



The Life-Changing Magazine

KERYGMA

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MARCH 2018



Do You Have a Forgiving Attitude?

Learn to Forgive Yourself

The Passion of Christ: Who's to Blame?

UNLEASHED!

BREAKING FREE FROM THE SHACKLES OF UNFORGIVENESS

Is Your Life Too Easy?

The Poison of Comparison

PAZ BALAYAN

Let this servant of God prove that forgiving love changes people, no matter what age.

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DO YOU LONG FOR MEANINGFUL SUCCESS IN YOUR CAREER, BUSINESS, AND LEADERSHIP?

"This must-read book tells us that whatever path a person decides to take largely depends on one's resolve."

- *Washington Sycip (1921-2017), Founder, SGV & Co.
1967 Management Man of the Year*

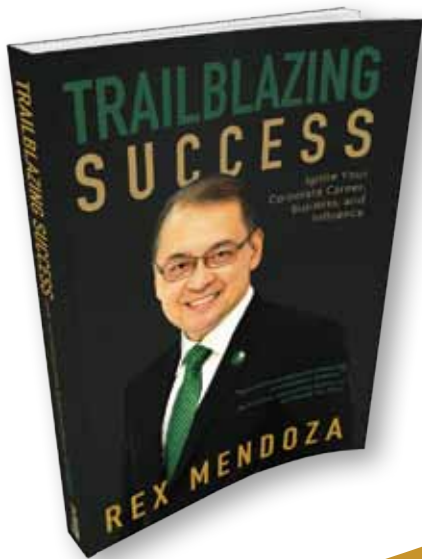
Packed with wisdom and powerful insights, this book will help set you up for success.

Whether you are an employee, executive, entrepreneur, or student, there is a lesson for you to learn. The author is a living testament that you can be all that you set out to be.

From his humble beginnings as an employee and insurance agent, to his rise as CEO of a multinational company, a successful entrepreneur, and a prosperous investor, Rex takes you on his life journey and along the way equips you with the tools you need for your own path to success.

You will also learn leadership lessons that you need as you move from one stage of your career to the next.

Soak in the wealth of insights from this inspiring leader who honors God and is loved by those whose lives he has touched. Follow the best practices that Rex generously shares to catapult you in your career, business, and family life.



Is Your Life Too Easy?

Here's my big question: Is your life too easy? Are you too comfortable? Maybe that's the reason why you've remained stuck. Maybe that's the reason why your dreams have not come true.

Because our faith is not expressed through action.

I'd like to share this passage with you: "My friends, what good is it for one of you to say that you have faith if your actions do not prove it? So it is with faith: if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead" (James 2:14, 17, GNT).

Work hard!

Today, I'd like to write about keep walking.

It's about an old-fashioned idea on working hard.

Oh, believe me. It's a very unpopular topic.

For many people, "work" is a dirty four-letter word.

When people ask me, "Bo, how can I succeed?", and I answer, "Work really hard," I see a glazed look in their eyes. They zone out. I lose them. Because today, people want to hear more glitzy, glossy, and glamorous catchphrases like, "Think Wealth" or "Focus On Your Dreams" or "Change Mindset."

But "hard work"? That's just too old school.

That's why people love it when gurus say, "Don't work hard, work smart." Yes, I agree at working smart 100 percent.

But can I be honest with you?

All my life, I've done both. I work smart and I work hard.

Here's the truth: I have yet to meet a hugely successful person—whether in his family life, or spiritual life, or financial life, or health life—who is not working smart and working hard.

Successful people have fire in their belly and they work twelve hours a day—but because they love what they do—it appears like they're not working.

The boundaries between work and play get blurred.

How did I write more than forty-five bestselling books? Easy. Because when people ride planes, they rest by watching three movies. When I ride planes, I rest by writing a book. Writing and resting are the same to me. Yes, I'm insane.

A lot of people complain that nothing is happening to their lives, that they're trapped forever in their hole of frustration. And they complain that life is unfair because they're still buried in debt. Yet when I ask them what keeps them busy, they tell me they finished the entire ten seasons of *Big Bang Theory* in one week. Or they play Candy Crush Saga for two hours a day. Or check their social media newsfeed every minute.

Hey, I'm all for rest and recreation. If you're sixty years old and reached success, and you're enjoying the harvest season of your life, go for it. Binge on Netflix.

Some people argue with me, "But Bo, I want my three hours of *telenovelas* every day! That's how I destress." Yes, you can do what you want. Six hours, if you want.

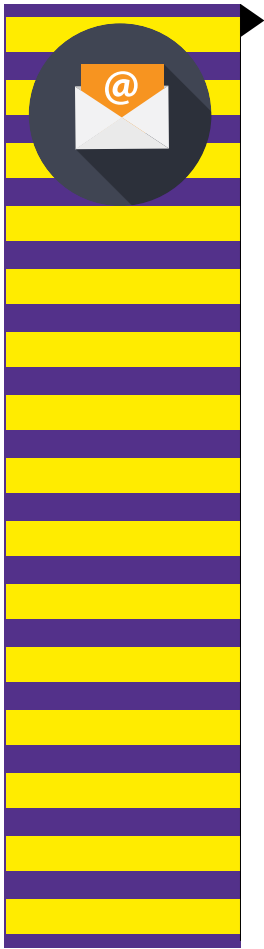
But don't complain with what you've got. 

May your dreams come true,



PS: Are you tired of having money problems? Join me and the TrulyRichClub in Wealth Summit 2018 on March 2 and 3. Learn from the country's best business and investment mentors as they share how to create multiple income streams. Visit www.trulyrichclub.com for more details.





Continue to inspire more people through this magazine and its articles.

Shevilson Villamil Hermosa
www.kerygmfamily.com

It is inspiring to read this kind of magazine. It helps me reflect more about my life.

Jesa Mae Amoroso
www.kerygmfamily.com

Thank you so much, Shepherd's Voice Publications. You are a blessing. Continue to be blessed by blessing other people.

Yvette Lumanta
www.kerygmfamily.com

Kerygma is a very inspiring magazine!

Danielle Doria
www.kerygmfamily.com

God bless your company. I hope that everyone can read this. It is a fantastic way to develop our spiritual life.

Andre Ger
www.kerygmfamily.com

Kerygma shares life-changing content.

James L. Fadriga
www.kerygmfamily.com

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Keeping up with the Joneses” is an expression that made its way into the English language in the early 20th century.

We all know what it means: it's striving to have the expensive things your neighbor has not because you really want or need it but because you just want to match their lifestyle. It came from a cartoon strip of the same title that ran for 26 years about the McGinis family who struggled to stay at par with their neighbor, the Joneses, who remained unseen throughout the life of the cartoon strip.

Keeping up with the Joneses was something I learned to do as a young student in an exclusive girls school where many of my peers hailed from wealthy families. The economic gap was evident in something as basic as our home addresses. I lived in faraway Parañaque (“What?! You mean you pass the toll every day?”) while most of them lived in nearby villages like Greenhills, Corinthians, and Valle.

The gap didn't end there. It extended to the logo on our pencil cases, the tag on our jeans, and the brand of our shoes. You can imagine what a tremendous dent this made on my self-worth as a growing teenager. Coming from a one-income family with six children and having a frugal mom meant that we didn't have much disposable income for the luxuries in life.

Thank God He intervened in my life when I was a young teenager. Growing up in a conservative Catholic, Bible-based community gave me a new standard to keep up with. Yes, God's commands became my new benchmark and distanced me from the



Keeping Up with the Joneses

It was an uphill climb but I've done it

By Rissa Singson Kawpeng

materialistic, worldly standards of wealth and success. But it also gave me a new yardstick as dictated by the group I was now a part of. Belongingness and acceptance became strong motivators for my choices in life. In a way, I was still keeping up with the Joneses, just in another form.

While being in community healed me of many of the hang-ups I acquired in school, it created new ones that I carried with me for decades. I have to credit the Light of Jesus Family, which I joined in 2003, for being instrumental in healing me of my complexes and correcting my wrong images of God and Christianity.

It took years of unlearning and relearning for me to understand that God loves me unconditionally. That there is nothing I can do to earn that love. That He loved me first, even before I did anything to make me worthy.


Today, I'm a year short of half a century and I've reached that place where I can sincerely say that I'm not just contented but I recognize that I am

overwhelmingly blessed.

I no longer have the compulsion to keep up with the Joneses because *I am the Joneses*.

I don't say that arrogantly, setting myself as a standard for others to benchmark. What I mean is that I've learned not to live by others' standards but by the one that God has set uniquely for me.

I only have to keep up with myself.

And I'm sure no one else can do that better than me. 

I know indeed how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need. (Philippians 4:12)

Visit www.rissasingsonkawpeng.com for more of her inspiring articles. E-mail her at justbreatherissa@gmail.com.

about the cover

Maria Paz Jimenez-Balayan is the founder and president of Moward Consultancy that helps enable companies optimize and exploit opportunities by unleashing their growth potential and trustees to a number of organizations. Prior to this, Paz was the vice president and head of Operations Research Division at ABS-CBN Corporation. For the last eighteen years, she assumed varied positions in ABS-CBN until she finally retired on June 30, 2017. She is now engaged in running several businesses and pursuing personal passions in music, parenting, coaching, and ministries, which includes being the emissary of Feast Video ELJCC. She is a loving wife to her husband Judd, and a dedicated mother to Psalmantha, Paulijah, and Piero.



Photos by Ryan Nacario
Makeup by Ara Fernando
Hair by Toni Santos



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daily pause **with** Pope Francis

<p>1</p> <p>"Now I ask you, please, let us have a moment of silence and let each one of us, silently in our hearts, ask ourselves the question: 'Who is Jesus for me?' Silently, each one, answer in your heart."</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>"Love makes us similar, it creates equality, it breaks down walls and eliminates distances. God did this with us."</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>"Christ is not an optional element: He is the 'Living Bread,' the essential nourishment."</p> 
<p>7</p> <p>"Jesus' wealth lies in His being the Son; His unique relationship with the Father is the sovereign prerogative of this Messiah who is poor."</p>	<p>8</p> <p>"Faith is the heart of Mary's whole story: she is the believer, the great believer."</p>	<p>9</p> <p>"Indifference to our neighbor and to God also represents a real temptation for us Christians."</p>
<p>1 3</p> <p>"How greatly I desire that all those places where the Church is present, especially our parishes and our communities, may become islands of mercy in the midst of the sea of indifference."</p>	<p>1 4</p> <p>"If we humbly implore God's grace and accept our own limitations, we will trust in the infinite possibilities which God's love holds out to us."</p>	<p>1 5</p> <p>"We are called to show that the Church is the home of all. Are we capable of communicating the image of such a Church?"</p>
<p>1 9</p> <p><i>"Emotional maturity can't be bought or sold and it is the greatest endowment of the familial genius. It is precisely in the family where we learn to grow in the atmosphere of emotional maturity."</i></p>	<p>2 0</p> <p>"In the poor and outcast we see Christ's face; by loving and helping the poor, we love and serve Christ."</p> 	<p>2 1</p> <p>"Wherever we go, we are called as Christians to proclaim the liberating news that forgiveness for sins committed is possible, that God is greater than our sinfulness, that He freely loves us at all times and that we were made for communion and eternal life."</p>
<p>"All that we have in the world does not satisfy our infinite hunger. We need Jesus, to be with Him, to be nourished at His table, on His words of eternal life!"</p> <p>2 5</p>	<p>2 7</p> <p>"Binding oneself to Him, in a true relationship of faith and love, does not mean being tied down, but being profoundly free, always on the journey."</p>	<p>2 8</p> <p>"May the Virgin Mary help us to always 'go' to Jesus to experience the freedom He offers us, allowing it to cleanse our choices from worldly incrustations and fear."</p>
<p>2 6</p> <p>"Believing in Jesus means making Him the center, the meaning of our life."</p>	<p>2 7</p> <p>"Binding oneself to Him, in a true relationship of faith and love, does not mean being tied down, but being profoundly free, always on the journey."</p>	<p>2 8</p> <p>"May the Virgin Mary help us to always 'go' to Jesus to experience the freedom He offers us, allowing it to cleanse our choices from worldly incrustations and fear."</p>

4

"Communication is a means of expressing the missionary vocation of the entire Church; today the social networks are one way to experience this call to discover the beauty of faith, the beauty of encountering Christ."

5

"May the light we bring to others not be the result of cosmetics or special effects, but rather of our being loving and merciful 'neighbors' to those wounded and left on the side of the road."

6

"When the people of God are converted to His love, they find answers to the questions that history continually raises."

1 0

"Let our communication be a balm which relieves pain and a fine wine which gladdens hearts."



1 1

"Christians are those who let God clothe them with goodness and mercy, with Christ, so as to become, like Christ, servants of God and others."

1 2

"The prayers of the Church on earth establish a communion of mutual service and goodness which reaches up into the sight of God."

1 6

"Charity, love, is sharing with the one we love in all things."

1 7

"It has been said that the only real regret lies in not being a saint (L. Bloy); we could also say that there is only one real kind of poverty: not living as children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ."

