
Relationships

There are moments each one of us would probably like to forget. Perhaps they were the times we hurt someone or someone hurt us. Those are the pains that cut each of us deeply, and the ordeal may have left our heart still in need of healing. The anguish still residing there causes our heart to feel heavy-laden. We are burdened by our inability to receive and perceive the love of another. We suffer because to regain that relationship or friendship takes so much emotional exertion.

Have you ever just stopped talking to a friend of yours? Something must have gone wrong for you to take such drastic action. Was there mistrust? Jealousy? Resentment? Was it perhaps that you expected too much of the person, and he did not live up to your expectations? Whether or not the person knew what your hopes were for him, although he may have been hurt by the ultimate consequence of your action, it is almost certain that *he* was not hurt because he did not measure up to your ideal. Yet by taking a judgmental attitude, you surely inflicted pain upon yourself. And he felt the result.

All of us have acquaintances. Any relationship which you have at this present moment can be deepened and developed into a full-fledged friendship. But if it is not well-cared for, it can be broken just as easily. What happens then? Is it possible to heal a relationship that for some reason has become impaired? Yes. And to be a fully functioning human being, that is a process of restoration imperative for spiritual growth.

However, if instead you make the conscious or unconscious decision *not* to restore a relationship which has dissolved, your conscience may speak to you countless times a day. You might have an uneasy and disquieting feeling that just won't go away. You can't feel whole, but a gnawing sense of emptiness drains you emotionally and spiritually.

John Donne wrote, "No man is an island, entire of itself..." Perhaps he wrote that profound statement after observing the people of his time. He may have meant it only for his age. But from my own experience, I perceive it much more as a God-inspired soliloquy meant for all ages and all times. The truth of his statement is no less evident today. Billions of people-islands exist side by side, many struggling to discover how to live and especially how to live with one another. I am saddened by the fact that many people no longer seem to regard John Donne's classic comment as having value or even being valid.

Yet I perceive that all human beings, whether we realize it or not or even dare admit it, are looking for direction, looking to find a harmony

with the Almighty. Even if people cannot hear their own voices, something within them is crying out to discover the pattern that would fit them. They keep searching to find role models. Perhaps like no other time in history, this era has awakened the emergence of "who am I" questions from all age groups. The search for identity and the need to be someone seems to drift in and out of the minds of many human beings, at the same time a "don't touch me" attitude is cast from their hearts. Even if it is a subconscious desire, people want to escape the aimlessness they feel, and find an answer to the impending question of the purpose of life. But at the same time, they may feel tremendous fear and anxiety, not knowing how to discover the right solution.

Father's perception is that the key relationship in anyone's life is the parent/child relationship. I feel it is tragic that in many families this relationship is disintegrating and often no longer exists. Not only have parents sought divorce, but some children and parents have also "divorced," mutually deciding to isolate themselves from one another. Can we become true human beings if we cease to relate to God as our parent or if we refuse to be parental toward one another?

Person-to-person communication has become somewhat of a lost art. Yet it is only by relating to people that true solutions to problems of the heart can be discovered and then implemented. The process of learning about people, caring for them, and developing bonds with them will reveal more answers than any of us can find by pursuing knowledge in institutions, or grabbing some momentary happiness.

There was a basic rebellion that took place in the Garden of Eden. That quality of defiance has been inherited by each human being. It is embedded within us and because it is such a block to true humanness, each of us must seek to resolve and overcome it.

Unificationism, like many religious ideologies, holds the belief that Satan was involved in the fall of man and since that time has continued his rule over this world. And as we examine certain results of the fall, we can perceive it was then that hatred, animosity, and resentment entered the human heart. They became the emotions which our first ancestors bequeathed to us rather than those such as generosity, respect, compassion, love, and concern which we now must go through great strains to develop.

From that action, people have found it hard to trust one another. Human beings not only became separated from God, but also from one another. And as a result, with suspicious minds, people inflicted emotional harm on others and also became more isolated from one another.

But human relationships *can* be restored. If we work on bridging the gap by being honest with others and especially with ourselves, we will encounter quite a new and unexpected experience. So many people walk by each other, never touching, seldom confronting or sharing the emotions they have buried inside. Clouded by an inherent mistrust of another's motivation, it has been impossible for us to acquire what he had to offer. This is because Satan has continued to whisper to us that other people are not to be trusted. He is the manipulator and we are still his puppets.

