

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

activated

Vol 10 • Issue 9



NEW WORLDS TO DISCOVER

Love's endless adventure

Under Construction

Temporary troubles, long-term gains

Who's the Boss?

The answer could save your marriage



PERSONALLY SPEAKING

A stray dog moved into the Smiths' neighborhood the same day the Joneses moved in next door, and the dog immediately began to wreak havoc, scrounging in trashcans and tearing up flowerbeds in both yards. The Smiths were irked that the Joneses had brought such a nuisance into the neighborhood, and the Joneses found it inexcusable that the Smiths made no attempt to control their dog. For several weeks neither couple said anything to the other, while bad feelings festered on both sides. Finally Ms. Smith could stand no more and gave Ms. Jones a piece of her mind. "Oh," Ms. Jones replied, "we thought it was *your* dog!"

Often the things that sour relationships are like that dog—more a matter of misunderstandings or small irritations that get blown out of proportion than actual wrongdoing on anyone's part. Usually all it takes to set things right is better communication, but someone has to make the first move, and that's not always easy. Both parties, convinced that they're right or unwilling to admit that they're not, lock themselves into their positions. Barriers go up. Relationships go bad. Everyone suffers.

Where can we find the humility to admit we've been in the wrong, or the love and grace to forgive and forget when we've been wronged? Where can we find the wisdom to turn a no-win situation into a win-win situation, the strength to buck our stubborn nature, or the courage to make the first move? All these and more are at our disposal anytime, whatever we need, when we need it, in unlimited supply, free of charge. "Every good and every perfect gift is from above."¹ "Ask, and it will be given you."² Like all of the other best things in life, the most successful relationships begin with the ultimate relationship—heart to heart communion with "the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy."³

May He bless you with His very best, always and in all ways.

Keith Phillips
For *Activated*

¹James 1:17 NIV

²Matthew 7:7

³1Timothy 6:17O

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UNDER CONSTRUCTION

By CHRISTINA ANDREASSEN

THE BOLD RED LETTERS GLARED AT US as we crawled along in bumper-to-bumper traffic, maneuvering between potholes and gravelly ditches that had turned what was once smooth pavement into an obstacle course. “UNDER CONSTRUCTION!” Noise, dirt, sweat-soaked workers, and clogged roads had been part of our lives since the city began a road-expansion project several months earlier. Traffic had always been notoriously bad in this part of sprawling Bangkok, but it was worse now.

Barricades had gone up, squeezing three-lane traffic into a single lane. The diggers came next, tearing up the asphalt and clunking and shuddering as they worked around the clock. Construction dust covered everything. Our hour-long commutes into town took twice as long, while we stalled and chafed in exhaust fumes and dust.

“Why do they have to do construction here?” I routinely complained to my dad on our weekly trips to give English lessons at an orphanage near the center of town. “It makes life so inconvenient and confusing for everyone!”

Dad, having long ago outgrown the notion that the world existed to cater to him, would glance sympathetically in my direction and say nothing.

Eventually I became accustomed to the noise and inconvenience, and Dad and I discovered that the car was a great place to catch up on little bits of each other’s lives that we had missed in the bustle of our busy days.

The day finally came when the constant jackhammering stopped, the large yellow machines were hauled away one by one, and the barricades with their red-lettered signs and flashing orange lights were carted off to the next construction site.

The next week we made our usual trip to the orphanage, and as usual I braced myself for the long ride. A minute or two later Dad maneuvered our pickup onto an entry ramp and suddenly we were racing above the snarl of city traffic below. The newly constructed flyover, with its smooth surface and intersection-free lanes, took us to the orphanage in a record time of fifteen minutes.

On the way home, as we once again sped above the clogged streets and honking cars, Dad broke the silence. “Do you still wish they hadn’t done construction here?”

“Of course not!” I replied, suddenly realizing that the temporary inconvenience we had lived through was nothing compared to the benefits that would now be enjoyed for years.

“Life is full of ‘construction sites,’” Dad said. “Learn to be thankful for them and be patient. God is in the process of turning each one into something better.”