1 8

"In Jesus, in His 'flesh'—that is, in His concrete humanity—is all the love of God, which is the Holy Spirit."

2 2

"The Lord asks us to be joyous heralds of this message of mercy and hope!"



2 3

"It is thrilling to experience the joy of spreading this Good News, sharing the treasure entrusted to us, consoling broken hearts and offering hope to our brothers and sisters experiencing darkness."

2 4



"Let us ask the Lord, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to give us a pure heart, free of all hypocrisy."



2 9

"The Eucharist is Jesus Himself who gives Himself entirely to us."

3 0

"But the Gospel also shows us the truest cause of Mary's greatness and her blessedness: the cause is faith."



3 1

"Faith, which is like a seed deep in the heart, blossoms when we let the Father draw us to Jesus, and we 'go to Him' with an open heart."

▶ *More Fun at a Lesser Cost*

IT'S VACATION TIME ONCE AGAIN! Almost everyone is set for the much-awaited summer plans. Along with the excitement is a major concern for travellers: budget. Here are some tips to enjoy the trip without stressing yourselves out every single day:

- 1) Explore and compare.** Do your assignment: research. Find out the hotels/apartelles, dining places, and tour packages within your destination and compare their rates. This will not only help you save money, but will also make you have an efficient journey.
- 2) Prepare for deal-hunting.** Have a clear list of the activities that you really want to do and look for possible promo offerings. Booking flights on a seat sale and having an online hotel reservation usually cut the rates to half. Knowing how to negotiate well is also a helpful skill.
- 3) Bring baon.** Yes! It's not a sin to have packed goods to fill your tummies. If you have a jammed itinerary for a certain day, it is cheaper and more convenient to eat inside the hotel (either for breakfast or dinner) than to walk around the vicinity for a quick meal. This goes for snacks, too!

There you have it! A vacation is meant to give us a break. With these suggestions, make its every second, and every cent, count.

Source: <http://www.investopedia.com/>

TO BE INTERESTING, BE INTERESTED. Thus some relationship experts say. One, if not the best, way to express willingness to know other people more is by being a good listener. It encourages openness and ease which are vital in building relationships. Next time you engage in a conversation, practice the following ways on how to be a more effective listener:

- 1) Focus.** Give your full attention to the speaker. Stay away from possible distractions such as electronic gadgets. Ask for specifics.
- 2) Clarify the details and the speaker's feelings.** Confirm if you heard the story correctly by voicing out your understanding. It assures the speaker that you are following the flow and not just feigning interest. Avoid jumping into conclusion on how he really feels which often result to conflict.
- 3) Observe body language.** Making eye contact, leaning respectfully to the speaker, and nodding your head are some of the nonverbal ways of telling you are all ears to every word the other person is saying.
- 4) Above all, show respect.** Having varied opinions and being excited to butt in are inevitable, but remain respectful. It is not necessary that you agree, but allow the other person to express himself fully. Let the speaker have his "moment."

Source: <http://www.besthealthmag.ca/>

Acing the Art of Listening

Quick Health Tip

Kale

KALE IS A DARK, LEAFY VEGETABLE which is part of the cabbage family. It contains folate that is essential for brain development. It also has an omega-3 fatty acid called alpha-linolenic that lowers cholesterol and prevents heart attack. The lutein and zeaxanthin content of kale guards the body against muscle degeneration and cataracts.

Source: <http://www.webmd.com>

Saints-at-a-Glance

St. Lea

Feast Day: March 22

After the death of St. Lea's husband, she stayed in a Roman monastery and eventually became its Superior. St. Jerome wrote about her, "She exchanged her rich attire for sackcloth, and ceased to command others in order to obey all. She dwelt in a corner with a few bits of furniture; she spent her nights in prayer, and instructed her companions through her example rather than through protests and speeches. And she looked forward to her arrival in heaven in order to receive her recompense for the virtues which she practiced on earth."

Source: <http://www.catholic.org/saints/>



HOW TO DISPOSE OLD AND BROKEN SACRAMENTALS

SACRAMENTALS are defined as anything set apart or blessed by the Church to sanctify or make our lives holy and lead us to the sacraments. These are your brown scapulars, St. Benedict medals, blessed rosary beads, and the like. But what do we do when these accidentally break or wear out over time?

Here's the rule: if it has been blessed by a member of the clergy, then it needs to be treated with due care (cf. Canon 1171).

We are then instructed to dispose old and broken sacramentals in a reverent way as well. All sacramentals can be either burned or buried. This type of disposal returns them to the earth in a dignified way and honors their sacred purpose.

If it's impossible to do either of the ways, you may inquire at your parish office for assistance. The sacramental may be dropped off there and they can take care of it.

Source: <https://aleteia.org/>



► THE SOLAR MALLS IN THE PHILIPPINES

DID YOU KNOW that there are malls in the Philippines that use solar energy? It's good to know that these businesses have considered lowering their carbon footprints by using an alternative form of electricity source, which can help to slow down or even stop the destructive effects of climate change.



So far, Robinson's Mall Iloilo have installed the largest grid-tied photovoltaic system in Iloilo with 2,404 solar panels on the roof. In 2014, SM North Edsa was the world's biggest solar-powered mall. Other malls with solar panels installed on their roofs include SM Mall of Asia, SM Dasmariñas, Robinson's Place Palawan, Ayala's Marquee Mall in Pampanga, and City Mall in Roxas City among others.

In December 2017, SM City Tuguegarao in Cagayan became the second industrial solar project in the area next to St. Paul University Philippines.

If these businesses have taken advantage of the heat of the Philippine sun to help Mother Earth, we might also want to do our part and go solar as well.

Sources: <http://solrenewenergy.com/>
<https://news.mb.com.ph/>



JEREMIAH FOUNDATION: FIVE YEARS OF RESTORATION

By Shellie Javier-Follero
Photos by LOJ Library Ministry

▲
Gratefulness abounds. Delfin Viola (upper right) shares how Jeremiah has been a blessing to him and his wife. Rissa Singson-Kawpeng (upper left) honors God for taking care of Jeremiah. Jenny Gindap (lower left) thanks the Jeremiah Foundation for being her mission field.

Five years ago, Jeremiah 33:7 Foundation Inc. was just a dream of Rey Ortega. The foundation was built to support abused young girls. The foundation aims not to only give what they need daily but to also help them heal through spiritual programs.

Rey's dream came true when with the support of Bo Sanchez and the Kerygma Family, a shelter for abused girls was established in Pasig City—fulfilling for the girls the promise in Jeremiah 33:7, "I will restore their fortunes and rebuild them as they were at first."

On December 7, 2017, the ten young girls at the Jeremiah home, the board of trustees, and staff celebrated their 5th year anniversary, with the theme, "Alive at FIVE... In God's LOVE, we THRIVE."

The celebration started with a Holy Mass presided by Fr. Emmanuel C. Hipolito, who also gave the sacrament of baptism and confirmation to two Jeremiah girls.

After the Mass, everyone gathered for a delicious meal before heading to the second part of the program.

The Jeremiah girls started the program with a doxology, followed by an opening message by Executive Director Glo Viola. In her speech, she remembered Rey Ortega and asked everyone to offer one minute of silence to pray for him.

Rissa Singson-Kawpeng, editor-in-chief of Shepherd's Voice Publications and Board of Trustees member of Jeremiah also shared a message. "In five years with trials and challenges of Jeremiah, God takes care of the



▲
Beautiful, loved.
 Feast Builder
 Obet Cabrillas
 reminds the
 girls how
 beautiful and
 important they
 are in God's
 eyes.



▲
The Jeremiah girls are precious. The presence of Board Member
 Liza Caleda, Marowe Sanchez, and Francis Sanchez, proves how
 God loves the Jeremiah girls.

foundation. And God is able to provide for girls and the foundation itself," she said.

Delfin Viola, husband to Glo and also a Board of Trustees member shared that Jeremiah is one of their blessings and they consider the foundation as their mission to serve God.

Another Board of Trustees member, Liza Caleda, shared to the girls that there is always hope and reason to be happy. She reminded the girls that God is always with them, and as their spiritual mother, she is always there to pray for them.

Obet Cabrillas, builder of The Feast Valle Verde, graced the event with his powerful

message to the girls. Daddy O, as he is fondly called, shared how precious the Jeremiah girls are to God's eyes and to all of them.

For the final message, Jenny Gindap thanked the foundation for giving her the opportunity to serve and be a mother to the Jeremiah girls.

After the talks, the guests and Jeremiah girls engaged in some fun games.

The laughters of our girls in Jeremiah is one of the evidences that God is really working. Not only for the foundation's financial needs but for the restoration of these beautiful girls. 📺

To know more about the mercy ministries of LOJF, log on to www.lightfam.com or call 725-9999.

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By being a Kerygma Mission Partner, you will not just subscribe to our highly inspiring magazine. You will also contribute to all our ministries and be a blessing to Anawim – our home for the aged; He Cares and Tahanan ng Pagmamahal – our ministry for street children and orphans; Grace to Be Born – a halfway house for unwed mothers and their babies; and Shepherd's Voice Radio and Television Foundation – our media ministry.



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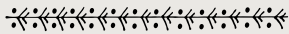
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My friend recently broke up with her longtime boyfriend because she found out that her boyfriend had been cheating on her for the past year. In addition, all of her batch mates in the office have been promoted except her. She started applying to other companies but she always got rejected. She doesn't want to go out, has lost her self-esteem, and stays in her room alone most of the time. We're concerned about her but she doesn't reply to our messages or talk to us when we visit her. She just told us once, "I never thought that depression is this real. I'm hopeless." How can we reach out to her? What can we do to help her overcome depression?

Worried Friend

Dear Worried Friend,

Your friend is blessed to have a concerned friend like you. At present, she certainly needs a helping hand to get out of her situation. She needs to be motivated to rise above her woes. To be able to reach her, she needs to let you in her life. If she does, make her feel you love her and that she matters—either verbally, nonverbally, or both. Spend time with her to listen to her, to inspire her with your stories or just to be there with her. An important point I suggest you try to get through her would be that “success is not never failing. It is in rising every time you fall.” There are many sites in the net she can visit like Guideposts Stories that you can recommend or even read with her. As you share about it, she may find the strength to go on. Bo Sanchez has written several books that encourage a positive disposition. You can research the lives of successful people who once upon a time were in her shoes, but by an act of the will, chose not to be defeated and have become famous. Arm yourself with these to help her. But be sensitive. Share it when she's interested and when she's listening.

If she has really clammed up, find a way to convince her to see a counselor or psychologist. You can write her or channel the idea through her parents or whoever she's living with.

I'll also pray for her.

**His,
Cristy**

Cristy Galang has been serving San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish for many years, building Basic Ecclesial Communities in the parish and doing catechetical work. She is a licensed guidance counselor and a certified counseling psychologist. She was one of the pioneers of the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center. E-mail her at cristy_cc@yahoo.com.



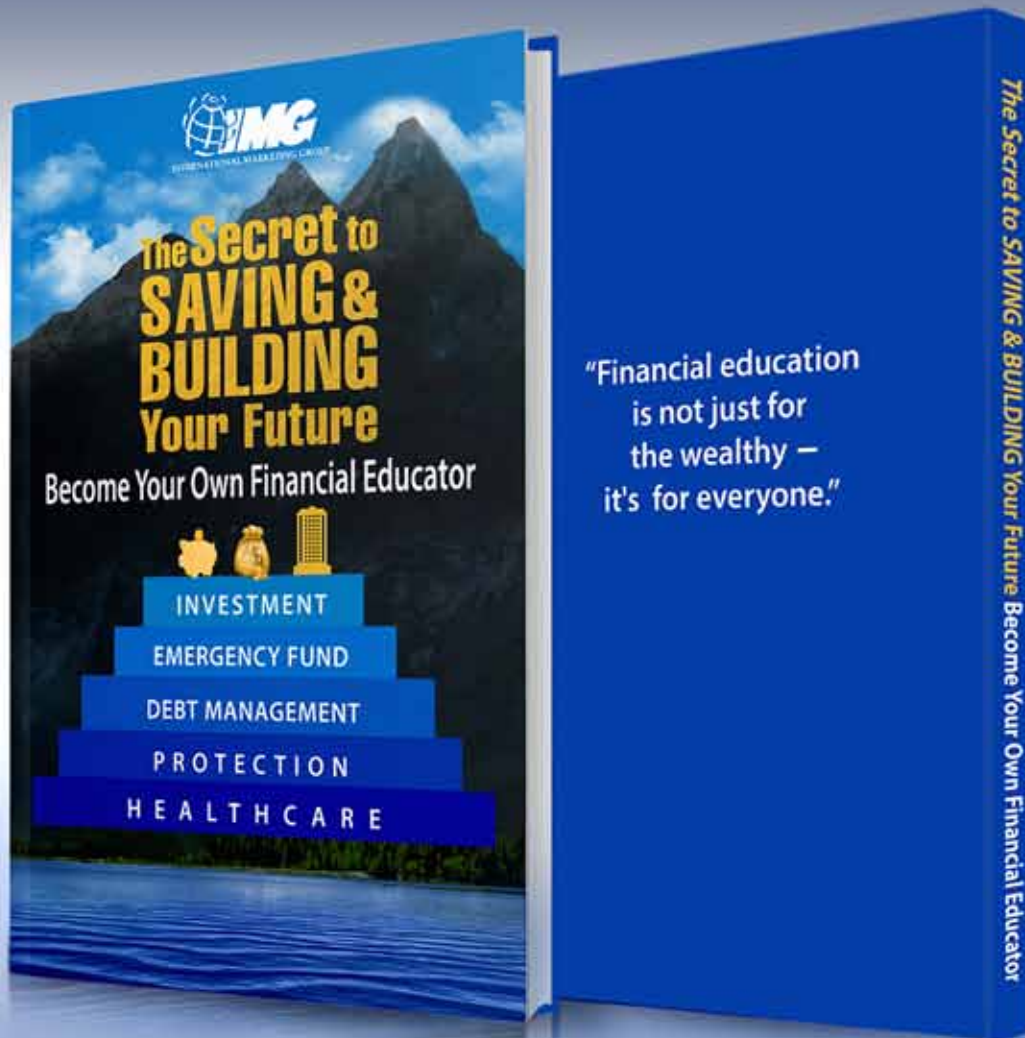
E-mail your questions to editsvp@shepherdsvoice.com.ph. Or if you need to talk to someone, call **(632) 726-4709** or **726-6728** to contact a pastoral carer of the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center. Pastoral caring session by telephone is 24 hours from Monday to Friday, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Face-to-face session is by appointment. For correspondence pastoral session, e-mail lojpastoralcare@gmail.com, go to www.kerygmfamily.com, or call **(632) 725-999**.