When a boss acts like a father to his employees by taking care of them, showing personal interest in their lives and the lives of their families, the people naturally look up to and honor him almost like a parent. In fact, the entire business can relate like a family. Yet all too often people today come to hate those they work with. When the clock indicates the end of their workday, they run out the door to escape to other people and other things that they hope will fill the emptiness they feel. If love governed relationships at the workplace, even the world around them would look different to those employees.

God should be brought into all facets of life. But most of the time, He is excluded and we feel as if we live our lives by ourselves. It makes us afraid to establish relationships. And if by some miracle we do, yet they then become severed, we are even more terrified of reaching out again. When a person rebukes us, we hurt. And we may even retaliate. Yet we continue to reapply pressure to our wounds even more when we retract our hands and our hearts from embracing someone who also needs a spiritual touch.

Humanity today has never experienced a total cooperation or a unification enabling people to demolish all the barriers and simply love one another. There are myriads of beautiful people in this world, however so many live mostly for themselves. They don't share themselves with others; it is fear which holds them back. We have forgotten that human relationships and friendships are primary and necessary; they are the jewels we should want to procure, for within them can be felt the workings and presence of God.

The fall of man left in its wake a world full of raw diamonds—billions of battered human beings. According to the view stated in the Principle, the process of restoration, or salvation, allows us to become brilliant gems, polished and shiny. Everyone we meet, live, or work with could be considered a grinding stone, able to etch into our fallen character new atti-

tudes and new perspectives on life. Others have within them the power to teach us the importance of being a loving individual. It all depends upon us. How do we actually view each other?

In the providence of restoration, the Messiah's mission is to unite all mankind and the universe with God. Everything was distorted through the fall, but God has commissioned the Messiah to cleanse and purify all that has been stained through our constant cooperation with Satan. That is why our Father is seeking to re-create the basic fiber of all relationships, changing the texture from satanic to divine. And Father is concerned that every person begin by rebuilding his own personal relationship to God.

One very human "nature" is the desire to gain benefit. Basically, man wants to attain success wherever he goes and whatever he does. What do we want to gain from being a Unificationist? It is natural that we want to profit in some way, too. We follow Father because we have noticed that there is something we can inherit from him. We see that we can gain great insight and knowledge about God and about love. And moreover we see that True Parents teach us how to attain perfection.

We can see that the way to accomplish that is to center upon the truth, listen to the Messiah's instruction, and then carry it out. What can motivate us? Where is the force, that enticing "something" that pulls us into that direction? What is the magnet? For a magnet to work there must be two poles. Man has within himself an original mind which responds to a very charismatic element—the spirit of God. The stronger the magnet is, the closer we come, and the shorter the time necessary for unification.

It is impossible to excel in university if all you have is grammar school material. It is the same with relationships. Our intellect can be likened to grammar school, while the heart is more like university. It is very hard to put into words what can transpire in the heart. It is very hard to explain in words what an awareness of God is all about. But there is a textbook of love from which True Parents teach us. And they are the ones who show us that the restoration of our relationship with God can make us vibrant and alive.

If we really want to become lords over creation, we must be able to recognize the inner essence of all things in the universe, especially mankind. Then we must be able to cope with those entities, understand them,

and deal with them in a responsible way. We should treasure and value them. And we need to concentrate on constructing relationships of substance and quality.

We each relate with people every day. Some of these relationships are deep, while some are more on a superficial level. But how do they make us feel? Some people look down their noses at others, but what does it profit a man to think badly of another individual? It does neither person any good. In fact, the person who does this may consequently damage his view of life and even himself. We should instead do our best to look up to others. The other person may be even more lonely than you. And he may just need a kind word. Why not give it to him.

When you relate to a person, think good things about him and talk about meaningful things with him. Talking negatively about him or looking down at him will only hurt you—perhaps causing guilt or arrogance. Yet when you increase his value, your own value also escalates. You feel better about yourself and life in general. Seeing the good—that sparkle of God—in another is using wisdom in developing and cultivating relationships.

