

Before Your Criticize Someone, Read This

Yesterday morning I crashed my car.

It was a minor accident, no damage to persons and both cars still thankfully drivable. The accident was embarrassingly all my fault. I was searching for a tissue because my nose had spontaneously started running (this is the only running I do these days), when I rammed up the back of a van that had stopped abruptly. I had planned to spend the day with bestie. We usually spend most Fridays embarking on mini road trips in my car, and exploring the nuances of life together. There is much musing, and much laughter. We take my car simply out of habit, and maybe slightly because I'm a bit of a control freak and prefer to drive ... I feel safer. Oh, the irony! But yesterday, although I kept our plans, I was just too shaken to drive. Instead, the bestie drove, and I was her ill-at-ease passenger.

An interesting thing started happening, for every request I made or basically anything I uttered, I prefaced, or followed it with: *"I'm sorry"*

This is a really bad habit of mine at the best of times, but my mood after the accident highlighted this flaw. It taps into a whole other world in my brain of weirdness and rejection, where I feel the need to basically apologize for my entire existence. Yes, I know, it's not good, its not exactly in keeping with the whole spiritual warrior, "more than conquerors" thing. Alas, it's there, and God and I are working on it. Slowly.

In any case, this constant state of apology was not lost on my precious friend, and she called me on it. *EVERY. FREAKING. TIME!*

But she did it because she loves me.

By the end of the day and our time together, I mentioned that I wasn't particularly looking forward to seeing my husband after the whole car "incident."

"Why?", she asked, "I really can't imagine Jordan (my husband) getting angry."

And she was right.

"No, he's not" I replied, "but I'm still nervous."

Then, she owned me!

"Do you know what I think? I think that's what scares you. The fact that Jordan isn't angry upsets you.

You want him to be angry.

You want him to be mad.

You want him to punish you because you feel like it's what you deserve.

It's what you're used to. You want to be punished."

Oooooof! Ouch.

She was right. Truth can be so unattractive.

The beautiful thing about this kind of unattractive truth (yes, oxymoron, I know, deal with it), is that although painful, it was easily accepted when coming from the heart and lips of one I love so dearly, one whom I know loves me.

Had an acquaintance spoken these truths over me, it would have added to my wounding, to my rejection and to my history of pain and distrust. Read into that what you may, call me unhealed and unwhole, but I know where I'm at in my journey and it's blessed far-cry from where I used to be! For this I am reflectively grateful.

My point is this: The acceptance of hard truths from the mouth

of another, can only occur when they stem from a place of genuine love and support. This is true for me at least, and I recognize and acknowledge we are all different.

This girl, my best friend, has my back. She's proven it, time and time again.

She will, and has, dropped everything for me in my time of need. I know she loves me, in all my difficult and hard to decipher states. I know she has my best interests at heart. She seeks to love, serve and nurture me.

We may very well have the spiritual acuity to see the root cause of another's negative or unhelpful behavior, but do we have the right through proven, trusted, selfless, loving relationship, to actually speak into their lives and current situation?

Often we, especially us 'Christian' folk, have a myriad of opinions and perhaps divine insights into a situation, but no matter how great the authority we assume, unless we have deep relationship with those people, our words will likely cause more harm than good.

God is all about relationship.

Jesus was constantly and publicly shamed, accused and condemned for the company he kept. He was called a thief and a drunkard, because these were the people he chose to associate with. He was more concerned with relationship than reputation, and this lack of pride and arrogance allowed him to cultivate deep relationships with the hurting, the unwhole, the broken and the vulnerable. Relationships that allowed difficult truths to be spoken, and not just spoken, received.

Next time you want to highlight an area of dysfunction in the life of another, put away the blazing guns, and ask yourself ...

1. Why am I wanting to highlight this?

2. What right do I have?

3. Do I have the best interests of the other person, not only in my heart, but also my mind?

4. Will my insights do more harm than good?

5. Will this build or hinder our relationship?

I don't have all the answers. I don't claim to come from a place of blissfully completed wholeness.

All I ask is that we pause. We think. We love.

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