How Can I Help a Depressed Friend?





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Finding God Overseas



Family away from home.
Jed, second to the left, found a home in his co-servants at The Feast Doha.

Before I joined The Feast, I have experienced so many heartbreaks. When my father had a stroke and died several years later, our family almost lost it all.

It was also the time when I lost my faith. All of the things that I learned from my Catholic high school, Opus Dei University, and all of my spiritual habits disappeared. I didn't even want to talk to God.

Unfamiliar Feast

In November 2015, I relocated to Doha for work and had the chance to see my friends and college batch mates, Lawrence and Therese. Therese was already serving at The Feast Doha then and she invited us to join her every Friday. I didn't want to go because I didn't have any idea of what The Feast was about and Friday was my day off, my only time to rest. But in July 2016, it was as if my father was telling me to attend The Feast. I called Therese and asked her if I could still join and she said, "Of course. You also might be able to find your girlfriend there."

Fridates, Coffee Dates


I have to be honest. During my first day of attending The Feast, I did look around to see if there was anyone there who could potentially be my "forever." Guess what? I didn't find *her*. But I met Someone who loves me beyond forever—Jesus. That day, I felt the love of God. I felt Him saying, "Welcome back, my son." I was teary eyed almost the whole time. I felt that I was not alone. I was home. Therese didn't need to convince me to come again because I was certain I'd come back.

Since then, I make sure that I attended and served at The Feast even if Friday is my only rest day. The Feast is truly a blessing to all especially to people like me who are working abroad and far from their family. It recharges my body, my spirit, and my whole being, and it prepares me for the following work week.

The love of all the family members of The Feast fills up my love tank every time—and it doesn't stop there. Every elder, brother, and sister of this family brings out

the best in me. They have supported me in every way they can through thick and thin. Also, through The Feast Doha, I was able to enjoy and love drinking coffee. It's during our coffee sessions when we get to bond together.

Back to God

The Feast is really a blessing to me because I was able to find myself again and realign myself to God. He is just there, waiting for us to come back and talk to Him. Whatever problems or trials we may experience in the future, I am assured that Jesus loves me—us—so much. At home or overseas, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). 

By Jed Martinez

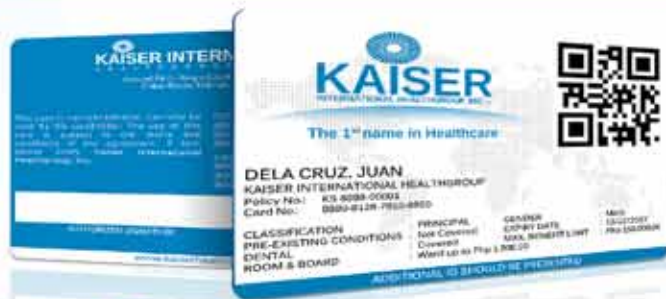
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A Teacher's Lesson: Forgive and Be Free

Anonymous Sharing



I turned the doorknob and peeped through the room, my chest thumping so hard it broke the silence of that hospital wing. From where I stood, I recognized the man who was trying to lie down, but his looks had changed since the last time I saw him. Gone was the might in his actions.

As if on cue, he shifted his gaze to the door and his eyes met mine. I could no longer trace any toughness from the windows that once reflected nothing but malice. The woman who was assisting him noticed the sudden silence and turned her head. After heaving a deep breath, I walked towards the speechless couple, took the woman's right hand and put it on my forehead for her blessing. "Mommy," I whispered. She cried.

I turned to the man and reached for his hand to bless as well. When his hand touched my head, the tears that I had been trying to hold back since I entered the room trickled down. With his little strength, he embraced me and spoke words that I longed to hear from him, "I'm sorry." I hugged him back, and we both broke into a louder cry. "Daddy..." I

mumbled in between my sobs.

It's been the first time in four years since I called him as such again—four years after my father molested me.

Student Introduction

I am the younger daughter, and I'm very much close to my only sister. She's three years older than I am. We're like the best of friends. We were enrolled in the same school, had the same set of friends (both at home and at school), and enjoyed doing the same hobbies. Our parents bought several pairs of dresses and shoes for us, so much so that people had often mistaken us as twins. I would even throw a tantrum if my sister and I were not in the same school service because we had different schedules.

Our parents used to be active parish servants. Our father served as a lay minister while our mother taught catechism during weekends. Aside from selling onions and tomatoes that we bought from a supplier, we relied on our retail store for income. Since my sister and I were both scholars, our family was able to save enough money

and invested on a new house. We could even afford to have a house helper. Things were doing pretty well. In my young mind, I thought the world would always be colorful and easy.

I was wrong.

Diagnostic Test

When my sister and I were in grade school, I noticed that something flawed was going on when our house helper, Shiela*, started to command me and my sister to do the chores. As days passed by, her tone began to be so bossy and so was her actions. Whenever we complained, she would shout at us and even pinch us with a threat to hurt us more than that. In front of our parents though, she looked like an angel. I tried my best to stay calm for two reasons. One, our parents taught us that answering back to older people was wrong, and two, they loved Shiela because of her seemingly nice demeanor.

We decided to put an end to Shiela's unlikely attitude and inform our parents about the situation. The perfect time came while we were at the store with our mother. Dad was out on a meeting with a supplier.

"Mom," my *ate* called aloud the moment we finished counting the delivered goods. Our mother stared at us and immediately suspected that something fishy was going on. "What do you want to tell me?"

I blurted out, "Shiela is bad! She's making us do the house chores!"

My mother looked surprised for a while, and laughed a few seconds later. "Of course, Shiela's there to teach you those tasks. It's not like she's bossing you around."

"But she's bossing us around!" my *ate* protested. Our mother stood up and dismissed the discussion. "Go home now. Stop watching those *telenovelas*

where you learn to raise your voice against your mother."

Lost in our case, we headed home helplessly. We were about to go straight to our room when our eyes caught something from the peripheral: my father was in the kitchen, passionately kissing and touching someone we knew. Shiela.

We froze. The picture in front of us couldn't sink in. Before our dad and Shiela could go any further with their act, my *ate* pulled me away and we ran as far as we could. We found ourselves in front of our store. *Ate* hurried to our mother who was obviously shocked to see us tear-stained. "What happened to both of you?" she asked.

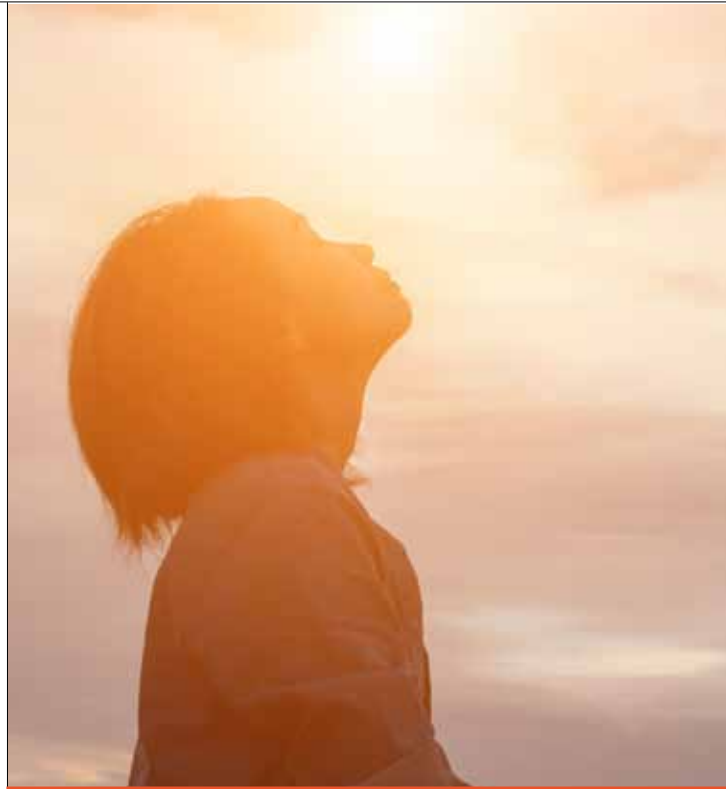
"Mom," *Ate* opened up, tears started to stream down her eyes again. "We saw dad and Shiela kissing at home. Dad's cheating..."

A slap from mom stopped my *ate* from speaking. *Ate* was startled. I was dumbfounded. Mom's entire body was shaking in rage. "Don't speak that way about your dad. We didn't raise you to make up stories and spread rumors about other people."

Her words numbed us. I could see her lips moving but I couldn't understand anything. I was frustrated. Hurt. Mad. That night, Mom served Dad as if we hadn't told her anything. A few months later, Shiela fled. We found out that Mom knew Dad's affair all along but she tolerated it to save face. She'd rather be cheated on than lose our father.

The Harder Exam

In my second year in high school, our family struggled financially. Our business went bankrupt. So when Dad found a job in the province, we sold our house and moved to a rented apartment. It was an old two-story house made of wood, where the only room upstairs




is directly above the apartment's comfort room. Aside from being less modern, living in our new home was fine with me.

In several instances however, I experienced a weird sensation that somebody was looking at me while I was taking a bath. Since the place looked creepy and I could also hear bizarre noise upstairs as if someone was moving (which was impossible because our parents were both sleeping soundly), I just shrugged my thoughts aside.

I was resting alone in the room one night when our father got home drunk. I got up from the bed and prepared to leave. Since we only had one room, our parents slept on the bed while my sister and I settled on a mattress that we put on the sala every night. "Prepare a cool water and towel," I heard Dad say before I reached the door. "Help me freshen up."

I went down to the kitchen and gathered what he needed. When I returned, he was already asleep. I soaked the face towel in the water, wringed it out and began to wipe it on Dad's face. I sat beside him so I could attend to him easily. I felt Dad's left arm wrap around my waist. I was shocked and instantly looked at him. His eyes were closed. I lifted his arm but it wouldn't budge a bit. Seconds passed and I sensed his hand moving and caressing my lower back. I forcefully straightened up, but his heavy arms locked me in. I felt his other hand wander around my body, stroking my private parts. I tried to be strong, but my tears betrayed me. I closed my eyes to keep



those traitors from falling. *How could he? How could my father do this?* His hands slipped under my shirt and garments. My eyes popped open. I was shocked to see my father wide awake, grinning. The sound of our front door being opened brought me back to my senses. My father nonchalantly took his hands off my body and turned to the other side.

In the following days, my father went around as if nothing happened. I began to justify that maybe he didn't intend to do it; he was just drunk and wasn't aware of his actions.

Until one school day, I was waiting for my sister to finish taking a bath when I remembered that I left some things in the room. Mom was out in the market. Thinking that our father was still asleep, I tiptoed. The sight that greeted me shattered my heart into million pieces—Dad was peeping through the floor which I perfectly knew to be the rest room's ceiling. I gasped, and not knowing what to do, headed

down absentmindedly. I couldn't think well. I couldn't even cry. I heard my sister step out of the restroom, and call me out, "Rhian*? Your turn."

I wanted to run away. I wanted to scream. I remembered our father kissing Shiela. His malicious smile while touching my body. His posture while watching his daughter, maybe daughters, as we take a bath every day. So it's him. Not a ghost, but a monster inside our very own father's body.