When we make some mistake, one consequence could be that we feel somewhat distant from God. We may feel like a terrible sinner, heavily burdened, and greatly unworthy to approach Him. The tragic mistake Adam and Eve made caused their separation from God. But our sins need not keep us from God. Although it is not easy to do, the trick is to throw yourself at His feet and not give up until you receive forgiveness—until the relationship with Him is restored.

If you are an employer or director and you can find it within your heart to forgive your employee for mistakes he has made, you can be sure that he will become a better employee—much more dedicated and loyal.

But if you disregard or destroy him with your words, he may come to hate you and build up resentment and a grudge. No matter what our work and no matter what our position, we should use wisdom in relating to both God and people.

You have to learn how to respect and trust people on all levels. By living together with people as well as through observing human behavior, you can exchange your former experience with a new one. Then all the disappointments, all the pain of segregation or independence will simply fade

away. New relationships of dependency built on love and respect will begin to form. This is a process which takes time. But for all the pain that seizes and freezes your heart when you just *consider* the difficulties, do your best to go beyond the scenarios and think seriously about restoring those relationships. At one time they brought you pleasure and delighted your heart. Why lose that part of yourself? Were you the one who wanted this "divorce" from your friend, or was it mutually agreeable? If the other person initiated the procedure, did you ever think about contesting it? Or do you just look at it as a trial separation? Do you find tears well up in your eyes when you think of that person? Ask him if he is willing to forgive and forget—to restore. And then try to reveal again that unique part of yourself he or she had been able to coax out of hiding.

If you want to be loved by people, you surely also want to be loved by God. You want to be divine and let the love of God shine through you. If you really want to make an impression upon your spouse or another person, it is best to be natural rather than mysterious and aloof.

Perhaps you are a person who follows the Principle in a very strict manner and you expect your spouse to do the same. But your absolutism won't be well received unless you involve your heart. The law remains the law, but can spiritually kill people if the right amount of heart is not mixed with it. This point is just as important to consider when building new relationships as it is when restoring old ones.

Since the fall, human beings were separated from one another, and from that time mistrust and animosity began to filter into interpersonal relationships. We have to clear our path of such negative emotions and instead replace them with positive ones. We each must work to repair and restore our relationships. That naturally involves repairing broken trusts and promises. But it also is necessary to do something to heal another's heart. We are not just concerned with sin, with transgressions and indebtedness. We naturally must also be concerned with forgiveness and mending. Forgiveness is the spiritual salve that can heal the abrasions caused by judgment.

If you are introverted and withdrawn during your life on earth, you may be miserable in spirit world. Therefore, this is the time and place to change yourself. Discover what is wrong with your perception of yourself and others. Then do something about it. Does anyone know you well? How many people do you know intimately? It is to your advantage to restore any

relationships which have broken, as well as build new ones. When you live in the spirit world, they will be your treasures and can serve to comfort you. Perhaps you were a neglected child or did not receive enough love from your family and friends. Perhaps you are shy and you don't relate well with others. If that is the case, it may be hard to break out of such a prison, but it can be done. Start by appreciating the qualities you find in your brothers and sisters. Begin to see the good in everybody. Look for the good at all times, not the negative. There is plenty of the negative in the world; we don't really have to look for it. But the best way to feel heaven is to seek within others those elements of goodness often not apparent from only a first glance. When you get married, look for all that is favorable in your spouse, and overlook the qualities that you deem undesirable. If you concentrate on drawing out the positive, his or her negative points will fade from your eyes. Your eyes will then slowly lose some of their sharpness and begin to soften.

Part of the immense task of the restoration providence is restoring interhuman relationships. Why do the differences between people cause so many frictions and tensions? If we had not been separated from God through the action of the fall, such problems would not exist. Yet during this time of restoration, we are playing out the roles of the people in history who made the original mistakes. Unless we are willing to cleanse those sins and purify ourselves, how will the Kingdom of Heaven be built? We have to overcome and change our view of God, of life—of everything.

