomplishing God's will in His life and reaping eternal fruits that have not yet been revealed in the current time.

### **5. Social Skills**

Other people may be better at mingling in social events and in communicating with other people. They appear attractive, they attract the admiration of many. But not everyone who is praised is really good. Many are even criticized for standing up for the truth. There are people who are not adept at socializing with other men, but in their silent prayers, they can reach God's Presence, and in this, they can find their joy.

## **6. Talent**

What is talent? It is but a gift from God, and for this, no one should boast. Each one is given a unique gift for in truth, we are God's wonderful gift to each other. Let each one mind his own and improve the gift he is given.

## **7. Goodness/ Holiness**

Only God is good. No person is really holy no matter how good he or she appears to be. If we had no need to be saved from ourselves, Jesus wouldn't have died for us all. Let none boast therefore that he is kinder or braver or more patient. We do not earn God's love with our goodness. We become good because God has guided us patiently towards the path of His goodness. All that we can offer God is our gratitude for all the MERCY that we have been given.

## **Where I Fit In**

I can't help it at times, if I trip when I walk

Or I sing some notes out of tune.

I am not like ones you've seen

on movie scenes -

Lovely, witty and sweet.

I am not the shy underdog

with a heart of gold,

or that daring adventurous girl

full of charm.

I fall short trying to fit in,

where I cannot fit in,

trying to be beautiful,

trying to be good.

I look at me

and I cannot see

what He sees,

how someone could love

the likes of me.

But as I look into His eyes

all I know

is that I am loved,

every bit of me - loved.

And I fall for Him,

fearfully yet joyfully,

I fall...

I let myself surrender all -

my hurts, my doubts,

my anger, my insecurities.

And they all vanish

at the sight of Him.

I am moved,

I am thrilled,

I am healed,  
every bit of me -  
accepted and made whole.  
Without even trying to,  
He changes me.  
Into His own likeness,  
He fashions me.  
And I sink deeper  
into His affections,  
where I lose myself  
without truly being lost,  
where I discover another me,  
the one I've always  
been meant to be!  
And it doesn't matter anymore  
that I could never fit in  
anywhere else,  
for there I've found my place,  
for there I've found myself,  
the one He sees,  
the one He truly loves!

***"We all want to be beautiful because we want to be loved. In truth however, it is because God loved us that we become beautiful!"***

Today's Activity:

Write down some of the reasons why you think people fall in love with another person. Write down also the things you could offer to another person. If you are having problems with your self-esteem, where do you think is it coming from? Is it just a voice of past people who criticized you? Is it based on things that do not really measure the true worth of a person?

## *Why Do I Always Fall For The Wrong Person?*

Why do we always seem to fall in love with the wrong person? And ***even after they've hurt us so much, why do we find it so hard to let them go?***

For most of us, *a certain pattern seems to repeat itself*. We fall in love with the wrong person, we get hurt, and then we fall in love again with someone who will only hurt us in the end. Our pain becomes deeper because the people we've counted on to heal us only brought us greater disappointments and hurts.

Eventually, we feel there's something terribly wrong with us, the reason why we can't be loved or even respected, the reason why people always leave us in the end.

In our desperation, we cling on to the only available person who can be there for us, even if that person cannot treat us well. In some cases, we make our own illusions about the person, ideals we project on them even if we know they can't really satisfy our needs.

Soon we can't even remember what our needs really were. We get so focused on meeting the needs of the people whose affections we desire that we fail to recognize and respect our own feelings and needs. We lose our identity and self-esteem. And then we lose the interest of the very people we have tried to please.

If you could recognize this pattern, know that not everything is lost. You're not cursed. You're not unworthy. You're not hopeless. Things have happened for a reason, and it's time we do something about it.

### **Why do we fall in love with the wrong person?**

We're just so lonely that we want the company and validation of other people even if we're not really compatible with them.

Some personalities naturally clash. Some issues are very difficult to address in a short span of time, especially when mixed with other issues. No matter how much we want to, there are some people who can better assist us at certain stages in our lives, especially while we're healing or learning to dream again. We have to find those people, and let go for a while those who might only stunt our growth.

Many times however, when we're so lonely, we just don't care about these things. We just don't want to be alone! Being alone becomes like a phobia, a fear so great it cripples us from doing anything else.

Where is this fear coming from? Was it due to peer pressure or to influences from the media? Does it have anything to do with your old childhood issues and neglect? Were you made to believe you could never be "complete" on your own?

***There is a big difference between loneliness and solitude.*** Solitude is when you're alone but you're still in touch with your source of life. Loneliness can grip you even when you're with other people. It's when you feel "cut-off" from the source of your natural joy, from life.

How lonely are you right now? Is your loneliness so great it can't really be addressed adequately even if you're with another person?

**We seek a trait we lack but desire to have in another person who has it**

It is said that the people we admire most possess certain traits we'd like to have for ourselves. It can be anything from being funny, intelligent, confident, adventurous, or even holy.

These are the traits we often find lovable in a person, traits we want to acquire in order to become lovable as well.

When we find people with these traits and become their partners, we feel as though we have also acquired these traits through affiliation. Finally, we become whole, we forget whatever it is that we lack.

But what if the person who possess such a trait also has other traits that are not really desirable, or even harmful? One example is when we find an adventurous person, but with a violent streak. Is it worth it? Would you like to have his exciting life even if he hurts you physically and emotionally?

Can you not find this trait in another person who is in control of himself? Or can you not try to grow this trait into your own character? It may be that you've been overprotected or restricted as a child and you now long for freedom to express yourself. But can you not do that with other supportive friends who will not damage your self-respect?

**We project an illusion of our ideals instead of seeing other people as they really are.**

Are you really in love? Or are you just in love with the idea of being in love?

Do you really love your partner? Or are you just in love with your illusion of who he/she is?

*We fall in love with the wrong people when we're so wrapped up in our illusions that we become blind to the true character of the people we become intimate with.*

In this situation, it's like we're actually using a person, any available person we can cling on to in order to feed our ideals which they may never be able to satisfy. We demand from them things they could never give us. We want to turn them into persons they could never really become.

In order to find true happiness, we must also accept the truth about other people. It's the only way to let go of those you don't really want and then give yourself the chance to find someone you truly desire.

**We don't know what we really want in a person.**

Have you so forgotten your own needs that you also forgot what you truly want in your life partner?

I've noticed that people who easily found their partners were the ones who had a clear idea of what they wanted in the other person.

They have been allowed to dream, and they truly believed they can someday meet people who can make them happy.

True love demands truthfulness from your heart. Even if you find certain people you can be with for the moment, you'd just end up pushing them away if you can't really find the heart to love them.

Dare to find out what your heart really desires. Only then can your prayers truly be answered.

**We can't believe we're good enough to find better people.**

It may be that we do know what we're looking for in a person. We know exactly the kind of people who could make us happy. But along the way, we were convinced we could never really find them. We were made to believe we don't deserve them or that they don't even exist at all!

How many times have you been told your standards were too high? Does it mean you have to lie to yourself and settle for someone you don't really like? Isn't it unfair for you and that person? Why can't you believe you're good enough to find the person you truly deserve?

***To really fall in love is not a tedious obligation to be performed, but a blessed opportunity to be grateful for!*** What kind of person will make your heart leap with joy? What kind of partner can make you feel God loves you?

To fall in love with the right person is to receive a wonderful gift from God! Which person will you consider as that? As God's "precious gift" to you?

**Falling in love with the wrong people doesn't mean we don't deserve to be loved fully. It doesn't mean we couldn't find the right people** who will give us authentic love and lasting joy. But it does mean that we have to make some changes that will break our previous pattern of hurts and start a new process of healing and growth.

*It means giving ourselves the time and space we need in order to see ourselves in a whole new perspective, to see the unique and beautiful person who also deserves to be respected and loved.*

**Be the right person for the right person at the right time!** Don't fill the empty space in your heart with anything less than God's best plan for you. Await for His gift and believe that you have always been loved by One who will never give up on you!

Today's Activity:

Try to reflect on all of your previous relationships. Do you see a common pattern occurring? What do you think could be the reason why you keep on falling for the wrong kinds of relationships?



## *How Do I Learn To Love Myself More?*

We cannot love others  
in the truest sense  
of the word,  
if we do not even know  
how to love  
ourselves.  
If we truly wish to love,  
to give generously and sincerely,  
we must ensure that  
we are holding out  
our overflowing cups.  
Not our half-empty ones  
waiting to be filled.  
How do I love myself?

### *How do I learn to love myself more?*

#### **1. BE KIND TO YOURSELF**

One of my good friends told me that everyday, we have upon us the responsibility to make at least one person happy, even if it means being that person ourselves.

It may have been such a long time since you have thought about yourself. You've thought of too many things about others, but have forgotten the things that bring about your own happiness.

*Discover them again.*

List them down and read them over until your heart could remember once more.

**Following are some of the things I enjoy:**

- 1.Coffee
- 2.Chocolate
- 3.Early mornings, a lovely sunrise
- 4.Books
- 5.Music
- 6.Fried chicken
- 7.A drizzle
- 8.Computer games
- 9.Movies
- 10.Musicales, concerts
- 11.Paintings
- 12.Taking pictures of beautiful sceneries and simple folks
- 13.Taking a walk
- 14.Time with family and friends
- 15.Traveling

Now it's time for your own list.

Things you enjoy:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

8.

9.

10.

## **2. KNOW YOURSELF!**

Being kind to ourselves

and doing the things

we enjoy

helps us discover

the person we truly are;

the person we may have

never known until now!

I urge you to know

who you really are;

in your eyes,

in your heart.

Know thyself,

especially your strengths.

Know that which is

beautiful.

Know that which is

loveable.

Know that which has made you

the unique and wonderful

person that you are!

You are not the good-for-nothing person you thought you were. It's just that we may have been afraid of ourselves for so long; we've been afraid to look at the mirror for fear of seeing some monster we do not wish to be.

My friend, would you kindly do something for yourself? Take a good look at the mirror today and see the beautiful one you have ignored for so long.

### **3. HELP YOURSELF GROW**

Once you have discovered

who you really are,

you can start

the exciting journey

of growth

towards your

infinite potentials.

We should not be content

merely knowing who we are,

but always strive to be

the person we could still become!

Dream,

Seize your dreams,

Then dream again!

Only in flowing

can the river

remain to be a river.

Only in growing

can life prevail

over death!

***SOARING HIGHER***

Why should I be afraid to fly?  
And why should I be afraid to try?  
I was born to meet the sky;  
I was born to meet the sky and fly!  
I may fall once,  
I may fall twice,  
I may fall so many times,  
But I will not fall always!  
I will try again and again and fly!  
Spread your wings now,  
Get ready!  
Let go of your fears  
as you leave the ground.  
Be prepared now, steady.  
You're getting better,  
You're flying faster,  
You're soaring higher up the sky!  
List down the things  
you've always wanted to do.  
List down the things  
you've always wanted to learn.  
List down the places  
you've always wanted to go to.  
List down your dreams,  
however big or small.