I stopped calling him "daddy." I stopped treating him as my father. My mother and other people criticized me for being disrespectful. I didn't care. I had totally lost my respect for that man.

Taking Tutorials

Since I relied so much on my *ate* as a confidante, I opened up and explained to her what I was going through. She was in a dormitory then for college. She embraced and counseled me, and advised to bring my pain in my prayer time. Initially, I found it corny and unnecessary. I believed in God but my sister's advise seemed irrelevant. Why would God care for my concern?

To keep our connection, *ate* frequented coming home. She brought CDs with worship songs and kept playing them on repeat. I didn't appreciate the music, but it comforted me because it meant my *ate* was just around.

My father kept pestering me. Because of fear and trauma, sometimes I would wake up in a light scratch, and weep in silence. When I couldn't take it anymore, I informed my mother that I had decided to live with an aunt. She agreed without saying much. Knowing her, she'd rather lose a rude daughter than lose Dad. I never visited them from then on.

In 2009, my sister dragged me with her at the Araneta Coliseum. I checked the ticket. It said "Bo Sanchez's Kerygma Conference." Bo, who? Then I recalled the books scattered in our house. Oh, the author.

True enough, that weekend was better than any event I'd been to—religious or secular. I found myself one with the crowd in worshiping God. At one point, a worship leader asked us to surrender all the hatred in our hearts, which I did. I thought I'd fill the entire

coliseum with my tears because I hadn't stopped crying since the worship started. Only that time, those were hopeful tears. Hopeful that I could forgive my father. Hopeful that I wasn't destined to live forever in pain. Hopeful that I could count on God come what may.

I came to understand that the reason I couldn't trust God completely was because I lost trust with my own father. And by forgiving my father, I opened my heart to God.


Passing with Flying Colors

KCON 2009 unlocked the chains that bound me for years. I began to attend a weekly prayer gathering called The Feast and developed a personal relationship with God. The weight in my heart became lighter. I found a sincere desire to pray for our parents, especially our father. Anytime soon, I was ready to visit them again.

I was preparing to meet my sister when I received an unexpected call from our mother. She said that a lump was discovered in my father's neck. They're still waiting for the confirmation whether it's benign or malignant. Together with my *ate*, we rushed to the hospital. And after four years, I found myself a daughter to my parents again. It was sweet to call them Daddy and Mommy once more. I thank God for another chance to restore and heal our family.

Currently, I serve at The Feast's Awesome Kids Ministry and work as a teacher. Our family enjoys a closer bond like never before. My father, completely healed from his benign cyst, expresses his love to us through his service at home. Mom listens to us now wholeheartedly and has devoted her time to care for us. As for me and my sister, we delight in going from one worship concert to another. And when opportunity comes, I lead people to praise and worship God in our prayer gathering. Why did I ever think it was corny before?

In what I do today, I'm very grateful for the learnings I acquired as a student of life. I'm confident that I can pass on valuable lessons to my students. First, God is a reliable father. Always. And second, forgive. It's the sure key to freedom.

I am glad God has been a patient teacher to me all throughout this time. 



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UNLEASHED!

BREAKING FREE FROM THE SHACKLES OF UNFORGIVENESS

By Bo Sanchez

Have you been hurt before?
Have you ever been rejected by others?

Ridiculed? Maligned? Gossiped about?

Have you been cheated? Betrayed? Lied to? Stolen from?

If your answer is yes, then I'm writing to the right person.

That means you have emotional wounds, and my big message for you is that there's only one thing that can heal your wounds.

Let me start by talking about something of great cosmological and eternal significance: my bloody ingrown toenail.

It's sometimes called a hangnail.

Let me translate that in Filipino: hangnail is *kukong nagbigti*.

Anyway, would you believe my ingrown toenail lasted for two years? Because the nail kept regrowing, puncturing my wound again and again. The wound got infected and my entire toe was filled with foul-smelling yellow pus. (I apologize for grossing you out. I'm actually doing it on purpose and having fun.)

This is my claim to sainthood. If St. Francis of Assisi had his stigmata, I had my two-year-old bloody ingrown toenail.

After two years, my mother scared me to death and said if the wound doesn't get well, they might have to cut off my toe.

I loved my toe.

So I visited a doctor. And he said he had to pull out half of my toenail. I fainted.

I still remember that fateful day. The anesthesia didn't work because of the pus. So I felt like San Lorenzo Ruiz who was tortured in the same way. (Please mention this tiny detail in my sainthood application.)

Here's how the doctor did it.

Step 1: He pushed his scissors in between my nail and my toe, all the way to the very end. The pain was so horrific, I was ready to recant anything he told me to recant. Even my love for peanut butter.



Step 2: He cut my entire toenail into two. "Snap!"

Step 3: He got his metal pliers and yanked out half of my toenail. Blood and pus spurt like a little fountain.

But it worked.

My wound was now free to heal itself. What lasted for two years took only a few days to heal.

Why am I telling you this gory story?

To tell you that your emotional wounds are just like physical

wounds. Bitterness is like the ingrown nail—it keeps the original wound alive by puncturing it again and again. So your emotional wound doesn't heal.

And your soul gets infected.

If you're not careful, the emotional wound can grow until it amputates parts of you, slowly killing you.

I've met people like these.

I pity them so much. They're like the living dead. They are alive but they're dead.

Like Minette, for instance.

Pressing the Rewind Button Again

Minette's husband left her three years ago.

But when you talk to her, it was like it happened yesterday.

Adultery is one of the deepest wounds a human heart can have. After entrusting your entire life to one person, that one person betrays that trust.

But I believe even the emotional wound of adultery can be healed. I've met many wives whose husbands became unfaithful—and they were able to move on by the power of forgiveness.

But Minette couldn't forgive.

Because every day, she pressed the "rewind" button of the most hurtful scenes.

Today, Minette has cancer. It doesn't take a

psychologist to connect the dots. Her bitterness was eating up her body as well.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

I should know.

I Forgive for Selfish Reasons

I was sexually molested twice, not by strangers on the street, but by an older cousin and by my own youth group leader. William Blake said, "It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend." That's so true.

Those traumatic events warped my thinking, opened my life to addictions, and gave me self-contempt that would affect my entire life. I hated myself. I was ashamed of myself. Oh yes, my wounds were deep.



Yet in my heart, I've forgiven them. Totally.

I've released the bitterness in my soul.

Why?

Because of a very selfish reason.

Remember: Forgiveness is first of all a gift you give yourself.

I forgave because I wanted peace.

I wanted to move on with my life.

I wanted to get rid of the emotional baggage.

I wanted to be free.

And today, I am!


Friend, I also want *you* to be free.

I want *you* to have peace.

I want *you* to move on.

I want *you* to get rid of your emotional baggage and break free from the shackles of unforgiveness.

Now is the right time. Turn the page.

I'm praying for you. 

Special Section

Teaching



Do You Have a Forgiving Attitude?

By Bo Sanchez

Forgiveness is difficult. And confusing.

Before I share with you my main message, let me clarify two things that confuse a lot of people.

Forgiveness and friendship require two decisions.

First, clarification: Forgiveness is different from friendship.

When you forgive someone, it doesn't necessarily mean you'll be friends with him again.

For example, when a business partner steals from you, you should forgive him. But that doesn't mean you'll take him back as your business partner again. That's a separate decision you'll have to make.

When your drunkard husband beats you up regularly, you should forgive him. But that doesn't mean you should take him back as a husband again.

One friend comes to mind: Liza. When I got to know her, her husband beat her up for the past twenty-one years. Her husband's favorite tool of torture was his hammer. When he was angry, he'd pick up his hammer, push her hand to the wall, and hammer her fingers to bloody pulp.

I asked her, "Why did you stay with this monster for twenty-one years?" She said, "Because he asked me for his forgiveness." I told her, "Don't confuse forgiveness with stupidity. Forgive him, yes, but run away as far as possible from that monster."

She said, "But I love him..."

I told her, "No, you don't love him. You need him. You're attached to him. But you don't love him. If you really loved him, you would have walked out of that horrible marriage a long time ago. By staying there, you allowed him to continue in his sin of violence."

Let me say it again. Forgiveness and friendship are two different things that require two different decisions.

Don't confuse the two.

Second clarification. Please don't be shocked with what I'm going to say next...

Don't Rush to Forgive If the Wound Is Grave

When the hurt is very deep, don't forgive right away.

When someone hurts you deeply, God doesn't require that you forgive right away. When your husband commits adultery, or when an uncle molests you, or when a friend betrays you... God doesn't require that you drive out your feelings of anger *right now*.

Why? Because we're not robots with push buttons on our chest.

In fact, God knows that we need to get angry for a while as part of our healing.

By getting angry, we restore our dignity. By getting angry, we love ourselves. By getting angry, we say, "What you did to me was terribly wrong. You violated me."

I repeat: The process of getting angry (for a while) is part of your healing.

Anger is like a medicine with an expiration date. Before that expiration date, anger is medicine. After that expiration date, anger becomes poison.

At the right time, God will ask you to surrender your anger.

Which now brings me to our main message.

Goal: To Have a Forgiving Attitude

Today, my goal isn't just to encourage you to forgive those who have wronged you in the past.

Today, my goal is much more ambitious than that.

My goal is to encourage you to develop a forgiving attitude.

Forgiveness is an isolated act. But a forgiving attitude is who you are normally, usually, regularly...

My belief? If you want to be happy in your life, you need to have a forgiving attitude.

Why?

Because you live amidst imperfect people.

You were born into an imperfect family, with imperfect parents, with

imperfect siblings.

Announcement: You're imperfect too! (Unless you happen to be a perfect alien from a perfect planet.)

Every day, you'll get hurt. Someone will step on your toe. Someone will stab your back. Someone will kick your behind. Someone will prick your pride. Someone will slander your name.

That's why Jesus said, "Forgive seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21-22). That number is a Biblical symbol for "forever."

Believe me, if you don't have a forgiving attitude, you can't enjoy any imperfect relationship.

Do You Have an Unforgiving Attitude?

Here's what I know. A person who has an unforgiving attitude is an unhappy person.

For example, when a waiter brings the wrong order, does it ruin your entire day?

When a cashier makes a mistake, because she's new, or she's nervous, or she's having her own family problems—do you roll up your eyeballs and sigh a sigh of exasperation?

When a sister borrows your blouse without your permission and doesn't return it washed and folded, do you fume for the rest of the day?

When a friend forgets to say "thank you" for her birthday gift, do you nurse a grudge until her next birthday?

Here's the crazy thing about unforgiveness. You can be moping and grumbling at home, while the person you're angry with could be sunbathing in Boracay.

Face it. Unforgiveness isn't very wise.

Be Selfish: Have a Forgiving Attitude!

A wise man said, "Forgiveness is first of all a gift you give yourself." Forgiveness is almost a selfish act—because of the incredible blessing the forgiver gets!

Imagine this scenario.

You're so angry at someone, you decide to buy Triple-X poison from the drugstore. Upon reaching home, you drink the entire bottle yourself! And then you hope that the person who offended you dies because of the poison.



Huh? Pretty insane, right?
But that's the insanity of the unforgiving attitude.

I know of a woman who caught her husband having many affairs. It totally devastated her. It was such a deep wound, her bitterness slowly killed her body. She had cancer and after two years she passed away. What happened to her husband? Still with his many girlfriends.

My friend is wiser. She had a business partner who stole eight million pesos from her. She thought it was the end of the world. She'd go to our weekly Feast, asking me to pray for her.

And in her heart, she made a decision to forgive her business partner. She refused to remain stuck. She didn't spend time thinking how to avenge herself. She moved on.

Today, my friend has recovered from that loss and so much more. God is prospering her business.

The business partner who stole from her? She heard that she was in jail because of another crime.

My friend did the unthinkable: She visited her in jail.

Move On!

Many years ago, I heard through the grapevine that I was being accused of using people's donations to buy myself a car.

That hurt. (If I used the donations to buy myself a car, I would have bought a Rolls Royce.)

I later learned that a friend had spread that gossip.

But on that same day, I forgave that friend in my heart.

Why? Because I was being "selfish."

Here was my logic: It's bad enough that he hurt me once. Why let him hurt me again (and again and again) by rewinding the tapes of his sin in my mind?

Friend, if someone has hurt you, don't let that hurt ruin your life. Don't let a betrayal, or divorce, or adultery, or unfaithfulness destroy your life and your destiny.

Forgive and move on with your life!

Forgiveness means you won't invest emotional energy to your hurt anymore.

Some people don't do that.

They like rewinding the tapes. They like reviewing the hurt in their imagination. They like opening an old wound and puncturing it again. And again. And again.

What's the solution?

To heal our unforgiving attitude, we must ask, "What is the root of unforgiveness?"

From experience, our inability to forgive others comes from our inability to forgive ourselves. Yes, it can be that simple.

If you don't receive God's mercy, you can't give mercy to others. The Bible says, "Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).

I remember Felipe.
Felipe told me he has a hard time forgiving others.