CHRISTINA ANDREASSEN IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ✨



NEW WORLDS TO DISCOVER

BY DAVID BRANDT BERG

OUR LIVES INVOLVE all sorts of relationships. In fact, relating to people is largely what life is about. Relationships, when based on the right foundation and growing in the right direction, are wonderful, rewarding experiences. Each new relationship also brings with it an exciting new set of challenges and surprises. And of course no relationships are as challenging or full of surprises as romantic relationships.

Opening your life to that special someone is like opening the door to a vast new world beyond what you've known so far. You discover the world through another's eyes; you feel the world through their emotions; you view the world from a different perspective. Now you have not only your own but also their feelings, opinions, and preferences to consider. You discover what makes them tick and how they think.



You learn to put their needs before your own, and in the process you also realize things about yourself that you never knew before.

A key asset to a good relationship is honest, open communication. Be honest about your feelings, your needs, and what you like or don't like. Share your desires, hopes, goals, and dreams. Communication will help you avoid misunderstandings and solve many problems while they are still small.

You have to know what to say, how to say it, when to say it, and even whether to say it. But if you build the bond between you on that kind of communication, and if you keep at it through the years, then love will thrive.

IT TAKES TIME AND PRACTICE TO LEARN TO BE OPEN AND HONEST WITH ANOTHER PERSON, WHILE ALSO BEING CONSIDERATE AND WISE.



It is natural, after a while, for couples to think they know each other inside out and therefore need to communicate less. Some couples even stop communicating altogether. But the truth is that two people can't know each other well enough to stop communicating and not have problems, because people change. Everyone has somewhat different needs and thinks somewhat differently today than they did a year ago, or a month ago, or even yesterday. So if a couple stops sharing their minds and hearts because they think they've got everything figured out already, they will miss these changes. When that happens, each person begins to think that the other one doesn't understand them, and that may be true; maybe they understood them last year or last month or last week, but they won't understand them today unless they communicate. Better communication can make the difference between a cold, drab, routine, humdrum existence and a warm, loving, fun relationship.

No matter how new or how old a relationship, there's always something new to discover! ✨



who's the boss?

BY MARIA FONTAINE

WHEN PEOPLE ASK FOR ADVICE REGARDING THEIR MARRIAGE or budding love relationship, I often tell them that the most important thing is to let Jesus be the boss. No matter how much two people love each other and no matter how much they have in common, they are going to have some disagreements. When that happens, the surest way to know what's right is to ask the highest authority. If both partners are willing to let Jesus make the decisions, they can avoid the friction and resentment that undermine many relationships.

Maybe the one you love has done things that have hurt you. Maybe you feel he or she doesn't understand you or isn't meeting your needs. Maybe you feel guilty about mistakes you've made or pain you've caused. Maybe a lack of communication has created a gulf that seems impossible to bridge. No matter what your difficulty or circumstances, Jesus has the answers.

He knows your heart and exactly what you need, and He

can fix anything. He loves you so much that He gave His life for you, so you know your happiness is important to Him. I've found that He always has a plan to bring wonderful things out of each test in our lives. Sometimes we go through long, dark tunnels, but we always come out on the other side as long as we keep following Jesus.

Look to Him for guidance, and have faith that He can and wants to give you solutions to your problems and disagreements. In some form or another, those solutions will always come down to love, humility, prayer, and communication—the four most effective problem-solving tools ever.

You let Jesus be the boss by communicating with Him through prayer, first of all. Take your problems and differences to Him, and let Him speak to your heart about them, either directly or through His written Word. Then act on what He shows you. That's where the love, humility, and better communication between you and your loved one come in, as well as more prayer for Jesus to make whatever inward changes you each need.

As you do your part, Jesus will reward your faith. He will change circumstances for you, improve things, encourage you, and strengthen your spirits. If things seem to be progressing slowly, don't give up. Keep trusting Him to come through for you, and He will bless you with a happy, fulfilling relationship. ✝

**Solutions will always
come down to love,
humility, prayer, and
communication**





“CAN I STAY WITH YOU TONIGHT?” Carlos asked in a trembling voice. He’d had a terrible argument with his wife, he explained over the phone, and he couldn’t return home. My wife and I knew that Carlos had already been going through a very difficult time in his life. To begin with, he’d hoped to be promoted to general manager of the company he worked for, but the job had gone to someone else. A few days later he’d been involved in a traffic accident, though fortunately no one was injured. Now this! Everything seemed to be going wrong.