If a person lives only for himself, he could die internally. Both thought and action activate energy. And once we are energized, we can accomplish our task. Yet even when a person has give and take with the contents of a book, he definitely experiences something and potentially can come to life! But what about relating with other people? We can surely come to life through our interhuman relationships. Yet it is up to each individual whether he will embark on a treasure hunt to discover the hidden qualities, or just communicate with the "window" of that person—those elements seen only on the surface. If you breathe on glass, your breath will form a vapor which will soon disappear. It is the same when you communicate with a person. If you relate about the superficial, you will make an impression but it may soon dissipate. You create a much more lasting effect if you find the key which unlocks the door of someone's heart and then use it to enter that territory.

All of us feel a need for give and take. But in order to make a relationship we need an object. Most of us unconsciously do this when we watch television or read. These diversions present the opportunity to have give

and take with many, many situations—some which satisfy our fantasy, and some which placate our loneliness. It is a question of whether we will choose the "real McCoy" or a substitute. We can confront others by going outside of our own world, and deciding to live and breathe "real life." Yet we *could* choose the more abstract or symbolic confrontations we see on television or in movies. Those don't require an active participation and are certainly easier, but definitely not as rewarding as episodes of real life.

Out of fear, people may become stuck in front of a television screen. But if they could just dissolve that fear, they would experience something so special in terms of spiritual and emotional growth. In a way, everybody *does* communicate already. We watch television because we are looking for some interaction. We tune in what we like—a war story, a love story, a documentary about the land of our dreams. We use the selective process to entertain and satisfy ourselves. Let's face it—we all want to be happy and fulfilled. Yet if we watch a comedy when we are all alone, we may find something funny and laugh, but somehow our voice echoes our loneliness when we have no one to share our joy. Wouldn't it be better to be a part of the studio audience and watch the comedian in person? We would relate to the comedian in a much different way. But it would be even better if we could put ourselves in *real* life situations rather than just look at others who make believe. But instead, we too often only pretend and live life in our mind. That is where we are comfortable playing the hero or heroine of the story. It is fear that holds us back from experiencing life.

So many people today accept a substitute for what could be a beautiful relationship of love or friendship. But that oppressive concept of fear just stifles our ability to make a relationship or to restore one that has disintegrated. We may feel no one would like us. But we are all children of God. Surely there are many "somebods" in this world who would like us. We only need to discover who and where they are.

Any behavior a person exhibits fundamentally depends upon his relationship with God. It has been that way throughout history. The relationships Unificationists develop within our church community somewhat depend upon the intensity and depth of our connection to God through True Parents. Restoration is the process of restoring all relationships. And the first relationship which has to be restored is the one we have with God.

If you can successfully look at people with the eyes of God rather than your own, everything about them will look different. You will even

view yourself in a different light. If you meet a person with a problem, that person will have a much better chance to be healed and taken care of by you if you use your parental heart, rather than your eyeglasses of criticism. But if you only notice a person's problems and consequently yourself display arrogant or self-centered behavior, your view of him would naturally be clouded. You may rationalize that he is not normal and probably refuse to have anything to do with him. But if you have a parental heart, you will want to take care of everyone. Rather than label another based on our own false perspective, we need to risk loving and being ourselves.

To make new friends and keep the old ones takes courage. We need the quality of resiliency as we engage in restoring relationships. And if we invite God to partake in all our relationships and friendships, we will bounce back, even when we are hurt.

Anyone who just hangs on and inwardly resigns himself not to fight the spiritual battle of overcoming "self" can easily succumb to Satan's ploys. What good does it do to worry about the past? We don't need to dwell on it, nor do we need to complain about it. Simply forget it. Forget the bad things you did. And especially forget those good things you did in the past. Figure today is that "first day of the rest of your life" and from this point, work for the good of others.

Of course it is impossible to forget about your past totally and erase all memories. The people with whom you lived and communicated in the past are part of your life, whether you like them or not. If there are still discrepancies with people from your past, do not just write off those individuals. Clear up the problems. Our works will follow us. Do good. Smile often. Lift up people. Give of yourself. And restore any relationships which were shattered—no matter what the reason.