But as we continued talking, I found out something very glaring about him that he may not have noticed. When he himself does something wrong, he becomes very miserable. He doesn't allow himself to be happy.

In other words, he punishes himself.

Even if Felipe asks for God's forgiveness, (and verbally, he'll tell you he believes that God forgives him), he'll subconsciously find a way to pay for his sins. By not being happy. By suffering.

He wants to pay for his sins. He demands it upon himself.

Result? When others offend him (and he gets easily offended), he uses the same standards. He wants them to pay up as well.

There are still isolated Catholics who practice flogging. (Other religions practice this too.) These penitents whip themselves as a way of punishing themselves for their sins.

I've met Christians who no longer carry a physical whip, but they carry an invisible whip. When they make a mistake, they whip themselves "bloody" in their emotions. They condemn themselves. They walk through life depressed. They accept all suffering as just rewards for their sins—even suffering that's totally unrelated to their mistakes.

They say they believe God loves them. They even sing about God's love. They'll even tell you that they believe God has forgiven them. But internally, they insist on paying for their sins.

Friend, if there's one thing I want you to learn today, it is this:

Stop trying to pay for your sins!
Rest in His mercy. Let God pay for your sins.

Let God Pay You

If someone stole from you, or hurt you, or offended you, read this verse: God says, "Your shame and disgrace are ended. You will live in your own land. And your wealth will be doubled. Your joy will last forever" (Isaiah 61:7).

What is God saying? He's telling you, "Let Me handle your case. Put the situation in My hands. I'll see to it that you'll receive double than what you've lost. I'll see to it that you'll gain back what was stolen from you."

As long as you let go and forgive, God will be your vindicator.

He'll make your wrongs right.

He'll return what the enemy has stolen.

He'll even the score.

Remember Job? Job's friends were trying to comfort him, but they said some hurtful things to him too.

Look at what the Bible says: "Then, after Job had prayed for his three friends, the Lord made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had had before" (Job 42:10).

If you forgive and pray for your enemies, get ready to be very blessed!

This was the story of my friend Mark.

Mark lent one million pesos to his business partner. It was a huge amount for my friend. But this partner ran away. This devastated Mark. It wasn't only the money but the betrayal.

But instead of being bitter, staying at home, thinking of ways to get back at him, my friend Mark decided to expand his small business. Instead

of spending his time cursing his enemy, he spent his time blessing his business.

After one year, Mark is earning P1 million every month. The exact money he lost, he now earns in a snap.

And what happened to the man who stole his money? Through the grapevine, Mark found out that the guy was still financially hard up.

You don't have to see to it that justice is done. Because the universe is governed by the Law of Reciprocity. What you sow, you reap.

Read carefully:

Unforgiveness is taking matters in your hands. Forgiveness is taking matters into God's hands.

The Path of Blessings

Let me define forgiveness for you: Being kind beyond what is reasonable.

Yes, forgiveness is insane.

On October 2, 2006, thirty-two-year-old Charles Roberts entered an Amish school with an automatic rifle. He tied up the legs of schoolgirls and prepared to shoot them, execution style.

The oldest hostage, a thirteen-year-old, asked Roberts to "shoot me and release the others." But he didn't listen to her. He fired at all of them with 400 rounds of ammunition.

He killed five girls.

When the police stormed into the school building, Charles Roberts shot and killed himself.

Why did he shoot the girls? He told them before shooting, "I'm angry at God for taking my little daughter."

Immediately after the massacre, more than fifty news crews came into that small town. And what they witnessed was unbelievable.

After the funeral of their



daughters, the families of these girls visited the funeral of their murderer.

Why did they go there? They went there to offer words of forgiveness and consolation to his widow and three children.

As if that wasn't shocking enough, these families raised money for their murderer's orphaned family.

Insanity.

Why did the Amish do this unexplainable thing? Because the Amish are Christians. They follow the Bible when it says, "Love does not keep a record of wrongs."

Yes, even if that wrong was killing their little daughter.

This is the mark of God in your life. When you treat well the people who don't deserve to be treated well.

I have my little story of forgiveness.

In my past thirty plus years of ministry, I've had my critics. Some criticized with love. Some criticized with venom.

Someone told me, "Bo, better read this blog. This guy calls you the devil's servant." I read his articles. It was true, the writer didn't like me very much. He said I brought a lot of people to hell.


This is what I did: Instead of getting angry, I prayed blessings for him and his family.

When I did that, I cannot describe to you how free and happy I felt. And I also felt that God's river of blessings began to flow more into my life.

It's now your turn.

Have a forgiving attitude.

And bless all those who have offended you.

And believe that you'll receive double what you have lost. 

E-mail Bo at bosanchez@kerygmfamily.com.



The Offering of the Bread

How Papa Taught Me That Even Old Dogs Can Learn New Tricks

By Paz Balayan

I often hear from various people that old people are quirky and they can no longer change their ways. I can attest that this is wrong. Love can make all things new—even the crankiest and grumpiest person I ever knew—my Papa.

Many years ago, Papa abandoned us for another family. Life became difficult for my mom and us four siblings. My eldest brother stood as our father and helped my mom support the family. There even came a point when *Kuya* and Mom's lives were put in danger for unknowingly getting involved in an illegal trade.

Fast forward, Papa came back when we were already grown up. He became crankier to two of my elder siblings. We couldn't discuss the past without yelling and cursing so *Kuya* opted to write him a letter. *Kuya* asked Papa where he was during those years when we could hardly make ends meet. Because of that letter, my Dad refused to talk to my brother and his family. We still gathered together during family occasions that I often organized but there were a lot of awkward moments. The environment was always tense.

On December 4, 2014, I invited Papa to attend Mass at The Feast in Valle Verde Country Club before his 76th birthday celebration. After the Mass, I asked him if he could stay for the next thirty minutes to listen to our preacher, Obet Cabrillas. Since then, he never missed attending The Feast. He was grumpy at first, so whenever Obet would invite the attendees to share hugs with others, I would stop taking photos, which was my service at The Feast, and rush towards him to embrace him. My husband, Judd, and I would also bring him

to Holy Week retreats and Kerygma Conferences (KCON). Often at reflection time, I would see him sob. Eventually, Papa allowed others to hug him, too. Over the next two years, I saw Papa cry at The Feast and would always hug Obet every single time. Then during Kerygma Conference 2016, he told me and Judd that he was ready to move forward.

Later on, my *Ate* Beck with whom Papa stayed for twenty years since he returned to us, said that he would always bring home the favorite bread of his grandchildren. At The Feast, he also handed bread to me and my children. Perhaps it was his expression of love, which he only did for my family and my eldest sister's.

On his 78th birthday, I organized an early dinner at Mary Grace Estancia. The entire family was there and again, there was a sense of uneasiness in the room. Suddenly, Papa left and came back with a loaf of bread and pieces of Cinnabon bread. He gave the Cinnabon bread to my nieces and nephews, and gave the biggest loaf to my *kuya*. He said, "Son, I am sorry. May I have a hug?" We were all thrilled to witness that moment of forgiveness and reconciliation.

With this positive development, I looked forward to our first Christmas together where there would be overflowing happiness and love.

My family left for a vacation in Osaka, Japan from December 20 to 25, 2016. On December 23, I received calls from my sisters that my dearest Papa died in an accident after losing balance and falling from the stairs in a train station. His first eleven calls while he was still conscious were for me.

We spent our "first happy Christmas" at Papa's wake. My *kuya* made sure of Papa's burial at his green alma matter ("*Lambing ko na kay Papa*," he said.) During Papa's wake, we got to know his other families before and after us. We learned that we were the second family. Another

surprise! While hardly pouring the holy water on Papa's body, Mama uttered that up to his last breath, he still kept a lot of secrets.

Honestly, I didn't feel any anger towards Papa. All of my rock-bottom recollections when he abandoned us turned into happy memories when we started to go to The Feast every single Sunday. Mama also became thankful to him for their five children whom Papa would always brag about to his friends. His passing away healed much brokenness in the family and made us grow closer.

When I was asked why it was easy for me to forgive him, I said, "He may have done a lot of bad things, but those mistakes allowed us to discover our inner best and brought us to where we are now. He has also done several good things and that's what we focused on to love him again."

We did not ask Papa to change. We just loved him dearly by spending time with him and embracing him. Through sincere love and by God's grace, my cranky Papa slowly opened his heart to forgiveness and humility and exposed his vulnerability. It was sealed with my *kuya*'s embrace when they reconciled. Giving bread served as his peace offering in exchange for sweet hugs from his family.

I love you, Papa. You will always be dear to us. 



Special **S**ection ▶

Teaching

By Bo Sanchez



**LEARN TO FORG
YOURSELF**

In one large gathering, a young woman came up to me and asked, "Can you hear my confession?" I shook my head, "I'm sorry, I'm not a priest." But I saw desperation in her eyes as she told me, "But can I still confess my sins to you?"

"I can listen to you, pray for you, but I can't absolve your sins," I said.

She said, "That's fine. I just need someone to talk to." We walked to a corner of the hall and she poured her heart to me, sharing her guilt to me. As she did so, I felt an urging from God to tell her, "My dear friend, God loves you more than you can ever imagine," and she began to cry almost uncontrollably.

She said, "Bo, I know God loves me. But I don't love myself. I know God forgives me. But I can't forgive myself for what I've done."

Through the years, I've met many people like her who already asked for God's forgiveness, but can't seem to forgive themselves. Even if the Bible says, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful," funny how people aren't merciful to themselves.

So I told her, "Then you're very proud of your sin."

Her eyes bulged, obviously shocked.

"What did you say again?" she asked.

Are You Proud of Your Sin?

I told her, "You fall into pride on three counts. First, you seem to think that your sin is bigger than God's love for you. That's pride. Friend, God's love is bigger than your sin."

"And second, you seem to think that your moral standards are higher than God's standards. That's pride. Allow Him to love you in your brokenness. And give yourself permission to love YOU. And third..."

"Did I hear it right? Give myself permission to love me?"

I knew that those words were new to her.

"Yes! And third, all this time, you've been focusing on your sin. Am I right?"

She nodded.

"You think God wants you to grieve and wallow in guilt? You're wrong. When you focus on your sin, you're not focusing on God. Focus on God. Focus on His love for you. Or you fall into despair." I began to think of Judas and how despair killed him.

The Bible says, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

How do we fall? Let me count the ways...

What Happens If You Don't Forgive Yourself

If you don't forgive yourself, you may have these problems...

- You'll have unresolved guilt nagging you.
- You'll always be recalling past failures.
- You'll be pessimistic and negative, or even suffer from chronic depression.
- You'll be seeking revenge toward yourself at different times.
- You'll manifest self-destructive behaviors.
- You'll be disrespectful towards yourself.
- You'll be indifferent toward yourself and your needs.
- You'll be defensive and exhibit distant behavior towards others.
- You'll be controlled by your fear of failure, rejection, and non-approval.
- You'll have an emotional vacuum in which little or no emotions are shown.
- You'll be suspicious about others' motives when they're accepting of you.
- You'll experience chronic hostility, sarcasm, and cynicism.

It is a sad life!

Make a decision to forgive yourself now.

Before Anything Else, Discern: Are They Real Sins or Imagined Sins?

Before we even forgive ourselves—or even ask forgiveness from God—answer one question. *Have you really sinned against God?* Or have you just failed someone else's standards?

Sometimes, we can set up ourselves for big-time guilt by making lots of rules that God never wanted us to make.

I remember a woman who felt guilty for disappointing her husband again and again. She would constantly ask for forgiveness from God for being a terrible wife. But when she described her husband to me, I instantly knew that *he* was the problem. He wanted his clothes to be pressed in a particular way, his egg cooked in a particular way, his newspaper laid out on the table each morning in a particular way. And if his wife will not do it in this particular way, he labeled her as a disappointing wife. *Not true!* I told her that she has not sinned and there was nothing for which to ask forgiveness from God.

Do You Have Toxic Shame?

Often, you can't forgive yourself because of toxic shame. It is your dream killer, your joy stealer, and your spirit cancer.

Let me make this clear: Not all shame is toxic. There are two kinds of shame: 1) toxic shame and 2) true shame. Here's the difference: True shame is connected to the *action*. Toxic shame is connected to the *actor*.

For example, if I committed

adultery, or if I stole money, or if I lied to you (for example, if I told you I was ugly), I should feel ashamed for that. That's not true.

True shame is useful especially in the early stages of your spiritual growth. In fact, there are people who are shameless, whose consciences are callous. That's very dangerous.

But from my experience, that's not my audience. I've noticed that the people who read my books and listen to my talks—because of their religious and cultural background—lean towards toxic shame.

They are ashamed not only of what they've done but who they are. They confuse the action with the actor.

An emotionally healthy person (in other words, someone who doesn't have toxic shame) won't mix those two up. When you fail, you don't say, "I'm a failure." You say, "I've failed—but I can do better. I'm a winner that has failed but will rise up stronger, better, and wiser!"

Don't Be Too Hard on Yourself

We're not machines, we're humans. And the difference between machines and humans is that we don't have push buttons on our chest. We don't change overnight, we change over time. We don't change in days, we change in decades.