List down the kind of person

you've always wanted to be.

Go ahead.

a.Enroll in that photography class.

You are never too old to learn new things.

b.Make that hairdo change.

Surprise everyone (including yourself), with that cool change.

c.Climb that mountain.

Experience the physical and mental struggles along the way and bask in the glory of reaching the top after all that you've been through!

#### **4. KNOW YOUR PURPOSE**

It is not enough

that a man eats,

and drinks,

and sleeps.

It is not enough

that he breathes,

and that his heart

continues to beat.

Unless and until he knows his purpose,

he is not a man at all.

Spend time

away from the noise

and anxieties of the world;

away from the demands

and expectations of the crowd.

Listen to your inner self.

Hear the innermost desires of your heart.

Discover the task for which you were most equipped to do.

Know your purpose.

Do not be afraid to make mistakes.

And do not give up even if you fail many times.

Your mistakes will only bring you closer to the discovery of your true purpose - the role which only YOU can perform!

## **5. ACCEPT AND FORGIVE YOURSELF.**

As much as we must learn to forgive others, so too, should we learn to forgive ourselves.

As much as we should learn about our strengths, so too, should we learn and accept our limitations.

The problem with us is that we often attribute every tiny bit of problem to ourselves.

In our obsession to be in control of everything, we consequently believe that anything that ever goes wrong is our fault.

***Accept your faults.***

***Do everything you can to correct them.***

***But learn also that not everything is your fault. Learn that you cannot correct the things, which are beyond your control.***

Stop trying to carry the burden of the world upon your shoulder.

*Carry only your own cross.*

*That is all that is asked of you.*

My friend, feel that you are loved,

not only by others, but first and foremost,

feel that you are loved

by your very self!

Starting this moment, can you promise yourself that you will be your own bestfriend? ?;-)

## **Separating Our Mistakes from Our Self Image**

Sometimes it's so easy not to separate our behavior from our image of ourselves, to separate the sin from the sinner, so they say.

When we make blunders, we feel we're failures. When we have broken relationships, we feel we are broken too and worthless.

However, if we truly desire to improve our relationship with ourselves, we must learn to practice acknowledging our errors without eroding our overall belief in our worth.

So you failed in your exams, does it mean you haven't learned anything? So you weren't accepted for a job, does it mean no employer would later on trust you and consider you a valuable asset to his company?

Things like those happen. Things change. What should remain intact is our respect and love for ourselves, our belief that we are God's children and no matter how many mistakes we make along the way of growing up, we are still destined for Grace and eternal Joy!

### Today's Activity:

List down at least three things by which you can start learning to love yourself more. Do at least one today!



## *I Don't Know Anymore What Life Means Without Him*

Our beloved seemed to be the *center of our lives* for the past years. They have been the world to us, the very meaning of our lives. Now that they're gone, what could our lives mean now? What could be the very *purpose of our lives*?

In order to rebuild our lives again, ***we must be able to find a new meaning to it***, a new purpose by which we could strive again and *dream again*. Have you ever thought about any other dream aside from the ones you have dreamt with your partner?

### **How Do You Know What You Really Want To Do In Life?**

Following are some of the things that helped me realize what it is that I really wanted to do, what it is that would make my life worthwhile and meaningful. It's certainly not an easy journey, and it's easier said than done. It may take even years for some, but take heart, and believe that it is never too late to find the answer you're looking for.

#### **1. Remember you childhood dreams**

We weren't always the grownups we are today. Once upon a time we were just kids learning to walk, talk and find our way in this world. Once upon a time we had the imagination to dream and to feel in our hearts what we really wanted to do. But something happened along the way. The necessities imposed upon us and the prejudices society taught us made us think differently. We lost touch of the child within us, the child who knew how to dream and to believe in that dream.

***Get in touch with that child again.*** Hear his voice. Pretend you're not afraid of the many difficulties that lie ahead. Pretend you haven't heard of what the many other grownups around you say a responsible person should be doing. Think everything is possible. Think God can grant you your heart's desires.

***What do you want? What would you ask for?*** What have you asked for when you were once a child? Did you want to be a doctor then and heal people? Did you want to be a teacher and feed the mind of young ones with knowledge and wisdom? Did you want to be an artist and paint the world with colors? Set yourself free. Oftentimes, what we really wanted to do, we already knew since when we were but children when our hearts were yet pure and our minds unbridled by the many rules the world has taught us later when we grew up.

## **2. Explore**

Now that you already have the means to support yourself, you can finally do things you've only dreamed of before! On my part, I was able to go to places I've never been to; I was able to attend seminars like 3D animation, scriptwriting, and playing the guitar; I was able to buy a digital camera and experiment on taking pictures; I was able to buy an oven and the ingredients needed to bake and cook; I was able to play computer games as much as I wanted and design my blog for hours using the computer I bought myself; I was able to buy the books I've always wanted to read.

I have the means now to finally explore the things that delight me and interest me. I can finally nourish the dreams the child in me used to dream only with her heart and with her head.

Explore. Don't think you need only to do the things where you can get outright monetary returns. Just set yourself free, now as an adult who knows how to enjoy yourself. Do what you want. It will lead you to those things you would want to be doing all your life.

## **3. Make a survey**

The people around us usually have clues about our strengths, talents and skills, and the things that we enjoy doing. Ask these people. They may even tell you things you haven't realized yet, like a good singing voice you've always kept to yourself before! Or you may discover that you're a good leader, and that you inspire the people you work with. You may discover how many people count on your wisdom and insights and thus, seek your counsel for important decisions in their life. Make a survey, and let it guide you in your discovery.

## **4. Fear not your own beauty and strength**

In your journey of discovery, you may sometimes get a vision of yourself, your best self, the one you've been searching for all along. But oftentimes too, we immediately disregard this vision, for we cannot believe it to be true. It overwhelms us to think we can be that beautiful and talented and strong. We regard it as an illusion we can never reach, and we settle for the next best thing that comes to our mind.

Don't do that. For God did not intend us to settle for something lesser than His greatest plan for us. God made us to be the best and most beautiful we can be so that other people may best be blessed as well through us. Don't belittle yourself. And do not be afraid to see yourself for who you really are, and for who you were truly destined to become. Shine forth your light and fear not your own beauty.

### **5. Accept your gift**

Once you have faced the vision of your destiny, learn to accept it with all your heart and spirit and mind and soul. Deny not your gifts, and deny not the accountabilities those gifts carry with them. If you have the gift of entrepreneurship, accept it. Accept that you have the power to lead many people. Accept that these people will count on you. And fear not that you may fail them in the end. Instead, fear that you may not even begin and give them the chance therefore to have a leader as good and strong as you are.

### **6. Do something you won't ever get tired of doing**

Once you have explored your many interests, learn to discern which of these things will delight you only for a time, and which of these things will give you joy forever. As for me, I once enjoyed my guitar lessons. But then I soon got tired of practicing and playing the same music again and again so I can master it. I didn't want to hear the song that way. It made me lose interest in the song. But I found out I could compose songs, and that I do not tire of composing them.

Realize that when you choose something, your passion in doing it must be that great so as not to tire of doing it all your life. Can you imagine painting everyday of your life? Can you imagine practicing golf for hours for all the days of your life? What is it that you won't ever get tired of doing? What is it that even if others attempt to stop you, you would still be doing just for the sake of doing it? Something you could never stop yourself from doing, because stopping yourself would mean stopping the very flow of life in you?

## **7. Do what enriches you and blesses others at the same time**

I've realized that when I write from the heart and from the very depths of my soul, the words I have written do not only help other people, but those very words inspire me first of all. Such is when I know that I have practiced my passion, when I feel enriched instead of feeling exhausted, when I feel that I have received and I have been blessed instead of feeling deprived and spent. I noticed too that when I write from the heart, other people are blessed, they are moved, and in one blessed moment, our souls touch, and our souls are both blessed by the God that gives us all good things.

It is thus that you know you have truly found your gift: when the thing you do both enriches you and blesses many others along the way.

## **8. Set aside what others deem as right, beneficial and noble**

Although I've suggested to you previously to make a survey of what others think of you and your gifts, you should also be careful that you don't listen to everything people tell you. Try to sense if they are sincere, and if they're truly speaking from the wisdom of their hearts. Other people merely repeat what others say without reflecting on it. Other people would dictate upon you what worked for them, and what may not work for you.

Most of all, when you have already discovered what you really wanted to be doing, set aside the prejudices of the world and trust the God who entrusted to you this mission and these gifts. Do not let the opinion of others belittle you or tell you that there are other tasks far nobler or greater than the one you'd like to be doing.

## **9. Do what really makes you happy and complete**

God has implanted upon your own heart the desires that would truly make you happy. These are the things that will guide you in your journey. These are the things that will shed its light in your path where there were only shadows and uncertainties before. Discover the deepest desires of your heart. For it is such desires that if fulfilled can really make you happy and complete.

## **10. Pray**

Above all these things my friend, pray. Seek for the counsel of God's Spirit and God will guide you all the way to finding your purpose in life. Pray for enlightenment. Pray for perseverance. And then pray for the courage to use your gifts. It is such that you will know God has a great plan for you, and it is God Himself who will help you to make your dreams come true.

Today's Activity:

Remember some of your childhood dreams. Which of these dreams are still able to bring a smile upon your face?

## *Why Is He Not Suffering As Much As I Am Right Now?*

There are times when we feel as though we're the only ones suffering from a heartbreak while the other person is merely taking it easy and moving on with his life as though nothing bad had ever happened. Isn't it unfair? How could he just be smiling and making new friends or even forming new relationships while we're being left behind with our hurts? Were we the only ones who truly loved?

*There are many reasons why he seems or is truly suffering less than what you're actually experiencing:*

### **1. He may just be hiding his tears**

Isn't it natural for people to want to appear better than they really are? People hide their tears. They don't want to appear as though they are to be pitied or as though they were the ones who are more miserable. Don't always believe what you see for people often wear masks to hide the true pain they have within.

### **2. His hurt could be so deep he could be dissociating from it**

It could also happen that the intensity of his pain from the breakup is so great that he is merely dissociating from what he truly feels. He isn't processing his feelings at all, he's even afraid of his own feelings! Hence, he laughs, he tries to have fun. He does everything to keep himself busy just so he wouldn't remember how hurt he really is.

### **3. He believes it would be better to end the relationship**

He may just be as hurt as you are from the breakup, but he has already decided that it would be the best course of action not only for him, but for the both of you. He may feel that if he shows you how he is also suffering from the breakup, you'd find a reason to convince him that it never was worth it at all.