How much richer and deeper our lives would be if we could regard each other as we do God and True Parents. In my opinion, coldness of heart is satanic. The individualistic way of life has turned into something very detrimental to the development of personality. Instead of banding together, people too often become separatists, widening the gap by misusing their freedom and all their blessings. Therefore in restoring that, we need to become "anti-individualistic." The Principle shows us that human beings need one another. And the voice in our heart echoes that refrain. Even though sometimes we decide to shut off that voice, deep within we know that we actually need to develop *interdependency*, not nurture our *independence*.

Rather than judge or criticize the person you want to help, be a good example to him. Your behavior could cause him to realize some things on his own. It may take a little longer, but by being exemplary, your actions will reflect the standard you would like to see develop in that person. A good example is always the greatest influence.

We should try to feel as God does about the person. Even though the individual does not live according to the law and still makes mistakes, God has compassion for him. That individual suffers under the burden of his own discrepancies and deficiencies. And isn't that enough? He may want to change and be on the road to doing so, but if you put another knife in his wound, he will suffer even more. Have compassion and help him instead. In the long run, that kind of "relating" is best.

Some people live in a dream world, very far from reality. But the spiritual hermits of this world may despise almost everything about life and in the end, may even come to hate themselves. That is a very painful and wholly unnecessary kind of lifestyle to adopt. We have to relate more, not just through trying to enforce our own way of thinking and concepts upon others. At least temporarily we need to try to put what we know behind us, become exposed to everybody else, and then listen. Not just with our ears, but also with our heart!

People who segregate themselves exhibit the evidence that they have not received enough love. Yet people who receive love from others generally do not withdraw. A family is a source of love—whether it is your immediate family, those at work, at church, school, and so forth. It is not the will of God for us to decide to abandon others. Every person in your world can be a channel of God's love. Yet if you fail to recognize that, you may drift away from others but even turn around to criticize and accuse them for abandoning *you!* You will find it easy to condemn anybody and anything, and in the process, look for all kinds of answers and systems to defend the position you take. But I don't think that you will find they hold much weight. It is when we go away from ourselves and back into circulation that we can realize our problems *do* have solutions.

It is hard to understand people when you are not involved with them. The only way to solve the problem of not receiving love is to go back to the core of that love and then overcome the obstacles that made you withdraw in the first place. Any relationship which is out of balance will be healed through love. You do not have to speak much, but whatever you say must be genuine and from your heart.

We must invite God to live with us. He is not just in your heart or my heart, but everywhere in human society. Restoration is the process to unite all entities in the universe so that they may experience the energy and love that comes from God, and ultimately fulfill their purpose. We have never really loved each other fully. There are so many people-jewels in this world, but far too many focus mostly on themselves.

Yet interhuman relationships are of the greatest significance. It is within them that part of the essence of God can be sensed and experienced. If we Unificationists practice and find that through the Principle we can build solid relationships and restore any which dissolved, we can encourage the rest of humanity that it is possible for them to do the same.

There is an old adage about not judging a book by its cover. A good artist can use his talent and flair to design a book cover which can make the book incredibly appealing and almost irresistible. You may be so attracted to the cover that you feel you *must* read it. But once you venture inside, you might find the material extraordinarily dry. You could be so disappointed that you toss the book on the side without finishing it. On the other hand, there are books whose covers do not have much eye appeal yet which are packed with pearls of wisdom. One book in particular comes to mind. Its cover design does not look very exciting—it is often a solid color with an imprint of a few gold letters. Yet that book—the Bible—is filled with so much knowledge and insight, it is still a bestseller even today.

Can you really judge a book by its cover? What about a person? What do you see when you look at Father? Just an Oriental man? We may see something more, noticing the many gestures he makes when he speaks. He exudes enthusiasm which even gives *us* energy. When his eyes crinkle at the corners from his smile, he looks like a wonderful grandpa. Yet sometimes it looks like the wisdom of the ages is engraved in the lines of his face and eyes. There is so much inside. One glance does not tell it all.

Even if you attempt to judge a person by his appearance, you still cannot claim to know him. Who can tell what goes on in that person's heart or mind. Scratching the surface through small talk is not sufficient; it can never allow us to figure out the main elements which comprise a person. About seventy-five percent of every person is hidden, but there are many reasons for this. Fear of being hurt is perhaps the biggest and most universal one. Some people are so twisted emotionally, there is almost nothing that will open them up. They even have problems to reveal themselves to God. Everything stays bottled up inside. Such a person is not free enough or strong enough not to care what other people may think of him. He looks for ap-

proval in every person. But unfortunately, he will continue to be disappointed if he does that.