I invited him over, and before he arrived, my wife and I prayed for Jesus to help us encourage him, as well as for wisdom in how to advise him in this personal situation, if he should ask for that.

When he arrived, we could see that he felt truly hopeless. He’d had a second car accident the night before, it turned out, and this time the car had been totally demolished. Now his wife was *really* upset.

When he had gotten it all out, we asked him why he thought all these things were happening to him. At first all he could do was complain about his wife and how she was always nagging him about his drinking. “She keeps after me about it. I think she just doesn’t want me to have a good time!” he said. He clearly couldn’t understand her justifiable concerns about his drinking.

After listening for a while, we suggested that the best thing he could do was stop blaming her or anybody else for his problems. We also explained that most of his troubles seemed to stem from misplaced priorities—too much emphasis on having a good time and not enough on the deeper, more important things of life.

“God doesn’t send us troubles just to see us suffer,” I told Carlos. “But He sometimes allows us to suffer the consequences of our wrong choices because He knows that often that’s the only time we will sincerely pray, when we are in trouble. Sometimes He has to send trouble our way so we’ll change. When bad things happen, we turn to Him for help, pray and read His Word more, and try harder to follow



Carlos was exchanging his happy married life for a glass of whisky



CARLOS RECREATED

BY SAMUEL CORDON

what His Word says. By getting back on track, doing our best to love Him and do what He says, we make it possible for Him to give us His full blessing.

“He doesn’t expect us to be perfect,” I continued. “What counts is whether or not we are sincerely trying to do what’s best. When we are, He’ll do His best to take care of us and protect us and make us happy, but sometimes He has to send bad times our way to make us stop and listen to Him.”

Carlos’s drinking seemed to be the main reason his wife was so upset with him, and it was about to cost him his marriage, so I told him how the Lord had delivered me from dependence on alcohol years earlier, and that he could also be delivered.

Carlos’s situation reminded me of the story of Esau in the Bible, when Esau had been so hungry and so short-sighted that he traded his entire inheritance for a bowl of his brother Jacob’s stew.¹ I related that story to Carlos, and explained how I thought it applied. It was like Carlos was exchanging his happy married life for a glass of whisky. “By running away from the situation,” I said, “you could be destroying your marriage. Probably the best thing you could do is return home, apologize to your wife, and tell her you love her.”

At that, Carlos burst into tears and told us that nobody had ever talked to him that way before, but he thought I was right. As we talked more, he became determined to change and to try to make up for the harm he had caused.

We read a few appropriate passages from the Bible and several devotional books, and my wife and I prayed with him for God to help him stop drinking and to bring about a real and lasting change in his life.

A few days later when my wife and I visited Carlos at his office, he was beaming! He gave us each a big hug and said, “God has changed me! I can’t thank Him and you enough for helping me get straightened out!” He went on to tell us how everything had improved in his relationship with his wife, and how happy they were now.

We’re so thankful for the change God brought in Carlos’s life. He never fails when we pray!

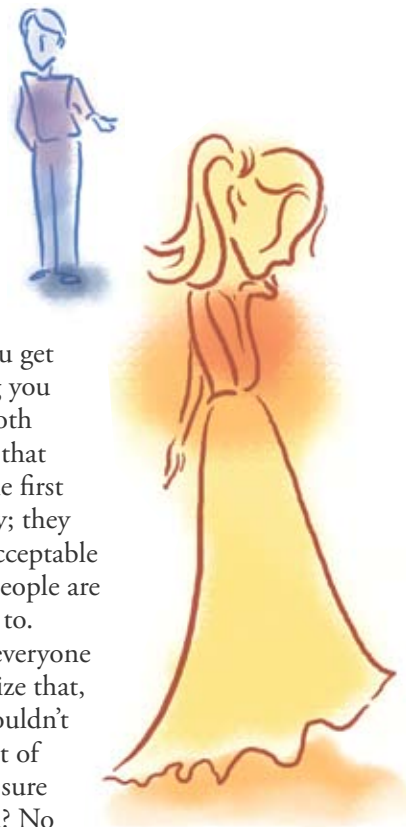
“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

SAMUEL CORDON IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN BRAZIL. ✂

¹Genesis 25:29–34

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

FREEDOM FROM JEALOUSY



Q: I have struggled for years with jealousy. I know my husband loves me, and he gives me no real reason to feel jealous, but I can't help myself. How can I be free from the grip of jealousy?