#### **4. He is soon to reap the consequences of his actions**

If he is the type who was never really responsible for his actions and does not really know what truly love really means, then the more you should be determined to move on without him. You should be thankful that you now have a chance to meet other people who have the ability to love you. Note that people who are irresponsible and who take others for granted will reap the consequences of their actions sooner or later. You should not worry about that nor devote your life to waiting for such things to happen however. You should be more concerned about your own life and healing. Let him go according to God's wisdom and guidance and trust that God knows the best for you.

#### ***Why do we hide our tears from the world?***

We hide our tears -

because we don't want to appear weak

because when we appear weak, other people would avoid us

because they don't want to be affected by our weakness

and when they leave us, we just become even lonelier than before

We hide our tears -

because we don't want to lose our credibility

with the people who trust us and depend on us

because when they see us crying, they'd think we're crumbling

and when we crumble, they'd have no one to lean on to anymore

We hide our tears -

because we don't want to appear hurt

because when our loved ones see how hurt we are, they'd get hurt as well

and we don't want to see them hurt

because we'd only get hurt the more

*I've hidden my tears for quite a while, 'til there came a time when I surrendered, and I set them free - I let them overflow, and I've realized, I don't want to hide my tears anymore.*

Why I don't want to hide my tears anymore:

I don't want to hide my tears anymore -

because I want to show others how much I understand their tears,

and in so doing, help them feel they're not alone;

because I want to show one doesn't have to be perfect all the time,

just so you can be strong;

because I want others to understand me,too, in my hurts,

trusting they can also be strong, and that they could also love me for who I am,

not for who I could be or pretend to be.

"There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love." - Washington Irving

**"The world breaks everyone, and afterwards many are strong at the broken places." - Ernest Hemingway**

Today's Activity:

Instead of focusing on your ex-partner today, focus on yourself. What are your needs? What are the things you still want to do in life?



## *What If He Suddenly Comes Back To Me?*

Although there are certain things that are very difficult to restore, we can't deny that slight possibility that the partner who left may come back and ask for another chance. And this may happen at a time when we're just beginning to heal and move on with our lives. What do we do then? What if he suddenly comes back?

### **1. Have you already decided the best course of action for yourself?**

Have you thoroughly reflected about what happened? Could you still see a possibility of reconciliation? Have you already thought things over and truly believe that it would be better to part ways? Is the separation you want temporary or permanent?

### **2. Are you ready to take him back?**

Have you healed enough? Are you ready to begin again considering everything that has already happened in the past? Do you now have a support system of family and friends to keep you balanced and secure? Have you already deepened your relationship with God and truly know in your heart that you would never be alone if you have Him?

### **3. Is he ready to return to the relationship?**

Is he willing to work things out in order to save the relationship? Has he shown signs of change if there were some things in his behavior or thinking that were unacceptable to you before? If he was violent, has he sought psychological help and shown recovery?

### **4. Are you coming back for the right reasons?**

Although loneliness is a pretty tempting reason to go back together, you should fight off this temptation considering that more damage could be done with the wrong relationship than patiently waiting for the right one.

Could you see a future where the two of you could mutually work things out to help each other? Are both partners doing it out of true love or merely out of need to satisfy his own wants?

#### **5. Could you clearly set expectations?**

Could you now clearly set each other's expectations about the relationship and how it could be met? If there were issues, could you both think of a way by which such could be addressed? If trust were broken, how could it be restored? Are both partners willing to be patient enough until the issues affecting the relationship could be addressed?

#### **6. What would change?**

How would things be different this time with the relationship? How are the parties concerned going to change and adapt to each others' needs?

#### **How Do I Know If He Really Loves Me?**

If he really loves me, why is he cheating on me? If he really loves me, why is he afraid to commit to our relationship? And why does he keep on hurting me with words that humiliate me? Our Definition of Love

Back when we were kids, we used to define love in our slam books and essays. We used to be so sure what it meant. When we grew up, so many people have shared their own definitions of it with us, and convinced us how wrong we were.

We weren't realistic. We're too idealistic! We've believed in fairytales for far too long.

Soon we no longer knew what love really is or if it even exists at all!

## **We Still Yearn For Love**

Deep within however, we still yearned for love. We feel this ache in us, this emptiness that we strive to fill again and again with the wrong kinds of affection. Signs of Love

***How do we know if a person really loves us? Is it enough that he or she tells us so?***

It is never enough to merely say it. Love is an active and powerful force that needs to be expressed, and that must be manifested in countless different ways. It may not be easy to define what love really is, but we can see the signs by which it makes itself visible:

### **Respect**

To be respected is to be valued as a person, and for our needs to be taken into consideration, especially those needs accorded to our dignity as human beings.

In my article "Why Is Respect Important In a Relationship?", I've discussed in more detail why love and respect must always go hand in hand.

We can't say somebody loves us if that person can't even respect our feelings. If we are constantly ignored, or threatened or forced to do something against our will, respect is absent, and we should doubt the authenticity of the 'love' being offered us.

On the other hand, if our needs are taken at heart, and if we feel safe and protected, if we feel valued as a person, it is one indication that love may indeed be present or can be allowed to grow.

### **Commitment**

Another sign of love is the ability of the person to commit to the relationship. To be able to devote ourselves is to be able to give of ourselves to something we truly believe in, to something we value most of all.

Commitment is when the other person is willing to devote his time, effort and emotions into the relationship in order to protect it, to cherish it, and to make it grow.

One sure sign of what we value most in life is the time we spend in it. Is work most important to you? Then you must spend a lot of time in it. Are your friends valuable to you? Then you must hang out with them a lot. Is your garden important to you? Then you must spend a lot of time taking out the weeds and watering your plants. Is he devoted to you? Take a look at the time he spends with you. It's not that he should have no other things to do but hang around with you, but sometimes it's so obvious how he spends time with seemingly unimportant matters but refuses to spend time to make your relationship grow.

Commitment is a sign of responsibility. It's something that separates those who just want to have a good time from those who really seek a love that would last a lifetime.

### **Faithfulness**

Faithfulness is not only being loyal, but in being true.

Is your partner truthful to you, or is he lying most of the time? If he is concealing a lot of things to you, then trust can never be developed. If trust isn't developed, love also falls apart. For how could you trust anyone whom you don't really know? How can you believe in his words when he has misrepresented himself most of the time?

Being faithful to you means you're not being treated as a mere object for fun or entertainment. It means you are not being used as a replacement for anybody else.

Faithfulness manifests purity of intention in a relationship, something that if carried consistently will deter painful relationship issues in the future such as cheating and betrayal.

**Respect, commitment and faithfulness.** They seem like old words, but they're never outdated. They help you find authentic love. They help you find the right people who will not play around with your feelings and then throw you away like trash later on. Look for these signs, and then look for their **CONSISTENCY**. We can still find what we're looking for, we need only to look in the right places, and with the right kind of eyes.

*The best partner in life is someone who will help us to love ourselves more! ;)*

Today's Activity:

Answer some of the questions above, especially on the expectations you will have with each other and how they are going to be met. Is it really worth it to restore this relationship if he ever comes back again?

## ***What If He Still Wants To Be My Friend?***

There is a very common question as regards breakups: **What if he still wants to be my friend?** To some people, this would be out of the question. They knew there was nothing to work out anymore between them, even friendship. To others, this would seem to be more of a consolation such that even if you could no longer be with him, at least you could still be his friend, right? You could still see him and talk to him, or maybe you could find a way to get him back! There are so many reasons behind this question that few are really about having the real thing, which is pure friendship and nothing more. In order to help us process this thought, let's consider the following:

### ***What would be the difference between his friendship and a romantic relationship with him?***

Have you really thought about this or is having a friendship with him the only way you could still be able to cling on to your previous relationship? Some people would say that a friendship, unlike a romantic relationship would be something that has no strings attached and no expectations. But is this true? Of course not! There are expectations in all kinds of relationships, even friendships. One should not use friendship as a disguise if one has a different intention behind it.

### ***Don't you have other friends?***

If the only friend you could think about for now is him, you may not be prepared to take his friendship yet. Forming this friendship may only cause you more harm than good because you would only be tempted to expect certain things such as having this friendship develop into a romantic relationship. This would also prevent you from forming other healthy relationships with other people.

On the other hand, if it is your partner who has no other friend besides you (and it so happens he has a new girlfriend now), asking you to still be their friend is a bit disrespectful in my opinion, especially if you haven't moved on yet and still hurting from your breakup with him.

### ***Will that help you move on?***

Honestly ask yourself if forming this friendship with your ex would help you in moving on to a new life. Will seeing him ever so frequently help you to rediscover a new you and to love yourself more? Won't you just be more attached with him?

### **What is friendship? What does it consist of?**

Do we really know what true friendship is? Friendship isn't an extension of your failed romance. It isn't a consolation. It isn't mere acquaintanceship. It's having a strong and intimate relationship with someone whom you really trust and respect! It's being with someone who understands you and who supports you as a person, someone who really cares for you outside of romantic love. **TRUST AND RESPECT.** These two things could not even be found in many of our failed romantic relationships, how could we even form it with our previous partners?

### **Why Is Respect Important In a Relationship?**

*I know that he still loves me, but why did I feel disrespected? Isn't love more important than that? Does it matter that I feel respected at all?*

Love and respect can never be separated in a relationship, especially in a romantic one. It is true that we can respect someone and not really love him, but we can never love anyone without also respecting them.

*"Respect is love in plain clothes."-Frankie Byrne*What Is Respect?

### **We're able to define respect best in times when we feel we're not respected:**

- When we're not recognized
- When we're not allowed to be ourselves
- When our needs are taken for granted
- When we are judged and underestimated
- When we are forced or threatened

- When we're not listened to when we have something to say
- When we're treated as objects for use rather than as persons to be valued and loved

***To be respected therefore, is to be valued as a person, and for our needs to be taken into consideration, especially those needs accorded to our dignity as human beings.***

To love on the other hand, is to value another person in a more significant way than everyone else. Hence, it must necessarily contain the ingredient of respect, which is the value we give to every person, no matter what our relationship with them may be.

*What happens at times is that due to our familiarity and intimacy with people we have a relationship with, we forget to accord to them the respect we naturally give everyone else.*

**Why so?** Why do we fail to respect those to whom we're in a closer relationship with?

It may be because we naturally expect them to know us and to understand us better and consequently, to also forgive us easier because they love us.

It may also be because we gave more importance to ourselves and we have come to the point when we're no longer genuinely loving the other person for his/her good, but for our sake alone. We have stopped treating them as persons and started treating them as objects we can use for our own happiness. Why is it hard to continue a relationship with a person who doesn't respect you anymore?

**It's very difficult to keep up a relationship with someone who no longer respects you because:**

- Nobody wants to be used as an object and not treated as a person of dignity and worth.
- Trust will be affected because you cannot rely on a person who cannot give you your minimum needs for your dignity as a person.



- Meaningful communication will be hindered as you will no longer feel "safe" opening up your true feelings and thoughts to the other person.