It is absolutely certain that we each have our vulnerabilities and weak points. For the most part, we reveal only a small slice of our inner selves. We have a misunderstanding of perfection, usually wanting to *do* everything perfectly and *say* everything perfectly, not understanding that perfection actually involves how "perfectly" we love. We don't want our mask to slip and reveal anything more than what we want others to see.

Through this overpowering desire to be perfect, we have forgotten how to show our humanness in front of each other. Some relationships and friendships we develop within our movement suffer because of that. We find it hard to connect and harmonize because we fail to open up to one another. We erect walls with self-defense mechanisms and often become so good at it, we leave only a little gap open for others to peer in. We lock up our main valuables inside. We have too much fear that others will discover them. But when we neglect that possibility, we also close off the option of being moved in our hearts through another's love.

It is only when we exercise the freedom to be ourselves and allow an inner, divine and godly security to penetrate our hearts, that we are able to open ourselves the way we secretly long to do. Of course there are certain secret chambers in every person which are not easily opened up. Every person possesses his own intimate zones. And we each *should* have such internal spheres. There is nothing wrong with holding back some things about ourselves. It should not be done out of malice with the intent to deprive, but rather to allow our mate to continually discover and open new doors to our personality. We change every day, so what we keep inside may not always be the same. Yet if we hold some of our expressions and feelings in reserve, we can keep the spark of interest and excitement alive in our marriage. But we must understand the ratio of what to hold back and what to reveal. Never hold back seventy-five percent and offer to share a mere twenty-five percent. If you make it the other way around, your relationship will be rich and deep.

But that kind of sharing is not necessarily only for our mate. We can do the same with many more of our close relationships. To open up and participate in helping each other in such a way that reveals our veiled, but beautiful heart, is hard. Yet once the top of that treasure chest is opened, a person can discover your treasure of gold and silver and diamonds. Perhaps you feel that what is inside of you is too impure to share. Perhaps you regard your heart to be an immovable stone. But you yourself know that you buried deepest that which you treasure the most.

Your love may be sewn into the bottom recesses of your heart, but nev-

ertheless it *is* there. Some people today display their most valuable treasures in public. People kiss and embrace with great passion in front of others. Yet our deeper thoughts and feelings are what we should treasure most and share only with our partner.

Isn't it a tragedy? Everybody has a heart full of gold, full of valuable jewels, and yet far too many of us keep the door locked. Some people even throw away the key, or forget the number of the combination lock that opens the safe. They never even think of opening it up. If someone asks what is in their safe, they may respond, "Safe? Oh yes, now I remember. That's right. I *do* have a safe somewhere. But I haven't looked inside for years. And I certainly don't want *you* to look either!"

Every person has treasures buried inside himself which he finds hard to display. That is perhaps the best reason not to underestimate people. We tend to devalue people because we only look at their appearance; we only see them at face value. But if you have a one thousand dollar bill which is so dirty that you can barely make out the numbers or design, the fact remains that it is *still* a one thousand dollar bill!

The question arises *why* we hide so much of ourselves and why we often avoid making true relationships. Hiding is a result of the sinful act which Adam, Eve, and Lucifer attempted to shield from God. Through that action Lucifer became Satan and because of our blood relationship with him, we have inherited that very undesirable trait. We continue to conceal both our most valuable things and our most dirty things in an effort to protect them. Since the fall of man, everybody went into hiding. Yet we lived side by side and probably suffered in silence. We do not even know the value of the love we have to give, because we have become afraid to lift it out and examine its quality. Therefore, even in the relationship with our spouse, we have to work hard to open ourselves and expose both our problems and our beautiful traits.

Relationships *are* treasures. If we have invariably allowed some of our relationships to deteriorate, we need to reflect upon how much meaning they once held for us. If we become close to God spiritually, we will be better able to appreciate Him and not take His children for granted. And when we reach out to restore those bonds, we will certainly create a harmony not only with our Eternal, but with each other.