FEEDING READING

People problems? Try love, humility, prayer, and communication

Love

1 Corinthians 13:4–8a
Ephesians 4:32
Colossians 3:14
1 Peter 4:8

Humility

Proverbs 13:10a
Galatians 5:26
Galatians 6:1
Philippians 2:3

Prayer

Matthew 18:19–20
Mark 11:25
1 John 5:14–15
James 5:16

Communication

Job 6:25
Proverbs 15:23
Proverbs 16:24
James 1:19

A: JEALOUSY—that nasty feeling that you get when you think your partner is neglecting you for someone or something else—can be both irrational and overpowering. Recognizing that jealousy is wrong, that it's a problem, is the first step, but many people don't see it that way; they consider it a virtue, or at least a natural, acceptable part of loving someone. Of course those people are unable to overcome it; they don't even try to.

Jealousy is a no-win situation; it hurts everyone involved and helps no one. Once you realize that, it's easier to take a stand against it. You wouldn't deliberately drink poison, or jump in front of a speeding car, or do other things that are sure to have negative consequences, would you? No more should you stand idly by and let jealousy run its course. You may not be able to keep jealous thoughts from entering your mind, but you don't have to entertain them; you don't have to accept or dwell on them, or let them control you.

It's also important to realize that dark spiritual forces are behind jealousy and other negative emotions such as depression, hatred, or unbridled anger, but we can free ourselves from their influence by praying against them. "Resist the devil," the Bible tells us, "and he will flee from you."¹ Ask Jesus to intercede and fight for you.² It would probably also help to explain your struggle to your husband, if he doesn't already know, and ask him to pray with you.³ Once he understands what situations trigger your jealous thoughts, he can better try to avoid them. Also, being open about your struggle is a step towards victory for you.

Don't be surprised if, after praying, you still have some jealous thoughts. Again, it's not always possible to keep those thoughts from entering your mind, but you can always exercise power over them, because "He [Jesus] who is in you is greater than he [the devil] who is in the world."⁴ So if they do come, make a conscious effort to resist them then and there. ✝

¹James 4:7

²Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25

³James 5:16; Matthew 18:19–20

⁴1 John 4:4



problem solving with my teen

BY PETRA LAILA

NOW THAT MY OLDEST, CHRIS, is 13, I have found that I need to change in how I communicate with him. He is not the child he was a few years back. All of a sudden, he is taller than me. How time has flown! It seems like just yesterday he was a constantly active two-year-old, getting into everything.

Like most parents, I suppose, my tendency has been to think that I instinctively know what's best for my children, and to take action accordingly. That worked well enough when Chris was small, but now that he's reached a stage where he wants to make more of his own decisions, I've found that I need to take a different approach and involve him more in the decision-making process—to treat him less like a child and more like a teammate.

When an issue comes up, it's more important than ever that I take time to listen to his ideas and understand both his viewpoint and his needs, as well as to explain mine. Then we try to come up with a solution together that will be good for both of us, as well as for anyone else involved.

When I fall into my old habit of trying to tell him what to do without considering his side, he feels squelched, pulls away, and misses a learning opportunity—and I lose his full cooperation. But when I remember to consult rather than give orders, things go well, he takes another step toward learning to make wise, responsible, loving decisions, and our bonds of love and mutual respect are strengthened.

PETRA LAILA IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN CANADA. ✎

HIGH WIRE ACT

Making the transition from childhood to adulthood can be like walking a tightrope, and teens need someone there, a parent or other strong role model, to help them find their footing and steady them as they cross over.