Hear me out. We're so preoccupied with our destination,

but God is preoccupied with our development.

Don't be too hard on yourself. Be patient. You'll make mistakes. You'll fail. You'll fall flat on your face. You'll be tempted. But listen. God knows you're going to fall. God expects it. *And He will cause every defeat in your life to be part of your victory.*

As kids, we think we're the center of the universe. We think that everything happens because we made it happen.

Insane.

When Mommy gets sick and dies, a little girl can say, "Mommy died because I was bad girl. If only I obeyed her more, she would be alive today."

When Daddy leaves Mommy and goes off with another woman, the little boy can say, "This is my fault. If I only I got better grades in school, Daddy wouldn't have left us."

This is the insanity of toxic shame.

When I was molested as a child, I really thought that somehow, it was my fault. That it happened to me because I deserved it.

And I carried this shame with me for the decades.

Let me declare this truth to you today: If bad things happened to you, it doesn't mean you're bad. It means that you live in a world where bad things happen to good people.

Toxic shame says, "It's hopeless. You won't change. You'll never change. Give up."

Life is not fair.

But God is fair. At the end of the day, He'll right your wrongs. He'll heal your wounds. He'll return your loss. He'll see to it that you'll come out a champion.

How to Heal Toxic Shame

To heal a disease, you simply look at its cause. If you understand its cause, you'll understand its cure.

Remember Magellan? (If not, let me remind you of Professor Villame's lesson: *On March 16, 1521, when the Philippines was discovered by Magellan, they were sailing day and night, across the big ocean, until they saw the small Limasawa island....*)



But I bet you didn't know this. History says that in one of his voyages, Magellan left Spain with 230 men on his ship. When he landed at his destination, only twenty-two men arrived. 208 men died from one specific disease.

This was typical of all voyages at that time. From 1500 to 1800, two million lives were lost in ships because of this one specific disease.

What disease? It wasn't cancer, heart disease, or even tuberculosis. It was scurvy.

They didn't know what to do. They just accepted this disease as a fact of life. But one day, one doctor finally understood that scurvy was caused by a lack of vitamin C. Because men were on the ship for as long as six months, they didn't have enough supply of fruits and vegetables anymore. This doctor said, "To cure scurvy, simply give what the body lacks. Eat fruits and vegetables."

It's so simple an explanation, many people didn't believe it. It took a while for everyone to believe this doctor. In fact, it took 400 years for everyone to finally accept this simply theory.

Friend, toxic shame is like scurvy. It causes death. It destroys your life.

But the cause and cure of toxic shame is so simple, it's difficult to swallow. We insist on a more complicated cause and a more complicated cure for our human problem. We think that complicated psychotherapy will heal us. We think community structures will heal us. We think brilliant theology will heal us.

All those things are good. But they can't heal anyone.

My simple explanation: toxic shame is caused by a lack of love. *So the only solution to*

toxic shame is to receive love.

And we receive love from three sources: from God, from others, and from ourselves.

Today, let's focus on receiving love from God.

Love Will Heal You

My friend and fellow preacher George Gabriel loves telling this beautiful story.

When he was in college, he had a fight with his girlfriend. In his anger, he punched the windshield of his car and it cracked.

Suddenly, his anger was replaced by fear. What will his father do to him?

The next morning, when he woke up, he saw his father was already in the dining table. He wondered, "Did he already see the car's windshield?" He was terrified.

But he still went to his father, and with great courage, told him the story of how he got angry and punched the windshield. After telling this to his father, George got ready for a lashing. He imagined his father getting angry, scolding him, telling him how stupid he was for losing his temper.

But what happened next was amazing.

The first thing his father said was, "Did you get hurt?"


When George said "no," his father said, "I just received a bonus two weeks ago. We can buy a new windshield."

That was all he said.

And that melted George's heart. That day, he felt his father's love so much, George wanted to love him even more.

And that's what happens to you when you receive God's love.

God tells you today, "Don't be afraid, because you

won't be put to shame. Don't be discouraged, because you won't be disgraced. You'll forget the shame you've had since you were young" (Isaiah 54:4). 

Prayer for Self-Forgiveness

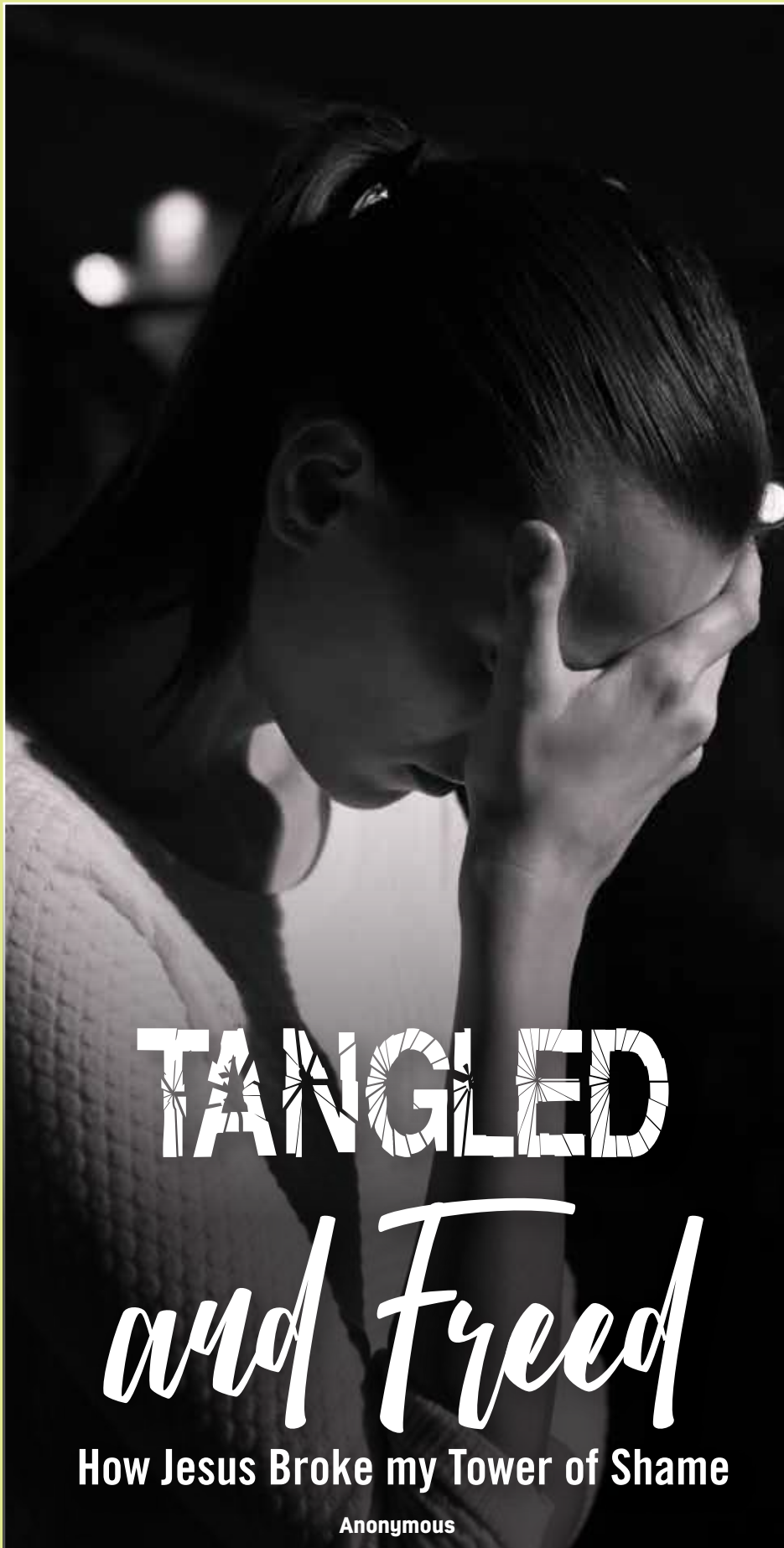
Step #1: Ask God for Forgiveness

Lord, forgive me now, in Jesus' name. Forgive me for all my sins and failures. I believe You love me. I believe that Your love is bigger than my sins and failures. Today, I receive Your forgiveness. Thank You for loving me!

Step #2: Forgive Yourself

Today, I make a choice to forgive me. I know that God has forgiven me. I don't have to be perfect for me to love me. I am a very good person because God made me very good. As God loves me, so do I love me. I no longer need to condemn me. I am forgiven by God, and I forgive me, in Jesus' name. Amen.





TANGLED

and Freed

How Jesus Broke my Tower of Shame

Anonymous

Out of the many Disney princesses, I could relate most with Rapunzel. I appreciated her story even more through the movie, *Tangled*. A witch kidnapped her when she was a child and pretended to be her mom. The witch imprisoned her in a high tower to avoid the palace guards from finding her, but disguised her evil plan as motherly protection. One incident led to another until, eventually, the princess discovered her true identity. The king and queen was reunited with their daughter, who met the love of her life and lived happily ever after.

In my case, instead of a witch, there were two people who stole my joy and innocence as a kid: my sexual molesters.

The Lone Princess

I was around eight years old—cheerful, trusting, ecstatic about life as any child would be. One morning, our neighbor, a family friend, lured me into their house. Soon, he was touching my private parts, then my frail body throbbed in pain as his molestation intensified. I couldn't understand what happened after that and how it happened. All I could remember was the fear in my heart as he threatened me, "If you tell this to anyone, I'll do the same with your sisters."

After that day, I avoided going out to play with our neighbors. I prayed every single day for the school year to end soon. I wanted to go to the province and bury that nightmare. I wanted to breathe again.

Vacation came at last and we went to our aunt's house. "Finally, I'm free!" I was excited to run wild and be a carefree child again. To play without any fear. To enjoy with my sisters without worrying that someone would hurt them. Here in the province, I was safe.

How wrong I was.

One evening while I was deep in sleep, I felt someone on top of me. When I opened my eyes, I almost screamed not because of fright but because of the pain of betrayal. It was my cousin,

someone whom I considered as a brother, someone whom I thought would keep me safe. For the second time, I was abused. With it, I was robbed of my trust in others.

That's when I started to build walls around me, to live in my own tower. I became aloof and afraid. I stopped playing, trusting, and looking at life positively. Like Rapunzel, I became a lone princess.

Inside My Tower

Psychological studies show that abused people become either aloof to others or addicted to sex. I became both. For many years, I was distant, cold, scared. I couldn't name exactly how I was pulled to the other side, but it happened.

When I began sharing my tale to others, I'd usually just talk about the bricks of pain and betrayal that make up my tower. I couldn't let them inside.

I was afraid that they would see pocket books with pornographic contents scattered inside my tower. I was afraid they would check my computer's browsing history and see how I "accidentally" clicked on adult websites. I was afraid they would know how I covered my addiction with spiritual affiliations and activities. I was afraid they would see through me.

Even when I was already serving the Lord, I still couldn't let anyone else in—except perhaps the priests who would hear my confession when I would sin again and again and again. For a female servant, it was hard to admit to living a double life. It felt that every time I stepped out of my tower to lead a prayer gathering, do ministry work, or serve God, I was living a victim's life. I was holy, innocent, admirable. Everyone seemed to know me as the abused one.

But inside my tower, I was the addicted one. Shameful. Unworthy. Filthy.

It came to a point when I no longer wanted to go to confession because I was already tired of myself. I was ashamed to confess the same sin, feel the same filth, then experience the same mercy that I felt I didn't deserve. My tower of shame grew higher and higher, I almost never wanted to go out. A rape victim and sinful woman like me could never be clean again. No confession could erase the fact that I was abused and continue to wallow in its consequence.

So I quit serving. I disconnected from my community friends. I locked myself again inside my tower.

Until one Prince came to my rescue.

Breaking My Walls

"The Word of the Lord."

I tried hard not to cry as I finished proclaiming the first reading in our afternoon Mass. It was about David's adultery, and how he plotted to kill Bathsheba's husband. It struck me to the core. God must've planned for me to read and reflect on David's life that very moment.

I was not supposed to be the lector for that day; in fact, I hid in the library with a classmate. But my classmate felt ill so I brought her to the clinic, which was near to our school chapel. A few minutes before the Mass procession started, our chaplain saw me and asked if I could serve since there was no lector. As if on cue, my classmate's boyfriend came and said he'd take care of my friend. Our chaplain knowingly looked at me with a half smile, and I was left with no choice.

After the Mass, I gazed at the Man on the cross and asked, "Don't You ever get tired of me? Can't You see? No matter how much I serve and know You, I'm hopeless! I don't want to pretend anymore. I'm tired of running away, coming back, and falling into sin again. There's no way out for me."

Silence.

Then a gentle voice inside my heart spoke to me, "Yes, you know Me,

but if you only know what I see in you, you'll understand why I keep chasing after you. I know who you really are. I know what's beneath your pain and fear. I know you because I created you. You are My beloved. You are My joy. You are My child. And nothing can ever change that truth—not your past, not your sins, not your shame."