- You will not be able to receive the care and affection you desire from the person, and you will also not be able to give it in turn because the other person who disrespects you will also neglect the true value of anything you may offer him, whether it be your words, your opinion or your expressions of love. ( A person only takes that which he believes to be valuable and that which comes from a person he believes, values and respects.)

- The absence of respect also signifies the absence/decline of love in many areas of the relationship

**To respect another person is to act in ways that will not harm the other.** Hence, when respect is lost, it's so difficult to keep the relationship because people would naturally feel the need to protect themselves and avoid any harm.

This protection does not only refer to meeting one's physical needs and avoiding physical harm. This also refers to protecting the inner person, one's feelings and emotions that are so vital in love. What could harsh words do?

*It's important then to know what harsh words (disrespectful words) can do to a relationship. If you think that words are harmless, you may have to think again because words are powerful!*

Words convey the inner person's feelings and thoughts. Words can make or break a person. And long after they've been uttered, they either live on to inspire us, or they echo curses at the back of our minds, haunting us with bitter memories and broken trusts.

*"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." - Proverbs 12*

"Righteous people know the kind things to say, but the wicked are always saying things that hurt." - Proverbs 10:32  
Seek Respect As You Seek For Love

Many people are fooled into believing the other person loves them even if it is very evident that they are not being respected. How could a person truly love you if he could not even respect you?

***People in relationships should of course be able to have a common definition of what respect is to them.*** Many incompatibilities arise from not being able to define what respect really is. There are subtle differences from each one's perspective of respect, but there are also general manifestations of it and of its lack. The most important thing is the other person's intent. Is his intention focused only on his own selfish desires, or does he take your growth and welfare into consideration? Is he willing to make sacrifices for your love, or does he run away from the first signs of discomfort and difficulty?

**"Certain people have a way of saying things that shake us at the core. Even when the words do not seem harsh or offensive, the impact is shattering. What we could be experiencing is the intent behind the words.** When we intend to do good, we do. When we intend to do harm, it happens. What each of us must come to realize is that our intent always comes through. We cannot sugarcoat the feelings in our heart of hearts. The emotion is the energy that motivates. We cannot ignore what we really want to create. We should be honest and do it the way we feel it. What we owe to ourselves and everyone around is to examine the reasons of our true intent... My intent will be evident in the results."- Thurgood Marshall

**If you are looking for one sure sign that a person loves you, always begin with RESPECT.** With respect, you are valued as a person of dignity, your physical and emotional needs are protected, and your best interest is always taken at heart!

*"Respect is what we owe; love, what we give" - Philip James Bailey*

***"The best thing to give to your enemy is forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to your child, a good example; to a father, deference; to your mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself, respect; to all men, charity."-Benjamin Franklin***

#### Today's Activity:

Call an old friend today. Revive a beautiful friendship and find trust and respect. You may also form a new relationship with someone and let that trust and respect develop in due time.

## *It Doesn't Hurt To Laugh*

There are times when we've already cried so much that we need to take a break for a while, to rest, to regain our strength, even to laugh a bit if it would help us take things easier and with a bit of humor. **It doesn't hurt to laugh, even when you're brokenhearted. :-)**

### Today's Activity:

***Read through the following tips and pick one that you could do today to help you regain your laughter or your zest to go on fighting for your happiness.***

### 101 Tips To Healing a Broken Heart

I don't intend to make light the difficulty one is going through, especially when a bit of humor is added in some of these tips, I just hope that it could somehow help in hanging on, in resting, in healing, and possibly, in letting go and moving on.

Cry your heart out. Get a bag of tissue rolls and let your tears speak of what pain no one else could fully understand.

Call a trusted friend and confide to her your hurts. Cry again.

Rest for a while. Don't let your tears dry out, it would be difficult later on if you run out of tears to release the heaviness you feel in your heart.

Call your mother, let her know how you're planning to take vengeance with your ex. (Don't take it seriously though)

Eat chocolate. Whoever says that life can't be bittersweet?

Even if you don't feel like it, go to the gym and hit that treadmill. Release all your pent up energies. You'd feel a lot better.

Have some more sleep, cuddle a cute teddy bear, the one your boyfriend did not give you!

Set your alarm clock to avoid oversleeping. Use three clocks if you must so you won't cheat by turning it off and just going back to sleep. Put two clocks beyond your reach so you'd really need to get up to turn it off. (Don't take sleeping pills!)

Search your all Dvd files and watch every comedy film you can find. I know, you're almost sure you won't laugh anyway, but just do this for the sake of doing something for now. Give Mr. Bean a chance okay?

Search your Dvds again. This time, look for tragic and war movies, films like "The Pianist" or "Schindler's List". You might feel a bit thankful after watching the terrible troubles of people living during those times.

Call another friend. Tell her to keep watch and just call you once in a while.

Search for pictures of your ex. Now you know what to do. Tear them into pieces!

Look for couples watching a lovely sunset. In your mind, tell them it aint gonna last!

Listen to sad stories of broken marriages. Be thankful you weren't married to a good-for-nothing man.

Search the internet for pictures of starving children in Africa. Donate some money and maybe you'd feel a little better.

Eat your favorite cake.

Treat yourself to a SPA.

Have your hair fixed and wear a new style.

Go to a place where you can pay a fee for throwing out plates and breaking them to pieces.

Buy rock CDs and let them lull you to sleep. Or better yet, find a new apartment with annoying neighbors so you'd have a reason to stay out late in the night when you can't sleep.

Go shopping, buy those clothes you've always wanted to have.

Treat your friends to fine dining. They would feel a lot better, too!

Buy a pet.

Buy seeds and start some gardening.

Learn some photoshop and see how your ex would look like in 50 years. Yes I know, its disgusting. Of course you don't need to photoshop your own picture, you'd stay younger now that he's gone out of your life.

Watch a boring opera concert. You may not have fun, but atleast you'd fall asleep.

Burn your previous love letters.

Burn your memorabilia items.

Attend parties with cute guys.

Find yourself a new crush!

Surround yourself with children and play with them.

Go to the park and help the ice cream man sell his stuff to kids.

Go to the home for the elderly. Let them talk to you what life is all about.

Read the lives of saints. See how happy they are even if they're single.

Volunteer for charitable work.

Search your closet and mend your clothes.

Enroll in a cooking lesson and learn a new delicious dish.

Dance.

Write a letter to yourself.

Watch a sunrise.

Dance in the rain, just don't overdo it or you might catch a cold.

Pray

Ask others to pray for you.

Look in the mirror and see how beautiful you really are.

Walk in the sand.

Run like children do.

Buy a punching bag, paste your ex's picture there and keep on punching.

Get a sideline and keep yourself busy.

Start writing a diary.

Start a blog.

Go to your friend's house and help with house cleaning.

Read books on how to heal a broken heart.

Make new friends.

Go to new places.

Shop at the mall.

Go to the park.

Write down the 10 things you wanted to do most in life (don't include anything about your ex).

Write tips you'd give to your future daughter if she ever gets a broken heart.

Listen to inspirational music.

Paint. Learn to paint.

Watch some cartoons like Hello Kitty or Winnie the Pooh.

Watch horror movies.

Play a computer on-line role playing game and achieve the highest level of your avatar.

Call a tough but trusted friend who can force you to do things you don't feel like doing.

Visit some children with cancer and try to entertain them.

Have regular brisk walks with a friend.

Eat fruits.

Buy incense and let it purify your surroundings.

Light a candle and let your prayer go up to heaven, to the ears of Him who hears all our cries.

Talk to someone who got over her heartache.

Join a musical band. It would be better if you're the one playing drums.

Buy some of your favorite toys when you were a child.

Have some chicken soup.

Buy a comfortable blanket you can snuggle into at night.

Cry again.

Take a bath.

Have a footspa.

Change your perfume.

Write a short story.

Write a poem.

Ride the scariest ride you could find at the carnival.

Hug a pauper.

Ask for hugs from family and friends. Three times a day would be nice

Buy balloons. Write in them your wishes and let them fly away.

Learn wall climbing.

Feed your pet. Remember the one I advised you to buy? If you can't he might just be dying now, you know.

Start a collection. Stamps, shells, rare rocks, whatever collection you'd have the slightest interest in.

Buy twelve pencils. Break them one by one.

Buy crayons. Scribble anything you desire.

Read my website and find your daily spiritual inspiration ([www.itakeofftheface.com](http://www.itakeofftheface.com))

Go stargazing on a clear night.

See some fireflies.

Embrace an old tree.

Give an old lady a flower.

Play the flute.

Solve a difficult puzzle.

Pray again.

Cry again.

Hope again.

Live again.

Love again.

## *Is It Wrong To Give Everything For Love?*

***For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning. Even as he ascends to your height and caresses your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun, So shall he descend to your roots and shake them in their clinging to the earth. - Kahlil Gibran***

We've heard so many people warn us that we shouldn't love like that, that we should reserve some love for ourselves just in case. It seemed practical, but it certainly didn't sound romantic. If love is like that, what's the use of it? How could it be love? And so we ignored these things and we fell in love, and then our hearts got broken and we remembered everything they told us about. Was it wrong to have given up everything in the name of love?

*The answer is yes and no.*

We're not wrong to think that love should be all-consuming, and that we dare sacrifice everything for it. It's the people and things we gave our hearts to that's wrong, because only God deserves such kind of love.

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' - Matthew 22:37-39

Our love for God should be first. Our love for others, even our most special beloved, should only be second. Why? Because people are not perfect. No matter how much we love others, we still fail sometimes, we still hurt those whom we love the most. Expecting perfect things from imperfect people isn't romantic, it's foolish.

**The reason we need to be guided first by our love for God is that God's love should be able to fill us first. If not, we crave for so much love that nobody on earth could realistically be able to give it to us.**

Nobody could stay with us 24 hours in a day. Even our partners would certainly have something else to do. Nobody could enjoy the same things with us all the time. We'd have different interests and



different ways of spending our days. We'd have different ways of expressing love, and of receiving it. Most of all, nobody could fully read our hearts. Only God knows the deepest yearnings of our soul, and only He could fulfil them.

**Giving up everything for imperfect people is actually not being able to give them the best you could possibly give them. The best that we could give others is the best of who we are, and who else knows how to achieve our best than God?**

Love has no other desire but to fulfill itself. But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires: To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night. To know the pain of too much tenderness. To be wounded by your own understanding of love; And to bleed willingly and joyfully. To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving; To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy; To return home at eventide with gratitude; And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips.-Kahlil Gibran

Today's Activity:

Think of ways by which not loving yourself is able to affect your relationships. Think also of how only God can fill you in such a way that you could be the best gift to everyone you love.

## *Should I Just Busy Myself With Work?*

**Different people having different ways of coping with their hurts.** Some people choose to forget for a while and to busy themselves with different activities. Other people choose to grieve first, to understand what happened before moving on.

For me, one should achieve the right *balance* between working and contemplating.