When my children reached their teens, I tried to guide them through the decision-making process, but then I'd have them make their own decisions. They'd often try to get me or their mother to make the decision for them, so they wouldn't have to take the blame if things went wrong, but I would tell them, "Don't ask me. You know what's right and wrong. What do *you* think you should do?" Afterwards they were usually glad that we made them decide, because they knew that was the way it was supposed to be and it helped them feel trusted and respected, which is a very important thing at that age.

—David Brandt Berg





1 CORINTHIANS 13 FOR TODAY

ADAPTED FROM MARIA FONTAINE BY JOSIE CLARK

JESUS GAVE US the key to happiness and harmony when He said, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). What exactly does that mean, in practical, everyday terms? One of the best explanations ever given is found in the Bible’s “love chapter,” 1 Corinthians 13. Times and terms have changed, but the underlying principles are as true as ever. Here’s how the apostle Paul might have put it if he were writing to us today.



1. Though I can speak five languages and talk intelligently on dozens of subjects, if I don’t have enough love to keep from gossiping or putting down others, I’m not just making so much useless noise, I’m being downright destructive.

2. And though I read the Bible regularly and even know parts of it by heart, and though I pray daily and have a lot of faith and other spiritual gifts, if I don’t have enough love to sometimes sacrifice some of my personal desires for others’ sakes, then all of my “spirituality” amounts to nothing.

3. And though I work two jobs to provide for my family, and though I give to charity and volunteer for every community project that comes up, if I don’t show love and kindness to those I live and work with, all my hard work and self-sacrifice are worthless.



4. Love has a long, hard, frustrating day at the office, yet doesn’t get snappy and short tempered. Love is happy for the other guy when he gets all the breaks. Love doesn’t have to drive the flashiest car, live in the biggest house, or have all the latest gadgets. Love doesn’t always have to be the boss or have the last word.

5. Love isn’t rude or crude, isn’t selfish, and doesn’t gripe or pressure others to get what it wants. Love is too busy being concerned about the needs of others to spend much time worrying about its own. Love doesn’t freak out when things don’t go its way. Love is quick to believe the best about people and slow to believe the rest.



6. Love hates to hear gossip and instead wants only to talk about others’ good qualities and the good that they’ve done. Love knows that what it listens to, watches, or reads will affect its attitudes and actions and thereby have an effect on others, so it’s careful about how it spends its time.

7. Love is flexible, takes things in stride, and can handle whatever comes its way. Love is always ready to give others the benefit of the doubt and looks for the best in them. Love wants to see others reach their full potential and does all it can to make that happen. Love never runs out of patience, even with those who are slow to get with the program or do their share. Love doesn’t keep looking at its watch when others are talking.



8. Love never fails. I fail others, and others can fail me. We all can be mistaken, misguided, or confused at times. Our words and deeds often fall short, and our bright ideas don’t always play out the way we want or expect them to.

9. We're frail, fallible, and often foolish, and our understanding of the world we live in, not to mention the world to come, is only partial at best.

10. But when God's Spirit of love lives in us, that changes everything.

11. We're really just children when it comes to practicing real love, but God can help us outgrow our childish ways.



12. Without Him we're clueless when it comes to love and the other things that matter most in life, but when we live in His kingdom—the kingdom of Heaven that Jesus said is even now within us—we can see things as He does, get our priorities straight, pull out the stops, and live and love to the full.

13. There are lots of nice things in life and lots of good things, but none are as good or as important as love! ✨



Love Power

There is no difficulty that enough love will not conquer, no disease that enough love will not heal. No door that enough love will not open, no gulf that enough love will not bridge. No wall that enough love will not throw down, no sin that enough love will not redeem. It makes no difference how deeply seated may be the trouble, how hopeless the outlook, how muddled the tangle, how great the mistake. Sufficient love will dissolve it all.

—Emmet Fox

Meet the Man

If you haven't yet met the Man of Love who has power to forgive the past, transform the present, brighten the future, and grant heavenly happiness forever, you can by sincerely praying the following prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank You for dying for me so I can have eternal life. Please forgive me for every wrong and unloving thing I have ever done. Please come into my heart, give me Your gift of eternal life, and help me to know Your love and peace. Thank You for hearing and answering this prayer and for being with me always, from this moment on. Amen.