God's words embraced me like a warm blanket. It melted my stone-cold heart. Slowly, I felt the walls that I built around myself break down, I could almost hear them crash.


I picked up my Bible and turned to a prayer that David wrote with a repentant heart. He was a man after God's own heart, yet he fell into grave sin. I couldn't question him because I was just like him. But even if he sinned, God forgave him.

As I read Psalm 51, I made each word my own prayer. That afternoon was the start of something new for me. I declared and believed that God will, "Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7, NIV). That afternoon, I learned to forgive myself. I may fail and sin again, but God's unfailing love is enough assurance that I can bounce back. I finally discovered who I really am and my identity gave me courage to start anew.

I stepped out of my tower, and basked in His light.

Happy Ever After

Now, I am free, joyful, and enthusiastic towards life again. It's been years since my tower crashed down. I went through counseling where I opened up about my past as part of my healing process. I have completely forgiven my abusers, and genuinely forgiven myself. It was only when I learned to appreciate and forgive myself that I was able to experience happiness like never before. Freedom, finally.

I continue serving God through pastoral missions—discipling youth and young professionals one-on-one, speaking to students about self-love, and writing about God's love. Like Rapunzel in her movie, I find myself singing to God every day, "At last I see the light. All at once, everything is different now that I see You." 



The Passion of Christ

Who's to Blame?

By Dina Pecaña




Icon Productions

released in 2004. Film reviews were one in cautioning the public about the graphic brutality and violent way that Jesus' suffering and death had been portrayed in the movie. Curiosity and a desire to contemplate deeply the sacrifice Jesus made for us sinners sealed my decision to watch the movie during the Holy Week of that year. But just a few minutes into the movie, I was shocked and in tears, flinching at the scene showing Jesus being tortured by Roman soldiers with whips tearing at His skin, that ended with the soldiers dragging Him, beaten and bloodied, across the courtyard. The movie caught me off guard—I was not emotionally prepared for it. But I watched it to the end where I was comforted by a glimpse into Christ's resurrection. I was emotionally drained, tired, and felt a nagging sense of guilt that lasted for weeks after watching it. Having seen how Jesus suffered (albeit only in a movie) even though He did not deserve it, I wanted to find someone to blame—the Jewish leaders, Pontius Pilate, the Romans, the devil. But then who really is to blame?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* teaches us what was declared during the Second Vatican Council: "Neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his Passion. . . The Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from Holy Scripture" (597). The CCC further explains that all sinners, us included, are responsible for Christ's passion and death, and that the Jews alone are not entirely to blame: "We must regard as guilty all those who continue to relapse into their sins. Since our sins made the Lord Christ suffer the torment of the cross, those who plunge themselves into

disorders and crimes crucify the Son of God anew in their hearts (for he is in them) and hold him up to contempt. And it can be seen that our crime in this case is greater in us than in the Jews. As for them, according to the witness of the Apostle, 'None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.' Nor did demons crucify him; it is you who have crucified him and crucify him still, when you delight in your vices and sins" (598).

We may not completely understand why the Father chose to send His only Son to die for us on the cross but we must believe that He did so out of love. Romans 5:8 says, "But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." To shed light on this mystery, the CCC also explains how Jesus willingly gave His life for love of the Father and us all: "By embracing in his human heart the Father's love for men, Jesus 'loved them to the end,' for 'greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' Indeed, out of love for his Father and for men, whom the Father wants to save, Jesus freely accepted his Passion and death: 'No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord'" (609).

This Lenten season and every time we celebrate the Eucharist, let us look at Jesus crucified and thank Him for His redeeming love. Though undeserving, "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3). Let us "take up [our cross] and follow him" (Matthew 16:24) and unite our pain, trial, and suffering with Christ's very own. 

E-mail your questions about the Catholic catechism at editsvp@shepherdsvoice.com.ph.

There were a lot of opinions and sentiments from different camps when Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* was first



You Are the Result of the Choices You Make

I have a lot of beliefs brought forth by many influences—my parents, education, friends, and mentors—that impacted by career life.

I'm sure you have these as well.

So you might say you're an output of all those experiences and relationships with others. However, I'd like to differ.

I have many influences, but it is only when I own those beliefs that they begin to matter.

Let me give you an example on spirituality. I grew up in a family of devout Catholics. You can sense that with our names. My sister is named Rona Rosario. My brother is Rene Perpetuo. And me? Rex Maria Jose, which is the Holy Family—The King, Mary, and Joseph.

We prayed every night as a family and it was a wonderful

thing to do. However, when I was young, I questioned that. "Why do I have to go through all of those beads of the rosary?" "Why do I have to repeat the prayer again and again?" "Why do I have to read that novena?" "Why can't I just talk to God?" "Why can't I use my own words?"

When my parents went to Quiapo and Baclaran, my sister and brother went as well. I was forced to join them at times, but it was not an enjoyable thing because in my head, I was questioning it. Even if there was a lot of influence, I still took time to say my own prayers. I still took time to converse and talk to God in a different way. Now that I'm older, I've gone back to praying the rosary and the novenas, and I don't have the same reaction to them as I did before.

Today, I appreciate them

By Rex Mendoza

more because of the kind of spirituality I already have, and the kind of acceptance that is now etched in my heart.

There were also some beliefs that I embraced, practiced, and owned. For example, when someone told me, "Rex, you have to start reading books. You have to start learning from others." That didn't resonate well initially because I wasn't a reader. I'd rather watch or listen. But in time, I realized that it was true that I get more depth out of learning when I read. Eventually, I started owning that and became a voracious reader.

In the end, it's not the influencer or the mentor; it is what you receive or accept. And when you own the belief, that's the only time they begin to matter.



Beliefs That Work for Me

People influence you only up to the extent that you allow them to. The way you imbibe the values and beliefs is up to you.

Let me go through certain beliefs that are important to me. I share this a lot in my talks.

1. The whole world is conspiring to make me a success.

That means being an inverse paranoid.

A paranoid person thinks that everyone is conspiring to harm him and put him down. I believe the other way around. And this strong belief empowers me and leads me to many opportunities.

For example, you lost your wallet in a room. You immediately think who could have possibly taken it. You

already have a negative reaction, and the emotion that follows it is also negative.

Other people who don't have that mindset would immediately think, "Who's pulling a joke on me?" They believe that majority of people do not steal. Their reaction is lighter and their thinking process will not be too negative. When your definition of people tends to be negative, then your view of your world is negative. That hampers how you trust others, how you coordinate and collaborate. And that will limit what you can achieve within a team.

Being an inverse paranoid will require you to be more trusting and will make you vulnerable. We are naturally wired to survive and have a strong tendency to protect ourselves. It will require a bit of risk and effort to have this mindset, but I assure you that it actually works.

When you think the whole world is there to make you a success, even your enemies can be friends.

2. I love being with people.

This is why many of the businesses and positions that I've had in my life are characterized by getting value, information, and experiences from people.

I am the kind of person who will never stay alone in a room for more than thirty minutes. I will always have a conversation with others. It's important that you know what you're good at and you know what you love doing. I love being with people and, for me, any endeavor I undertake has to involve others.

3. There is nothing I cannot learn if I put my heart in it.


Anything that's out there that I don't understand, I can learn if I want to. However, I will only focus on the things that I want to learn. And the choice is always mine.

For example, I have friends

who can fly airplanes. I don't exactly want to be a pilot, so I'm not going to waste my time just to say I can fly. I will rely on professionals and experts who are great at what I don't like doing. I will master and learn more of the areas around my passion and purpose.

4. I can't fail the people who are special to me.

That has been my conviction through the many years in my career, in the businesses that I handled, in all the investments that I've made, and in my life in general. I can't fail the people who are special to me. The people whom I love are over and above everything else. At the very least, they are my priority, next to God and country.

Embrace full responsibility and accountability. Because if you know that the power rests in your hands, things will be different. That will be the only time you can truly say, "You know, if it is to be, it's up to me." 

This is an excerpt from Rex Mendoza's upcoming book, Firing on All Cylinders, available soon at www.kerygmabooks.com.

Rex Mendoza is the president and CEO of Rampver Financials, a dynamic niche player in financial services specializing in investments and the biggest nonbank distributor of mutual funds in the Philippines. He is a director of several firms, which include Globe Telecom, Prime Orion Properties, Inc., Esquire Financing, Inc., the Cullinan Group, TechnoMarine Philippines, Seven Tall Trees Events Company, Inc., Mobile Group, Inc., and a trustee of the Bataan Peninsula State College. His first book is titled, Trailblazing Success, available at www.kerygmabooks.com.

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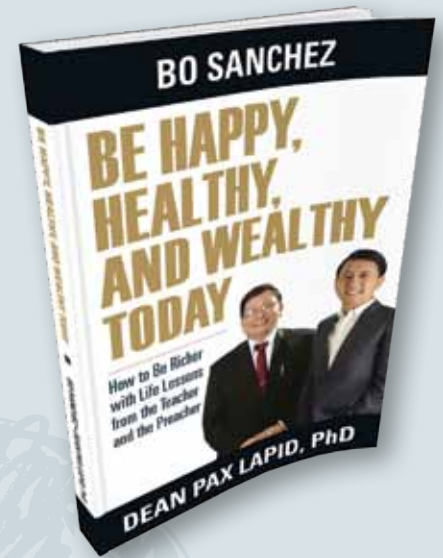
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In this book, you will learn about:

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- ✓ Valuable Nuggets of Financial Wisdom
- ✓ Snippets of Business Success
- ✓ How to Live in Significance and Trust
- ✓ The Pattern of a Miracle

Drink up their stories, their experiences, and their lessons. Their life lists are an invitation for you to create your own. Listen and learn from the teacher and the preacher, and start living a fulfilled life. Be happy, healthy, and wealthy today.



As a young and innocent student in the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, one of my favorite subjects was pharmacology. I learned thousands of pharmaceutical drugs from voluminous textbooks available out there. I got my highest grades in medical school in that subject. I had an aptitude for memorizing a drug's generic name, which I would repeat continuously in my head to make sure that I will be well-prepared for professional practice.

Most drug advertising fine prints say, "If symptoms persist, consult your doctor." But I am the kind of doctor who would tell you, "If symptoms persist, better consult the source of your illness."

In the past, I might ask you to take more of the same drug, switch to another brand, or go through a battery of tests to find out if there exists a better set of chemicals that can stop the symptoms that are bothering you.

If I were to involve myself in treating your symptom, I would only be focused on getting rid of fever, a cough, a pain, a swelling, a tumor, or a migraine. If symptoms stopped, would we consider that you're already healed?

It doesn't matter to me anymore what your symptoms might be aside from acting as the indicator. Symptoms should never be the main point of discussion, as it often used to be. The biggest question is, what is the deepest root of your illness?

Let me tell you what I might do.

Now, if you had hypertension, here's what I might write on my prescription pad:



The Essential Shift

Treating the Root Cause, Not Just the Symptom

1. To alkalinize your body, I would ask you to drink calamansi daily.
2. To self-nourish, you would take in a combined set of fruits and vegetables, sometimes eaten, sometimes blended as a smoothie.
3. Strictly abstain from eating 3M (*mamoy, maka, manok*). He, he, he!
4. Drink at least two liters of water a day.
5. Exercise regularly.
6. Smile more often.
7. Manage your stress.


Treating the symptom is very different from treating the root cause. The prescription you saw above is an example of treating the root cause. Treating the symptom bypasses the empowering nature of the body that it needs for healing to happen. You can't buy healing just as you can't buy your happiness, fulfillment, and life

Dr. Romy Paredes

meaning.

There is a medical crisis that affects the rich and more especially those who cannot afford the skyrocketing expense of healthcare. The problem escalates in consideration of the statistics that show there are more kinds of diseases and a greater percentage of the population suffering from them than ever before. Another statistics show that there are more dialysis and chemotherapy procedures done today than in the past.

As a doctor who advises patients to cease both their dependence on me and the drugs I can prescribe, the actual cure I give is called freedom and trust. You have to free yourself from dependence and at the same time, learn to trust your own body's capacity to self-heal and regenerate.

The benefits of these two are too many to list down. 

Dr. Romy is the founder of Wellnessland, a healing and wholeness center in Cebu. He authored Health Made Incredibly Simple, available at www.kerygmabooks.com.

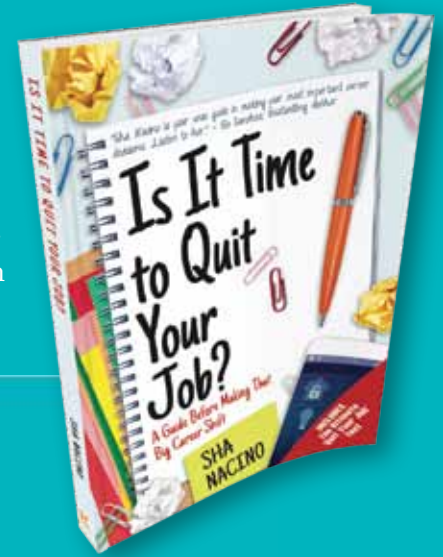


Don't Quit for the Wrong Reasons!