### **Disadvantages of Contemplating All Day**

1. Thinking about your broken heart all day could only make you depressed and unwilling to do anything anymore. It makes you lose interest in life.
2. Hiding in your room all day cuts your connection from everyone else, your family, your friends, your co-workers, those people who could support you and help you feel you're not alone.
3. Spending all your time in reflection gives you nothing to look forward to into doing each day, a purpose which would keep you fighting for your chance to live a new life without your ex.

### **Disadvantages of Working All Day**

1. Working all day leaves you no room to understand fully what you have gone through.
2. Working all day leaves you no time to grieve for the relationship that has just ended.
3. Being busy may help you forget for a while, but it doesn't heal everything that's been broken.

Find for yourself the right combination of work, reflection and prayer to help you heal in due time. Escape mechanisms have their limits. We can't always pretend nothing's wrong or nothing's hurting. Wounds don't go away just because you forget you had them.

On the other hand, there is a limit to our capacity to face pain. We can only process some sorrow for a time, and then we need to rest and regain our strength to carry on.

***Following are some tips in dealing with emotional pain:***

**1. Accept the challenge and do my best.**

We can never move on anywhere unless we acknowledge where we stand at the moment. Acceptance is the shortest route to peace. Acceptance will help you let go of your WHY's so you can start focusing on your HOW's. Accept that things have already happened. Accept that you can do nothing to turn back the hands of time to undo everything that's already been done. You can blame everyone, you can blame God, you can even blame yourself but that would never change your situation. That would never help you get out of the pit that you're in, the suffering you're going through. Find the way to acceptance, and you can begin to find the strength and the will to move on.

**2. Rest when I can no longer carry on.**

It is a good thing to cry and mourn for your sorrows. It is good to release your tears, your anger, your pent-up emotions. But there are limits to our powers, to our physical and emotional strength as human beings. We need enough time to rest in order to renew our strength so we can have a better cry next time. Have enough sleep. Force yourself to watch television or buy groceries and give yourself a break. Try to forget your troubles even if only for an hour or so. That way, you do not exhaust yourself to the point where you no longer have enough strength to face the challenges of the coming day. Reserve some of your strength until you are able to make it through.

**3. Take comfort in God's greatness, love and strength.**

Many people may criticize me for this. But those who knew torment and have survived from it a better person understand the comfort of knowing someone is there listening to you, someone who understands you, all those hurts you're going through. Someone who doesn't judge you or condemn you, just someone who loves you and trusts you that if you will only hang in there a minute more, you will surely make it through.

It may be quite ironic, but I have found my greatest joy in the arms of my God in my darkest hour. I felt him hugging me, comforting me, crying with me. He didn't just watch me. He didn't scold me and reprimanded me to get up and be strong and stop being such a fool. He cried with me. He knew my pain and he claimed it as though it were His own.

#### **4. Bear the pain and be patient.**

This seems to be the hardest part of all. Pain is pain and suffering is suffering. There is no pill or any kind of painkiller that we can take to prevent us from feeling our hurts. We have to bear it head on and cling to the thought that things will definitely change for the better.

*"I have deep sorrow today, and an unclear vision of the future. But nobody ever died of loneliness - only of hopelessness! As long as I have hope, no problem is ever too difficult, no night ever so dark that it can prevent the rising of another day!"*

There are times when we are so lost in the dark that no matter how hard we try to find our way, we find not the roads we're looking for; no matter how desperately we seek, we grasp not the answers, and we continue to grope in the shadow of the night.

But faint not, and fear not the voices that creep in the dark. For in your hour of need, help shall come upon you. In your moments of greatest fear, a flame of hope shall arise and give you peace. The night is short and the voices will soon fade away. Darkness shall falter and surrender to a brand new day.

Take heart; stand firmly and strong, for it will not be long before the awaited dawn.

## **5. When it is time, stop dwelling on the pain**

There are times when the pain finally subsides, and we are given a chance to move on a notch higher. Finally, we have the chance to break free from our pain. The problem however is that many of us choose to cling to our hurts. We let the pain linger longer than they should. Maybe we got so used to it, we don't know anymore what we're going to do without it. Maybe we feel mad at ourselves and we choose to punish ourselves for the things we thought we did wrong. Maybe we're mad at someone else and we want to punish him by punishing ourselves. Whatever it is, it will not help you find your path to living the full life you should be living. Let it go. Let go of your pain and move on.

## **6. Live from day to day. Or if that is too long, from moment to moment.**

There are some wounds that take a longer time to heal than others, and there are some hurts that take a while longer to subside. The important thing is that we stay afloat one day, one moment at a time. Don't think of how hard the whole process is going to be, you'll go nuts doing that! Don't think of all the lonely days ahead of you. They haven't even arrived yet! Just think of the moment. If you can live and make it for the moment, that is all that is needed to make it through.

## **7. Claim the strength God gives me to rise above the situation.**

There is a strength God gives you in times when your strength is no longer enough. However you may call Him, there is a Higher Power that will see you through. I've received it. I've felt it coming just in time when I can no longer see how I'm going to carry on. That is why we should never compare our strength with the weight of our problems. We'd probably make a wrong estimate doing that! There is a strength that comes to you to help you overcome whatever you're going through. Wait for it! It will certainly come and will not delay.

## **8. Learn everything I can from the process.**

When we're in pain, we seldom realize what lessons we can learn from the process. Though it is quite understandable why we do not give attention to things like that in times of grief, the truth remains that we do learn many things during our darkest hour. It is a time when everything we know and have ever learned are being challenged in an instant. It is a time when we come to realize what it is we value the most in life. It is a time when we get to understand other people better. Let us take advantage of those times when we see things more clearly than we ever saw them before.

## 9. Protect my joy at all times.

Sounds crazy doesn't it? This thing you can ignore if you want to, but I believe that joy and sorrow can definitely exist at the same time. Yes, we are hurt. Yes, we're broken. But yes, we know we're going to make it. And yes, we know we'll get out of it better persons than we used to be. Somewhere in our hearts, there is a chamber of joy that should remain intact, untouched, forever guiding us in our most troublesome paths.

***It is indeed a painful thing to grow, but afterwards, you will be glad that you have undergone the process. You will feel stronger. You will feel like you have just been released from your self-made prison.*** You will carry with you the joy of God being there for you, comforting you in your darkest hour. You will have greater confidence as you learn more about the true beauty that lies within you. And you will move forward in life with greater strides knowing that the things which have caused you pain could no longer touch you and torment you the way it did before. You will overflow in spirit realizing that you have just risen from your former horizon and moved on to greater heights. And you will look forward to His guiding hand that will carry you farther from one God-destined glory to the next.

### Today's Activity:

List down a schedule of prayer or moment of reflection within the day when you can just let go of your tears and offer them to God. List down also some of the activities you can do to help balance your day and give you something to look forward to.

## *Should I Just Look For Another Man?*

**Looking for another man without being able to address your own issues first is like burying yourself into work without dealing with your broken heart.** Do you think you could solve one problem by entering into another problem? It's not that you shouldn't love again. But you have to be ready for your next relationship so that you could finally love fully, unhindered by all your previous wounds and hurts.

### **Before You Fall In Love Again**

Before you fall in love again, are you now certain what you're expecting from your partner in life?

Before you fall in love again, are you now confident what you're able to offer for the relationship?

Before you fall in love again, have you assessed what your limits are?

Before you fall in love again, have you asked yourself if your wounds have already healed? Are you ready to risk getting hurt again?

Before you fall in love again, could you define what love is after everything you went through? What is love to you now? How do you see it enriching your life?

### **The Kind Of Love That Heals**

*Only love heals, and My love in you shall heal many. - Bo Sanchez, Embraced*

I used to think that love is all we need in order to heal other people's hurts. I used to think that if we could only give that love to the very best we could, we'd have the power to change other people's lives for the better.

But why is it that after giving everything we could, we are still met with pain and frustration? Why is it that after so many years of trying to prove our love, wounds are still hurting and people remain unchanged?

Can't love really heal our hurts?

*My daughter (son), you are not yet a strong and prudent lover. Because you abandon what you have begun at every little adversity which you encounter, and too eagerly seek consolation. -Imitation of Christ*

How strong must we be? How persistent must our love be? In our exhaustion, we say in defeat that our love could never be that strong enough. If the only hope for healing left is love, then it couldn't be the kind of love that we have. Our love is not the kind of love that heals.

### **What then is the love that heals?**

But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.  
- Romans 5:8

Only God's love can. For in truth, God Himself is LOVE

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." - John 3:16

All our greatest strivings fall short of God's Perfect LOVE for us, a love that is sufficient unto itself and neither needs nor asks for anything in return. Who among us could love like Him unless He empowers us to do so? God's Unconditional Love

Have you ever wondered how only God can love us unconditionally? It's because only God is perfect and doesn't need anything from us

We can't love like that. Our love, however good is still conditional. We want something in return because we are not perfect, and we try to get from others what we lack.

We expect something back, whether it be the praise of the one we love, his presence to soothe our loneliness and emptiness within, the feeling that we're needed, the fulfilment of our childhood ideals, protection, financial security, or his characteristics that we yearn for but don't possess such as a strong identity, childlikeness, excitement and strength.

This is the reason why Jesus told us to love God first for in truth, it is a command to allow God to love us, to be so embraced and ensured that we couldn't ask for anything more. In that way only can we love others as God has loved us.

This kind of love is therefore not waiting for any condition or reward. This love is also not boastful, self righteous or looking down upon another person because it knows that whatever love it can give has come not from itself but from God, like the moon reflecting only the light cast upon it by the sun.

### **A Love That Heals**

God's perfect love is the kind of love that heals. Whether we receive it directly or through the people He chooses to help us along the way, only God's love has the power to change us and to heal our hurts.



If we are to be channels of His love, we must stop relying upon our own strength and goodness and begin tapping unto God's endless reserve of mercy, power and grace. Know God's love and how different it is from the kind of love that failed us in the past.

## **GOD'S LOVE IS:**

### **1. Benevolent**

*Benevolence is silent goodwill. It is like the sun shining on hard ground, softening the earth, melting the ice, but with no design or intention to heal. It is a state of naturalness which is why it works because the ground feels no debt to the sun. In the same way, to be on the receiving end of benevolence is to be receiving something for which there is no return. Not even a pressure to respond - which is why one does, so easily. - Inner Beauty*

God's love is just like that. GOD'S LOVE just IS. Even without our appreciation, even without our gaze. God's love needs no permission nor recognition in order to shine through and give its warmth to all. Only He has that kind of benevolence.

There are times when we also feel as though we've already given so much kindness. But if we could really be benevolent in the same way, why do we feel so much pain when our partner leaves us or betrays us? Why do we hear ourselves say, "I've done everything for you all these years and this is how you will repay me for everything?"

It is not that we shouldn't feel bad in any way. It's but natural to be disappointed with infidelity and with things that break apart our love. But in our weakness, we fall into the temptation of making our partners the very center of our lives, the source of our joy, the meaning of our existence. God is not like that for He is not dependent upon His creatures for His happiness. He loves us but He is the Giver, not the one who expects from us something in return to fill Him back.