ENDTIME INSIGHTS

The Spitting Image of the Antichrist

BY SCOTT MACGREGOR

FROM TIME TO TIME, this column on Endtime events revisits the subject of the “image of the Beast.” Recently I was looking at a photo of a gold-plated colossus of a recently deceased dictator, and it got me thinking. It seems dictators really like having giant statues of themselves erected, and it looks like the worst tyrant the world will ever know is going to follow in the tradition of his predecessors. That tyrant, of course, would be the Antichrist, whom the apostle John, in the Bible’s final book, Revelation, called “the Beast.” According to John, a character called the “False Prophet,” one of the Beast’s chief accomplices, “deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the Beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the Beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.”¹

This “image of the Beast” is generally believed to be the same thing that Daniel, in the book of the Bible that bears his name, several times called the “abomination.” “He will set up an abomination that causes desolation.”² “They shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.”³ “The daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up.”⁴

Jesus also spoke of the abomination, and in dire terms. “When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand) ... then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”⁵

What exactly is this abomination of desolation? An abomination is a hated thing, and it’s obvious why plenty of people will have plenty of reason to hate this one. According to John, it will cause the death of anyone who doesn’t worship

it. "He [the False Prophet] was granted power to give breath to the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the Beast to be killed."⁶

I have been impressed lately with how the book of Revelation relates a vision, not a prophecy. John saw it all. Some of the book is the record of conversations he had with different characters in the vision, but it largely describes what he saw during that amazing revelatory vision nearly 2,000 years ago on the little Aegean island of Patmos. Prophecies are often more enigmatic than visions. The prophet Daniel was only told about the thing that he (and later Jesus) called the abomination of desolation. Daniel had a number of visions that are described in detail in the Bible, but the passages that refer to the abomination were messages given to him in verbal form by spiritual envoys. In contrast, John actually saw the character who he called the False Prophet erect this "image of the Beast" and then cause it to have life. The image was animated and it spoke.

I don't know if you would have seen on BBC some time ago a news item regarding a Japanese robotics scientist who has created an android in his own likeness. The android "breathes" and talks and even has a range of facial movements. The scientist, Hiroshi Ishiguro, envisions it as an alter ego of sorts, as well as the telephone of the future. The scientist could be in one place and talk through the android in another, and it would almost be like the scientist was there in person. Ishiguro envisions business meetings where androids and humans sit down together and hammer out deals. "Sometimes it's easy to forget that he's not human," Ishiguro says. (See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_6590000/newsid_6592200/6592251.stm?bw=nbandmp=rm.)

Exactly what form the image of the Beast will take is still speculation, but looking at that android that is the spitting image of its creator brought home to me just how close humanity is to being able to build an image of the Beast that breathes and talks and acts just like the Antichrist it represents. ☞

OUTLOOK AND UPLOOK

After the darkest night in world history, we are going to have the brightest dawn. The fast-approaching night is going to be the nightmare of the Great Tribulation,⁷ and the day, the coming of Christ. Things have got to get worse before they can get better, but in spite of the horrors of the growing darkness of this world, we know that it's all going to work out right in the end. The darkest hour is just before dawn. The faster things get worse, the sooner they're going to get better. The outlook for this poor world could hardly be any darker, but the "uplook" could hardly be any brighter or more glorious, so keep looking up!

—David Brandt Berg

⁷the three-and-a-half-year period before Jesus returns

¹Revelation 13:14

²Daniel 9:27 NIV

³Daniel 11:31

⁴Daniel 12:11

⁵Matthew 24:15,21

⁶Revelation 13:15

LOVE IS LIKE THAT



“The course of true love never did run smooth.”—William Shakespeare

“Love is everything it’s cracked up to be. It really is worth fighting for, being brave for, risking everything for.”—Erica Jong

“Love is an act of endless forgiveness, a tender look which becomes a habit.”—Peter Ustinov

“You come to love not by finding the perfect person, but by seeing an imperfect person perfectly.”—Sam Keen

“Love at first sight is easy to understand; it’s when two people have been looking at each other for a lifetime that it becomes a miracle.”—Amy Bloom

“All the best things in life come packaged [with] a ribbon of risk. You untie the gift, you assume the risk, and equally, the joy. Parenthood is like that.