Are you sick and tired of your job? Do you want to quit and do something else? Is your boss giving you an unreasonable amount of stress? Is there too much gossip, politics, and negativity in your workplace? Do you feel unappreciated, overworked, and underpaid? Don't quit just yet!

This book will help you pause and assess if quitting your job now is your best option. Based on her own employee-to-entrepreneur shift, Sha Nacino gives you tips on how to:

- Love your job even if you hate it
- Discover and develop your unique core competency
- Make money without quitting your job yet
- Plan if you've already decided to quit, and many more.



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Foster Responsibility at Home

Getting kids to become responsible can be a difficult thing to achieve, especially the younger ones.

The first-born kids are usually able to handle responsibilities well but may end up doing too much. The middle children may get some of the responsibility, and the youngest ones sometimes end up not being responsible at all because they are hardly given any responsibilities. This is usually the case.

Here's a little trick we used with my kids when they were younger.

We have three kids and we would tell the eldest to take care of the second born, and then we would tell the second born to take care of the youngest, and then we would tell the youngest to take care of the eldest. Even if

it was quite impossible for the youngest to take care of the eldest (they have a five-year age gap), it still instilled in them the idea that they are responsible for someone, and they all have their fair share of responsibility.

Try this out with your kids:

During the summer vacation, assign household chores to the kids that are age-appropriate. This will teach them responsibility over the family's possessions. Have them help out with washing the dishes, setting the table, washing the car, shining shoes, and changing the toilet paper rolls in the bathroom. Include watering the plants, wiping dry plates and utensils, etc.

The myth that the eldest child is the only responsible one can be changed by instilling a few ideas and rules in the household. Although

By Allan and Maribel
Dionisio

at a certain age the youngest cannot still do things that the eldest is doing, instill in his/her mind that he/she has some age-appropriate responsibilities too. Share responsibilities among children, don't just let one handle everything. Having one child receive the brunt of responsibilities can bring about burnout and resentment on the part of the child.

Make sure everyone has that sense of responsibility that they will need when they are adults. **K**

Dr. Allan and Ms. Maribel Dionisio are both graduates of the Family Ministry course from the Loyola School of Theology of the Ateneo de Manila University. They are sought-after speakers and resource persons at workshops, radio and television programs on parenting, marriage, and family.



YUNG TOTOO? PANGIT BA AKO?

Have you ever asked this question before? Sabay follow up ng, “Kung ‘di ako pangit, eh bakit single pa rin ako?” This may be the biggest question that many singles, who have not yet found their partner in life, are asking.

If this question is answered incorrectly, it will lead to discontent, impatience, and misery. Kaya imbes na mag-enjoy ka sa pagiging single mo, tinatrato mo ito bilang sumpa na kailangan mo nang malampasan o takasan.

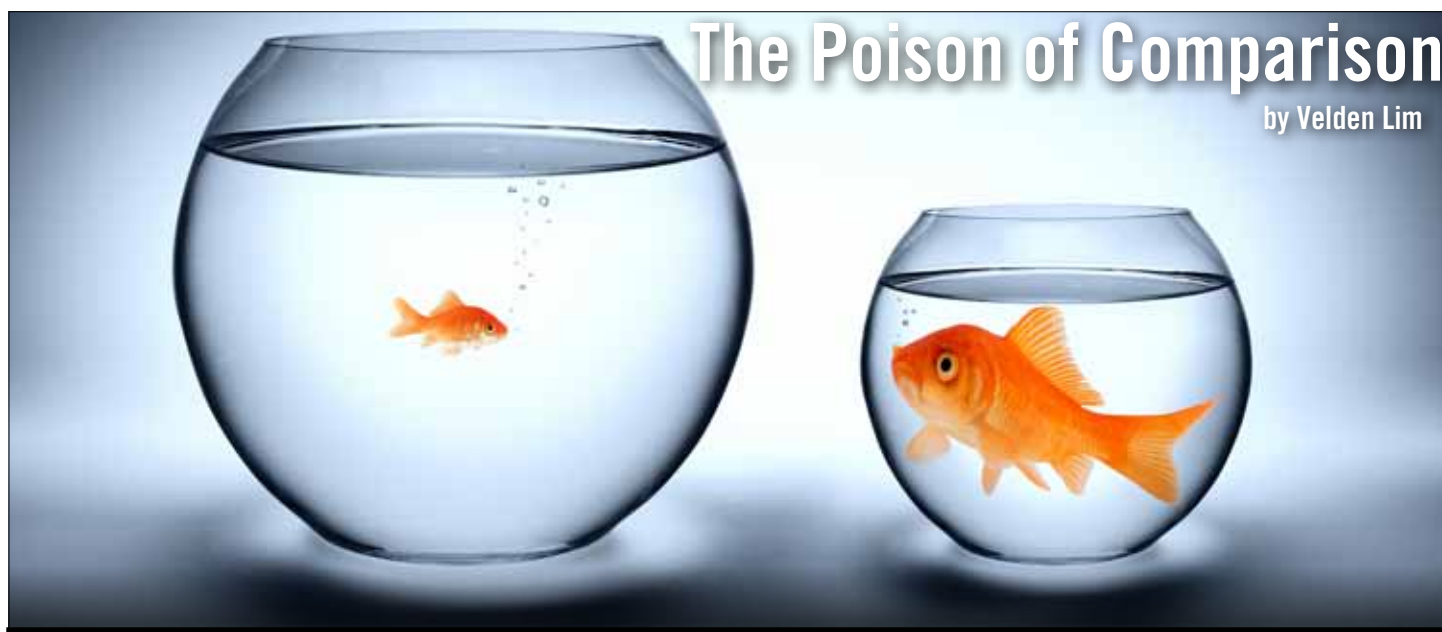
SO BAKIT SINGLE KA PA RIN?

Kasi marami kang kalokohang pinaniniwalaan tungkol sa pag-ibig.

This book will reveal these relationship myths and other crazy things you believed about love while growing up. Let this book guide you not only in finding your one true love, but also in living your single life to the fullest.



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The Poison of Comparison

by Velden Lim

When my wife and I got married, we were blessed with a house from my parents. My parents had it constructed to sell it. Unfortunately (fortunately for us), the house was not yet sold that time. Out of my parents' generosity, they let us use it until such time we are ready to have a place of our own.

It is a three-bedroom, three-storey house in a ninety-square-meter lot. Each bedroom has a bathroom. The living room, dining room, and kitchen are spacious enough. It has a one-car garage, a maid's room with toilet and bath, plus a terrace where we can chill and enjoy the breeze at the rooftop. It's on the main road, accessible to the grocery, jeepney and tricycle terminals. And the best part is we don't have to pay for rent. Truly, it was heaven-sent.

Three years later, a friend invited us to their new house. Their lot is three times bigger than ours. It has bigger rooms, a garage for two cars, and a huge lawn. My wife exclaimed, "This is my dream house and neighborhood!" I couldn't agree more. We had a nice time and

went home afterwards. As I parked my car inside our garage, I felt a tinge of sadness. Suddenly, our one-car garage seemed too small. When we got out of the car, we noticed the polluted air and noise coming from the main road. The rooms felt cramped. We both cried out, "This house is too small, too ugly, and too old." We forgot how beautiful our house was!

American pastor Craig Groeschel said, "The best way to kill something special is to compare it with something else." That's what comparison does. It poisons our heart with discontent.


It's not bad to dream and aspire for better things. But in the course of wanting to "be more," "do more," and "have more," we might forget to be grateful for the blessings we already have. I believe we have a lot of under-appreciated blessings: under-appreciated jobs, under-appreciated spouses, under-appreciated children, and under-appreciated lives because we keep on comparing them to something else.

Have you noticed that race horses have blinders? Their masters put blinders as an anti-distraction device. Blinders make the horse focus on his own lane. Without it, the horse will look around and wander instead of rushing to the finish line.

It's the same with us. We cannot finish the race God has set before us if we keep on looking at what our neighbors do and achieve.

In the age of social media, it's tempting to compare our lives to the newsfeeds of our friends. But let's be reminded that what we see in social media is usually the "best of the best." You rarely see someone post their three-in-one coffee; instead, you see an expensive frappuccino. You don't see a photo of the trash along the trail of a mountain; instead, you see a majestic view at the top. I love what preacher Steven Furtick said, "Stop comparing your behind-the-scenes to someone else's highlight reel." Remember, you have your own highlight reel and they have their own behind-the-scenes as well.

May we stop comparing "and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2, NIV).

You can never win a race you're not meant to run. Run your own race and you will never lose. Because nobody can beat you at being you. 

Velden Lim is the builder of The Feast SM Bicutan. He wrote a book titled, Bakit Single Ka Pa Rin, available at www.kerygmabooks.com.



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did not see myself being part of a faith community. I felt that that the two-hour praise and worship was just all too much for me.

Then it happened. In 2012, my wife Marie met an accident. Examinations in the hospital showed that she had brain tumor.

She began to seek God and His will for her. There were times I saw her in tears, struggling as she did with her anxieties and questions about her trials. I could not provide answers.

She calmed down and gained hope when she found The Feast. She learned to pray and read inspiring verses in the Holy Bible. She invited me to join her in her prayer and Scripture time but I opted to watch television. She attended spiritual seminars and asked me to go with her. I declined.

I could see that Marie felt alone. She wanted me to be part of the spiritual renewal but I simply didn't have the enthusiasm. I wasn't ready. I was a baptized Catholic. I like our religion because it emphasizes humility and love for the poor.

But there was a time when my spiritual life was empty. I would try to hear Mass because that's our tradition as Catholics—no more, no less.

Finding The Feast

After a few days since my wife first attended The Feast, she received an invitation for an event titled "Life Saver." It was handed to her by her mother, who at the time, hadn't heard of The Feast. The invite turned out to be



NOMINAL, IRREGULAR, AND THEN A TUMOR

By Joseph Gerard Dizon

from The Feast Ortigas led by Vic Español. I went with my wife. Two years later, we were asked to join The Feast Greenhills led by JPaul Hernandez.

Each Sunday, I saw my wife soaked with tears, lifting her hands, fully surrendering herself to God. I felt there was acceptance, relief, and so much love that was filling her up, which at the time I could not understand. I saw a remarkable change in her—how her fears disappeared as she began to trust the Lord.

That's when I began to pray. I asked God to help me overcome my apathy. I realized how much I needed the Lord in my life.

From Bad to Worse

In February 2014, Marie underwent Gamma Knife surgery. After a week, she went back to work and took on the same responsibilities she had. But the repercussions were severe. Four months after her operation, she suffered from brain swelling. The tests showed that there was water in her brain, or necrosis, which also left a scar in her brain that could have been fatal.

According to her neurologist, the image of her brain looked as if it belonged to a person who had


been in a very bad car accident. So she was put on steroids for three months which could have also brought complications.

But we prayed and kept our faith. Despite Marie's condition, she still attended the Sunday Feast and tried to keep a positive outlook.

The Miracle of Faith

Then, in January 2015, she had her annual checkup. My wife was so afraid of what the neurologist was going to say.

But to her amazement, her doctor said, "Your tests showed remarkable results. The scar in your brain is gone, your brain went back to its normal state, and lastly, your tumor has decreased in size."

I remember Marie calling me and crying for joy over what the Lord had done for her. Indeed it's true: God answers prayers. It's only through His work that my wife's healing became possible. Filled with gratitude, we now serve the Lord—helping to grow the couples light group of The Feast that strengthened our faith. 

I PRAY THAT YOU RECEIVE YOUR MIRACLES IN JESUS' NAME!

I PRAY THAT GOD LIFT YOUR TRIALS, heal your diseases, bless your problems, and direct you to the path He wants you to take. I pray that God remove your fears and give you the courage to surrender your burdens to Him.

So place your hand over my hand, and let's pray with trust, together with our prayer team of intercessors praying for you right now...

This page is our Point of Contact, our spiritual connection.
Say after me...

In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, I surrender to You my worries and anxieties. I surrender to You my needs, my problems, my trials. I place them all in Your big hands. And I open myself to all that You want to give to me. On this day, I say yes to Your love, to Your blessings, to Your healing, to Your miracles. And Lord, specifically, I ask for the following miracles for my life...

I believe that You answer my prayer in the best way possible! And I thank You in advance for the perfect answers to my prayers. I also ask for the special intercession of Mama Mary. I pray all this in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



SPECIAL INTENTION FOR THIS MONTH:

Father in heaven, we give You our praise and thanksgiving. Thank You for not giving up on us. Thank You for Your limitless compassion. Thank You for Your endless mercy.

Help us to forgive those who have hurt us, including ourselves. We pray for our brothers and sisters who are victims of rage, war, and pride. Heal their hearts and may Your light and peace overcome. In the mighty name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Praying for you,

E-mail your prayer requests to me at bosanchez@kerygmfamily.com or write to me at Shepherd's Voice Publications, #60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines 1109.

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