The only way we could somehow imitate such benevolence is when we're able to connect to God. When we're filled with His goodness, we're able to give the same to others without expecting anything in return.

### **2. Strong**

God's love is so strong that even if we fail Him again and again, His love remains steadfast and unaffected by our changing desires.

His love is also strong enough to join us not only in our happiness but even in our pain. It is not afraid to see us in our weakness and our failures. It is strong enough to allow us to make mistakes, to hurt, and to learn from them. How very different indeed from our human love that expects perfection from one another. We're afraid to feel our loved one's pain and so we meddle with their decisions and keep them from being responsible for their own lives. We'd rather that they remain as babies who never grow up rather than risk falling as they learn to walk on their own.

### **3. Trustworthy**

We know God has no hidden agenda and only has our highest good in mind. He never lies to us and His words can be counted upon.

How different it is with people who often lie to us and betray us, people who keep us guessing whether they really love us or only care about themselves.

For those of us who have been hurt so deeply that we find it so difficult to trust again, only God's love heals because it may just be the only love we'd be able to TRUST for a time.

### **4. Respectful**

God respects our freewill and does not force us to do His will even if it be far better than our desires. God is powerful but He does not manipulate us. God is everywhere but He doesn't always reveal His presence if such will not be good for us.

With people however, we often try to control others, especially our loved ones if we have come to believe that we know the best thing for them to do. We exert upon them our authority, or even use emotional blackmail just so they would do as we want them to do even if they don't truly believe in our plans.

We could always reason that we only intend the best for them. But could it be that we're also depriving them to learn in their own way and time? Could it be that we're just showing them how we can't really trust them to run their own lives?

God knows far better than we do and could surely accomplish a lot of things on His own, but He honors us by acknowledging the strength we have and what we can do for ourselves. He doesn't want puppets who can do His will but who can't appreciate and believe in His wisdom.

The kind of love that heals is the kind of love that is able to respect the dignity of the person, one that is able to touch but not intrude, to help but also honor the person's ability to help himself.

### **5. Wise**

God's love is filled with wisdom. It knows and does what the beloved needs, not what she wants, if what she wants wouldn't be good for her in the long run.

We in turn may be tempted to merely please other people. We think that by always doing everything others wanted us to do, we're already loving them. A love that heals is never blind. It sees beyond what the person asks to what a person really needs.

### **6. Gentle**

God's love is so gentle that it could touch us in our frailty without causing us farther harm. Other people's love seem strong, but unless gentleness be present also in that strength, we may feel threatened or even afraid to receive it. In times when we can't even look up and extend our arms, what

we need is a quiet love that merely shelters us in our moment of need, like a tree that provides just enough shade to protect us from too much rain or sun.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs." - 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

## **7. Infinite**

God's love is infinite. There's always something new to discover, something fresh to surprise us and to keep us awaiting His presence. He could never bore us for there is no end to knowing Him. The more we know about His love, the more we yearn to comprehend His greatness.

One reason why many relationships fail is because people also fail to grow. If we really wish to offer the best for our loved ones, we should constantly seek to improve ourselves, to grow and to become better kinds of people from day to day.

## **8. Unchanging**

God's love comforts us because His love remains the same, He is as reliable now and in the future as He had been in the past.

It is true that there is always something new to discover about Him, but He does not take back what He has already revealed about Himself.

"I am the Lord, and I change not." - Malachi 3:6

## **9. Beautiful**

The beauty of God's love is so alluring that it gives us joy. Can we ever find something more beautiful than His love?

The kind of love that heals is a love that is given out of the beauty of one's heart, not out of one's fears, guilt or emptiness.

## **10. Eternal**

We may not be able to count the number of times we wept because the love we thought we'd always have suddenly fades. Separation, abandonment and death broke our hearts and we couldn't understand why something so beautiful had to end.

In truth, the love that we have right now is only a taste of the greater love we'd enjoy in eternity. With God's love, we need never be afraid anymore because His love is eternal and has no end.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Such is the greatness of God's love that has been made available to all. We may not always be able to reflect that love to others, for we are all but hazy mirrors of His love at best. In times like that, let

us not feel defeated for we know God can always continue His work for the people we love in ways we could never imagine for now. Only God's love is infinite, wise and trustworthy. His LOVE shall never fail!

Today's Activity:

Define love once again. After all that you've been through, have your wounds healed already? Are you now ready to truly love again?

## *I'm Afraid To Change and Become a Heartless Person*

***We don't become heartless by moving on. We become heartless whenever we choose to be angry, whenever we choose not to forgive.***

How's the pain in your heart? Are you beginning to let it go little by little? Are you able to breathe better, knowing your wounds are slowly being healed?

### **Prayer of a Broken Heart**

Dear Lord, how could he have done this to me? How could he forget his promises? How could he throw away in a moment all the things we have built all these years? How could he break my heart? Was it my fault? Was it me Lord? Tell me where I have gone wrong. Show me my sins, flash them before me so I may know. For I do not understand how all these things can be happening right now. I do not understand how something so good can suddenly end up the way it is today. We were so happy, Lord. We were so in love we have not a care in the world. It was just him and me, the two of us, and it was enough, probably more than enough. He was your gift to me, and I to him. We complement each other, we share so many things in common, it is to him that I opened up my heart. It is he Lord whom I trusted with all my heart.

How then can he break it so? How can he betray our love? How can he suddenly say he doesn't love me anymore? It seemed not so long ago when we would simply walk hand in hand along the beach, when we would share a slice of pizza and be satisfied just the same, when we would gaze at the evening sky and count the stars, content of what we had, certain that it would last forever like the millions of stars in the sky. I believed in forever. Now I don't know anymore. I know nothing anymore. Can love be lost in an instant? Can true love really just fade away? I am so broken deep within me Lord I do not know if I can still piece together every shattered part of me.

My friends say that it will heal in time. They say I should busy myself with this and that, date with this guy and that guy. But I don't know Lord. Are these the things that can make me believe in love once again? Are these the things that can relieve this pain I feel in my heart? I am not only hurting, Lord. I feel so angry that I couldn't do anything to avenge myself for this kind of suffering I do not deserve. Do I not deserve true love Lord? Do I not deserve loyalty, sincerity and respect? He makes me feel so bad, Lord. He makes me feel so bad about myself. I built my whole world around him, and he took it all away. I built my self esteem upon his admiration, and he trampled upon it as though it were trash. How can he

not feel guilty for what he has done? How can he suddenly be so happy now in the arms of another woman? How can I ever build my world again? How can I ever be happy once more?

Please help me Lord, I really don't know what to do. Only your words can comfort me. Only your embrace can soothe my pain. I have given everything I could my Lord, and there is nothing more I can give. I kneel before you now, crushed and broken, empty and afraid to be alone. Hide me under your wings, hold me in your loving arms. Say unto me again how much you love me. Say unto me that you have called me yours and you will never ever let me go. Though men may fail, you remain faithful, steadfast and immovable as a rock. Though men may judge me for all the faults they see in me, you see my heart and reveal to me the beautiful soul you see in me. Help me to let go of my pain, teach me to forgive those who do not even ask my forgiveness. This burden is something I shouldn't carry in my heart. This trouble is not something I should trade away my peace for. I know that I have been done wrong, the things that have happened had been so unfair. Sometimes life's like that. Many things in this life really seem so unfair. But let me not continue being unfair to myself. Let me not punish myself anymore for the things others have done.

I offer unto you my wounded heart, my broken heart. I know it is you my Lord who will uphold me in the end. Let me not lose hope. Let me not cast away everything that's good and beautiful in this life. I know that there is so much more in store for me. I know how much love I can still give away because it is you who fills me with everything that I'll ever need. You are the one who loves me truly, eternally, unconditionally. You are the one who has always been there for me and always will be there for me. You are my one true love. You are my forever. You are my strength and my peace and my joy. Surely in your presence Lord, I do not need anything more.

### **Mastering Life Transitions**

Your heart was broken into a million pieces, how do you pick up the broken pieces to be whole again? How do you transition into the new person that you are?

Surviving difficult life transitions is one of the most important things we need to know if we desire to live a full and meaningful life. We may not have noticed it, but transition follows us the moment we were born until the moment we die. First, we make the transition from childhood to adolescence, from adolescence to adulthood. Then we make the transition from single life to married life, from an active career into retirement.. In between are many other difficult transitions challenging us, sometimes ripping our very hearts apart that we know not how on earth we're ever going to survive.

How do we survive a sickness and achieve healing? How do we gain wisdom and grow from our immaturity? How are we ever going to rise from our poverty into abundance? From brokenness into wholeness? From darkness to light? From death to eternal life?

***What is transition anyways? How do we survive difficult transitions in our life?***

TRANSITION is CHANGE. It is a transformation we undergo in order to reach a desired end. In some cultures, it is also called a rite of passage, such as when a male passes from boyhood into manhood and accepts all the powers and responsibilities attributed to his new social position.

Transition is therefore stepping into another level, into another world where we are not so familiar with, where we may not yet be equipped to enter. Transition is that difficult process we make in order to CROSS OVER in that OTHER WORLD.

Following are several things you may find useful in assisting you in the many life transitions you may undergo. I cannot guarantee its completeness nor can I be able to summarize it in 3 easy steps in a way many "how to" articles are done. Transition after all, is not a simple process, and everybody deserves to receive as much assistance as one could possibly get.

**1. Understand what's happening**

Before you could go on to any other point or desired end, you must first be able to know what's really going on at the moment.

What's taking place at the moment? Why is it taking place? What's making the situation difficult? Is what you're going through a natural process that cannot be avoided? If it isn't, what are the alternatives?

Are you broken hearted from the separation or passing away of a loved one? Surely, you did not intend any of it to happen, but it happened anyway, and the only road that lies before you is the road of healing and recovery from your pain.

Are you frustrated at your current job and planning to move on to the next? Maybe you can first ask yourself why you're frustrated in the first place. What's causing your frustration? A grumpy boss perhaps? A jealous officemate? What are your alternative causes of action? Will it be an outright move into another career? Will it only be a change from one company to another? Is there any possible improvement if you should study further and acquire more relevant skills to the position?

Understand what's going on right where you are. Transition is not a mere EXCUSE or a means of escape from somewhere you're frustrated to be (even if we do feel it like that!). In fact, transition is the ability to CONNECT TWO different planes of reality.

Transition is the MASTERY of TWO WORLDS and achieving "balance" in the process, said balance being the point where the different forces of the Universe seem to converge and fall into their proper places, creating MIRACLES along the way.

Transition is mastery. And to be able to achieve mastery, you must be able to understand what is taking place at the present moment, right where you are.

## **2. Accept the Difficulty**

It is not enough that one understands what's going on. One must also ACCEPT "what is" in order to move on to "what there can be".