Marriage is like that. Friendship is like that. In order to experience life in the full sense, you expose yourself to [continual] vulnerability.”—Kristin Armstrong

“Love is like a precious plant. You can’t just accept it and leave it in the cupboard or just think it’s going to get on by itself. You’ve got to keep watering it. You’ve got to really look after it and nurture it.”—John Lennon

“We mistakenly assume that if our partners love us they will react and behave in certain ways—the [same] ways we react and behave when we love someone.”—John Gray

“It’s not love that blinds, but self-love.”—Voltaire

“Relationships of all kinds are like sand held in your hand. Held loosely, with an open hand, the sand remains where it is.

The minute you close your hand and squeeze tightly to hold on, the sand trickles through your fingers. You may hold onto some of it, but most will be spilled. A relationship is like that. Held loosely, with respect and freedom for the other person, it is likely to remain intact. But hold too tightly, too possessively, and the relationship slips away and is lost.”—Kaleel Jamison

“You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working; and just so, you learn to love by loving. All those who think to learn in any other way deceive themselves.”—Saint Francis de Sales

“Love is like a Rubik’s Cube: There are countless numbers of wrong twists and turns, but when you get it right, it looks perfect no matter what way you look at it.”—Brian Cramer ✂

reboot

A Spiritual Exercise



IT'S A TYPICAL BUSY DAY, filled with the usual responsibilities at home and work, but then more than the usual number of unexpected things come up. You manage to keep going, but notice that you're running slower, losing focus, and feeling overwhelmed.

What's one of the first things most people try when their computer starts running slower or having other problems? They save their work and reboot their computer, which clears the computer's cluttered memory. Often that is exactly what was needed to get the computer working efficiently again.

When you see that it's taking you longer than it should to complete the task at hand, it may seem like a waste of precious time to stop long enough to clear your mind and settle your spirit, but you'll probably waste more time and energy in the long run if you don't. You would be like the person whose computer is running slow or acting up, but who doesn't want to take the time to clear the computer's overloaded memory by rebooting.

Here are a few things that you can do to "reboot" yourself, all of which involve stepping back from your work for a few minutes: Take a short walk in the fresh air. Take a few deep breaths to clear your lungs. Stretch. Do some light exercises to get your heart rate up a little. Look out the window at God's creation. Count your blessings. Enjoy a cup of tea. Take a short nap.

Before you go back to work, ask Jesus to put each of the tasks still ahead of you in perspective. Reassess your priorities and adjust your work plan accordingly. ✞

A PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Jesus, You said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Right now I'm worn out and weary, so here I am, coming to You. Please give me that rest of spirit You promised. Take my mind off of my work and problems for the next few minutes, and help me relax.

Thank You for never being too busy for me. Any time of the day or night, I can stop and direct my thoughts toward You, and You always know just what I need. I feel such peace in Your presence. When I get so stressed that every obstacle seems like a mountain, You help me put things in perspective and the mountains melt away. When I'm confused or frustrated, You bring things into focus. Just a few minutes with You changes everything. I love You, Jesus!

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FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

Talk to Me

Are you feeling isolated? Angry? Hurt? Frustrated? Misunderstood? Tell Me about it. You don't have to keep it all bottled up inside. I am your best friend, and you can confide in Me. I am your strong shoulder to lean on when times are tough or people are being difficult. Come to Me and tell Me your thoughts, and I will guide you through those trying times.

Often just talking about things is the best way to sort them out, and if you don't feel you can talk with anyone else about what you're going through, you can always talk to Me. I will help you make sense of what you're feeling. In some cases I will help you to see things more realistically, and that will be enough. In others, I will give you ideas of how to go about resolving the problem.

It's tough to be objective about your emotions, as they can be overpowering. But if you'll come to Me and talk things out with Me, I can help you to live above those feelings and make good choices. That is the surest way to true success and happiness.