You are in poverty perhaps, and I cannot say that where you presently are is a comfortable place to be, it surely isn't! So why am I talking about acceptance here?

Please do note however that when I say acceptance, I do not mean that one accepts his situation forever. If that were the case, there would be no transition, and nothing else pertaining to change remains to be discussed. When I talk about acceptance, I mean to talk about accepting one's present condition "for the present moment". I do not even speak of one whole day, just the present hour, the moment where one is.



"But why the necessity for this?" you may ask. "Aren't we trying to change because we are not happy where we are in the first place?"

You have a point in there, yet as much as we'd like to achieve change the soonest time possible, we cannot deny the truth in the present circumstance of our life, that point where we want to start our journey towards change.

Understand also that I do not instruct that anyone should be "happy" at this point. One must only accept the present situation where one is and be willing to face its difficulties.

The significance of this step is this: If one would not be willing to accept the difficulty of the moment, one would be DENYING the truth of his present situation. One who denies the truth cannot go anywhere because he cannot face anything, starting from the many difficulties one already has where one is.

Accepting the difficulty in one's present condition also prepares you to face the other challenges that are sure to come your way when in the process of transition. If you cannot accept your present difficulty, how much more could you not accept the uncertainties and difficulties in the road ahead?

In addition, not accepting your current situation tells that you are exerting much effort at resisting it, resisting something you cannot really change "for now". Wouldn't it be wonderful to use that energy instead in devising a feasible plan rather than resisting what already exists? Surrender is a mighty powerful word. It is that calm we see in the eyes of those who though still suffering, are letting go of the urge to fight the unalterable. It is the calm we see in the eyes of those whose days are already numbered by a dreaded disease yet still having the zest to live and make the most of each day given them.

Acceptance is the shortest path one can take towards peace. This may be hard truth to chew, but it is possible to have peace even in the midst of difficulties, it is possible to have peace even in the midst of your most painful tears.

That peace is needed in order to have a stable ground with which to start from. Otherwise, we shall only be driven by fear, or anger, or any other strong emotion that clouds our minds and prevents us from seeing things for what they really are. Peace brings us closer to our true nature and restores our connection with our Eternal Source. Seek peace therefore through acceptance.

He who cannot accept his present affliction is bound to live with the thing he resists the most; he who can befriend even his most terrible pain is one who can turn it around and transmute even curses into GIFTS of power and healing.

### **3. Let your difficulties strengthen you**

One other thing your acceptance of your difficulties brought you is the ability to be able to use your difficulties in order to strengthen you and propel you in your transition. Had you denied them, you wouldn't have even admitted their existence, more so, studied them to be of use to you in your transition. But how could it be so?

Many times, the difficulties we encounter at present signify to us some weakness we must overcome in order to proceed to the next level we're looking for.

For instance, you may wish to be a businessman and acquire wealth so you can be of service to many people. At present however, you don't have much materially, and your difficulty at present is in making both ends meet with your low budget. Maybe you don't want to experience that difficulty anymore. You just want to be that wealthy businessman who knows all the tricks of the trade to make money at the right place and at the right time. But the fact is, your difficulty in budgeting your expenses may not necessarily disappear the moment you become rich. The fact is, your difficulty may even be amplified as you try to budget not only your own expenses, but the expenses of an entire Corporation that you own! Now how is that?

I am not saying that everyone who can't come up with a feasible budget from a limited source of income do not have financial skills. But it can be one of your difficulties. At the same time, it can also be one skill you can learn from, a skill that may yet be able to help you achieve your highest dreams.

In order to proceed somewhere, we've got to start from where we are and use what we have. You cannot start with nothing.

What do you have at the moment? Your disappointments? Your tears? Your poverty? Use it and let God help you in transforming it to joy, to abundance, to victory. Remember that even a mighty oak tree wasn't always the majestic tree it is today, it started from a puny little seed that unleashed its

potential, kept its ground, and allowed the nutrients of nature to take its course and create a great miracle.

#### **4. Let a compelling vision propel you**

Oftentimes, carrying our crosses is not our main problem. Our main problem is the lack of heaven in our minds with which to strengthen us in carrying our cross!

Have a compelling reason for you to undergo transition, something that is beyond moving away from the negative things you wish to leave behind. Think of what you desire to achieve. Think of the people that will be happy, think of the joy in their eyes. Without the said vision, you'll just be going around in circles not ever landing to where you truly desire to be. In my article "How do you carry your cross", I've mentioned how Jesus urged us to "follow him" as we take up our cross. Our real goal is not to take up our cross, it is to follow Jesus himself! If you are not enthralled by his glory, if you are not captivated by his beauty and his light, will it be any wonder if you will always complain of how heavy the cross you're carrying is?

#### **5. Devise a plan and make it flexible**

Once you were able to calm down and assess the situation where you are, it is time to devise a workable plan to guide you along the way. Don't edit your plans so much at the start, but rather, gather as much information and possible strategies as you can. This would be especially helpful as you would have a vast resource available for you, back up plans you can avail of whenever your chosen plan does not work out as you expected it to. This would in turn free you from ATTACHMENT to one plan, which more often than not contributes to unnecessary pressure and stress. When I planned for a successful business and opened a coffee shop of my own, I was glad I didn't resign from my day job. If I did, and I didn't know I would go broke then, I would have had nothing to fall back into when all my hard earned earnings were suddenly swept away.

#### **6. Accept that there will be temporary setbacks**

No matter how far you have moved on in your journey, there will be times when you fall back or trip over a little bit. Accept that there will be temporary setbacks along the way, but don't think that just because you encounter them, you cannot make progress anymore. Treat them instead as periods of rest or reflection, of assessing what you have already done, and where you're really headed. Oftentimes,

setbacks are like mirrors reflecting to us an image of what has been happening. It is an indicator and a warning signal that something's been happening and if you continue on your path now, you'd surely be going further in your chosen path. It's asking us if we're sure we want to continue in such a path. It's giving us the time to assess if we'd like to make last minute changes and move on to another direction.

Have you been broken hearted and felt you've already recovered? Then, just when you thought you've finally made it through, a painful memory suddenly slips in and brings back every hurt you felt before. Does it mean you haven't been healed? Does it mean all your efforts at moving on have just been wasted? Of course not!

What it could mean is that not every wound had been patched yet, not every hurt healed. Healing often comes in seasons, one painful memory at a time. If it were not so, we might have been overwhelmed, and we could have seen no point in trying to move on. The next set of healing comes when you have recovered enough, when you have gained enough strength to make it through the difficult process of letting go.

Think of it this way. If you were diagnosed with cancerous tumors and scheduled for chemotherapy, can you survive it if such a therapy is given you in a non-stop manner until every cancerous cell in your body had been wiped out? Those cells may be killed indeed, but so will you!

## **7. Enjoy the journey**

There are transitions we can better enjoy than other kinds. A move into a new country is one. Getting married is another. We usually don't complain about it but celebrate all the excitement it brings.

Other transitions are more difficult. Losing a loved one for instance, or retiring and losing a job you've held for more than half your life. Yet even in these times, know that there are moments you can claim as your very own.

When a boyfriend has betrayed you for someone you believe is not half as beautiful as you are, what do you do? You cry your heart out of course! You cry for the hurt it caused you and for the disgust you feel for the girl he replaced you with. And what do your family and friends usually do? They stay beside you and support you and would do almost anything you tell them too! Now, you're getting it. People are kinder, they bring you gifts, they treat you to a new movie, they cook dinner for you, they let you win card games when you have pajama parties in your room since you can't sleep.

Quite often, we don't notice it and remember it only when it's too late! One by one your friend excuses herself, a meeting has come up, or a pet has been too sick to be left alone. They notice you're improving and can now fend for yourself. Bad times are over, but so are all the fun things you could have done with them while you were the one in charge!

### **8. Don't make big leaps without sufficient confidence or resources**

One mistake I've noticed people usually do is to make great leaps of faith when their faith is not so great yet to support their leaps. It is true that faith can indeed move mountains. It is true that whatever you set your mind on to you can achieve. It is true that envisioning your dreams would bring you in closer vibration to making them come true. But whoever said that it is also true for all of us - now?

Some of us are not yet prepared. Many have not yet truly believed. That's why when things don't immediately happen as suspected, almost everybody who talked aloud just a while ago departs slowly unto oblivion, blaming everybody else for leading them on to illusions they can never possess.

We build our confidence through various seasons of testing and strengthening, not in a single instant of jumping in what's fad. There are many gurus and more gurus to tell you what you want to hear, but remember that in the end, it is you who will live the life that you create. I believe there is a Chinese saying that goes like this - teachers can only open the door for you, but you walk in that door alone.

Don't walk that door scared and startled. Walk in there with enough confidence that can match the challenges before you in your next step. For goodness' sake, test the waters with your toe and not your whole body!

Are you trying to seek for a more stable income by engaging in business? Test it first on a small scale and see if there is any market for the product you're selling. Be wary of get-rich schemes. More often than not, they are get-broke-quick schemes driven to take away what little capital you have that you could have invested wisely somewhere else.

Take intermediary steps that can help you proceed to the next level. When I was younger, I didn't know how I could help my family financially. We were poor, we had no connections, we have no rich relatives that can help lift us up. The only way I worked my way through was having a good education. One small step at a time, I was able to graduate from an elementary public school. In high school, I was able to get a scholarship. The same thing with college where the country's biggest auditing firm had me as their scholar until I took my board exams. It was not easy, but I've made progress and built my confidence from each achievement that came my way.

## **9. Keep what's important, forget it not**

Moving on does not mean letting go of everything that has happened and that has made you who you are. Being able to transcend into a new being doesn't mean nullifying the person you were before. You will be a different person, but in many ways, you will still be the same. If you will not, you will be lost as a mist that has quickly vanished in the light of the bright noonday sun.

Keep what is worth keeping, let go what has only been an outer shell you thought were your true essence. Keep the happy memories with the ones you love, with the places you've been to. Keep the lessons learned, the wisdom gained, the power and strength and the legacy that has been passed on to you by countless beings that have guided you to be where you are now. Forget them not. Forget not who you are.

## **10. Accept and celebrate the new**

Not many people are willing to accept the new because not many are willing to let go of the old. No matter how broken their old self was, they find it hard to leave it and be made anew. Few men live again because few men are willing to die in order to have new life.

Realize that for something to be created, something has to be destroyed. For one thing to be embraced, another has to be left behind. We cannot serve two masters at the same time. It would not benefit us if we stand always at the fork in the road, never making a choice, never making any mistake, but never making any progress as well, and never being able to live life to the full.

Accept the new and celebrate it. It is the only way you can give honor to the old, by being a better you, the you that could never have been had you always remained scared of seeking out the best that you can be.

Life indeed is a transition. We see it in the passing of each season, in the rising of the sun and in its setting, in the evaporation of raindrops and in its pouring down again unto the sea. Life must transcend for life to thrive. He who chooses not to transcend has already chosen to decay and to die. In that way, nature still wins. For in every death is a new birth, in every ending a beginning waiting to be unleashed.

What shall I find as I cross the uncertain bridge of life? Full of questions do I cross this bridge, yet full of hope do I walk towards my destiny.

### ***What If...***

What do we look forward to?

When we were kids,

we looked forward to growing up

when we were teenagers,

we looked forward to finishing our studies

when we were young adults,

we looked forward to getting a job

when we were finally stable,

we looked forward to getting married,

when we got married,

we looked forward to having kids

when we had kids,

we looked forward to seeing them grow up

and so the cycle goes....

but what if we stopped  
somewhere  
when we were adults  
thinking what life really means  
what a life that matters really is  
and what we'd really like to do  
will the cycle stop?  
shall we move on to another circle?

after our soul searching  
the cycle may go on  
we marry  
we have kids  
we look forward to them growing up

but then all the while  
that this happens  
a change within tells us  
things are finally different  
not because we've headed in a different direction  
but because we took the road



with a new heart

and a fresh new pair of eyes.

Today's Activity:

Draw a line to divide a piece of paper into two columns. In the first column, describe in a few sentences the kind of person that you were before the breakup. In the second column, describe the new person that you envision yourself to be.

## *But He Could Be The One!*

People believe in many things. Some people believe in fairy tales and in happy endings. Some people believe in what romantic movies often show - our one true love. We have a right to believe in them if we choose to, but we should always remember that our lives will always be our responsibility. If we become disheartened because of our beliefs, we must acknowledge that we are the ones who chose to give our power away to those beliefs.

On the other hand, we can also choose to search for the truth. This is beyond what society and popular culture says. God says that if we seek, we are indeed going to find.

Based on your previous experience, and on the lessons you learned, what do you choose to believe? Do you still choose to believe that there is just one person who could make you happy? Do you choose to believe that your happiness depends upon one such person and if that person ever chooses not to honor your relationship with him, then there is nothing more you could do for your own life?

If you truly believe that there is one person meant for you, that person who alone is destined to make you happy, then what is there to fear? If it is destiny itself who will ensure your happiness, what is there to worry about? On the other hand, if he is really your one true love, then why didn't it work out? Why didn't he prove to be the one?

On the other hand, if we choose to believe in our God given freewill, then we can use the wisdom given us to choose wisely with whom we give our hearts to. We'd learn to choose whom to give our trust, our hearts, our lives.

Often too, we blame God for many things, especially for our sufferings. We blame God when we didn't even seek His will in the first place. Why not ask God to help us in discerning His best will for our lives? Why not allow Him to enlighten our minds which person He sees would be best for us?

### **Prayer For That Special Someone**

I want someone who will think about me first  
when shopping for his Christmas gifts,  
and who envisions a life with me in his future years.

Someone who gazes at me as though I were  
the most precious thing he has,  
and seeks to feel my hand whenever I'm not there.

I want someone who treasures each moment  
he spends with me  
each laughter shared, each adventure taken, each lesson learned throughout the years.

I want someone who thinks fondly of me  
before he goes to sleep  
and thinks about me again when he awakes  
who finds meaning in what we have,  
and who looks forward to all that we have yet to discover  
in life, and in each other.

I want someone who sees the real me  
and loves me just the same.

I want someone who can grow with me  
and who is happy in seeing me grow.

I want someone who can be intimate with me

and yet is strong enough to set me free,  
so I can be the best of me.  
I want someone who can make me smile,  
and who smiles in turn because of me,  
someone who can make me a more loving person,  
a stronger person,  
someone who is neither selfish nor insecure  
and someone who will love my loved ones with me,  
who will be strong enough for me  
when I can't be that strong anymore.

I want someone who has a life of his own  
yet is able to weave it gracefully with mine.  
Together we will create a new and more beautiful life together  
not that we're empty without each other  
but that together, we will fill up each other's cup until it overflows.  
This is my prayer for that someone,  
and may God who knows my heart better than I know mine  
grant that which is most beautiful of all!

### **Was His Prayer Not Answered?**

There was once a very poor man named Jose who wanted to win the lottery. He prayed, "Lord, I really wanted to give my family a better life. I want to be able to send my daughter to school. And I want to buy medicine for my sick wife. Please help me win this lottery."

With full trust in God's power, He bought his lottery ticket.

The next day, he was so excited to read the lottery results that he didn't even eat his breakfast. He quickly got out of the house and bought a newspaper, hoping to find the answer he was looking for.

To his total dismay however, not one of his numbers matched the winning results. Disappointed and frustrated, he looked up to heaven and asked where he had gone wrong.

Later he found out it was his neighbor who won the lottery. His neighbor was so happy that he couldn't help but broadcast his fate to his friends.

Jose felt even more frustrated. He knew the man who won. The man was a drunkard, one who beat his wife and his children. How could God have blessed that man when He ignored Jose's plea?

Some years later, a shocking news reached Jose. The man who won the lottery was murdered by thieves that tried to rob his house, and rumor has it that the man's own friends plotted the incident because they were jealous of his good fortune.

Some more years later, Jose's daughter received a scholarship, and she was able to graduate later on and find a stable and high earning job. She supported her father and gave him a business of his own.

Jose now lives in a decent house, earning a good sum from his business, and surrounded by family and friends who love him.

One quiet morning, as Jose spends some quiet time at the garden, he recalls the time he prayed for God's blessings. Thinking about it, Jose realized that God had indeed heard his prayers and answered them, just not in the way he expected it. If he had won the lottery then, maybe he would have told his neighbors too about his good fortune. Maybe he had also been robbed. Maybe he too, would have died and lost the chance to enjoy his wealth with the ones he loves the most.

Indeed, only God knows the things that are bound to happen. And in times when we feel He's disappointed us, He may just be working out another plan, a better plan that would give us greater happiness and peace.

### **Must God Give Us Everything We Ask For?**

*Faith is not the belief that God will do what you want. Faith is the belief that God will do what is right. - He Still Moves Stones*

How many times have we desired that our loved ones do what we wanted them to do? We think that if only they would do everything we desire, we'd have no more problem and we'd all end up happy and contented with our lives. But is this really the case?

What if the person we love the most indeed does nothing else but follow our every command? Worse, what if they don't do anything unless we tell them to do something? What if they consult with us every little thing that they're about to do? Would that satisfy us? I believe not, for if this is to continue, all that we'd have in the end are mere puppets that we control and nothing more.

If we end up with mere puppets, we'd also end up lonely because we'd end up with people with no real consciousness and identity.

How many times have we wanted God to do the same and answer our every prayer? Why is it that God doesn't always give us what we ask for?

### **1. Giving us everything would invalidate God has having his own mind and personality.**

God is not a genie who would follow our every wish just so we'd set Him free from the bottle. God is already free and He is free to grant our prayers or not to grant them depending on His infinite wisdom.

"God is an ocean, a fire, a living fountain...That is the essence of prayer: this contact with a living God, a God who reacts, not like a simple inanimate being but like a living person, with a thrill of joy, with the gift of Himself.-Where The Spirit Breathes"

### **2. We don't always know what's best for us**

We're often incapable of knowing the things that could truly make us happy. We'd want something and then once we acquire it, we'd want something else. We want the kind of people who could hurt us the most. We yearn for those things we'd only regret later on.

If God were to give us automatically our every wish, He may just do us more harm than good.

**3. If God always gave us everything, our faith would not be strengthened because we'd always interpret that God is deserting us everytime things don't happen our way.**

We are not only to live by reason, but also by faith. This is because we don't know everything, and for us to gain the best things, we have to trust the One who knows all things.

There are many things whose end we couldn't see yet, but will eventually turn out for our good. If God gave us only things that benefited us for the moment, our faith would be crippled and our relationship with Him wouldn't grow. We'd also feel afraid and alone, thinking nobody else is in charge when we can no longer take care of ourselves.

**4. God wouldn't have the ability to surprise us anymore.**

If God gave us only the things we ask for, how else could He surprise us with His gifts? God is not only a Provider, but a Father and a Lover who loves and yearns to make us smile!

God does not always give us what we ask for, only those things we ask for from deep within our soul - our greatest and most sacred desires, for such are the desires that are most aligned to our perfect joy!

*"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."(Psalm 37:4)*

Today's Activity:

If God would give you the one true love you really desire, how would you want that person to be? Do you really believe God desires only the best for you?

## *How Do I Start Again?*

We are often afraid to start back at zero. We're afraid to set aside everything we've learned, everything we've ever worked for and accomplished, and that led us to where we are today.

Thinking about it though, what are we so afraid of? So what if we start at zero again? Didn't we all start at zero when we were born?

We all started out as fragile helpless little babies who could do nothing but cry, and yet look at where we are today!

Are we less able than newborn babies are? Are we less equipped? Are we even more vulnerable than they?

It is a miracle how babies come to life, and how they grow up to become like you and me. God still works His miracles today. And if we only be willing, He'd do the same for us, even if we should start back at zero over again.

### **Ready To Start Again**

There comes a time when you feel  
that you're ready to start again.  
You've spent enough time  
looking at the past,  
cherishing memories  
learning your lessons,  
healing the wounds that have caused you pain.  
You may still feel some hurt



in some of the wounded parts of you,  
you may have your regrets  
and you may not have found  
all the precious things you wish to carry with you.

But you move on.

One step at a time, you let go  
and you release yourself from the past  
that has held you captive all these years.

You may feel your heart skip a beat,  
for there is still much uncertainty,  
but you hold your ground  
and with a firm resolve  
you look ahead  
instead of looking back.

And you begin to surrender,  
as you begin to receive.

You welcome all the new things  
life can offer you,  
and all the new people  
who'd welcome you in their hearts.

You become less afraid  
and your courage increases  
as you begin to follow your heart.

Everything has suddenly become new  
and interesting

and blessed.

You see the world again

through the eyes of a child,

colourful,

magical,

and full of wondrous possibilities!

You are no longer too old for anything,

and it is no longer too late to try something else.

You hold nothing,

but you're ready for everything,

you are just beginning

but you're not afraid to pursue

what it is you really desire!

You are no longer the same

and you're not afraid to change some more.

You're no longer afraid to lose yourself

for you know who you are

and all that you have yet to gain

For the first time in a long time,

you feel free,

you feel so alive!

You've been prepared for this very hour,

for this very beginning,

You know there is yet much to do

but you won't be turning back.

You only move forward,  
you only hope  
and trust  
and believe  
that you're ready  
never more ready than now  
to START AGAIN!

***One of the many blessings of a new day is the opportunity to start over and live a better, happier and more fulfilling life.-Joyce***

Today's Activity:

Find yourself a seed and then bury it where you can watch it grow. In a sheet of paper, write down all your remaining heartaches and fears. Burn that paper and then light a candle as you pray. Ask God to help you as you courageously start again!

***He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. - Psalm 147:3***

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