

# THE *Encourager*

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DAVE DRAVECKY'S OUTREACH OF HOPE

## The Rocky Road of

# Relationships

## We Need Each Other!

by *Dave Dravecky*



**No one is wise enough to live alone, nor good enough nor strong enough. God has made us to a large degree dependent upon each other. From our brethren we can learn how to do things and sometimes also we can learn how not to do them. . . . Next to God Himself we need each other most. We are His sheep and it is our nature to live with the flock. And too, it might be well to remember that should we for a moment lose sight of the Shepherd we only have to go where His flock is to find Him again. The Shepherd always stays with His flock.**

A.W. Tozer  
*Born After Midnight*

**T**he school of pain and suffering teaches many lessons, and one rarely finds a student who has not learned something very important—even life-changing—about God, life, or relationships. These powerful, vivid lessons often leave an indelible mark on the character of their students. For me, one of the powerful lessons of pain and suffering had to do with relationships.

Before my cancer and the eventual amputation of my arm, I had friends, but I didn't understand how important those relationships really were. Sure, I enjoyed my friends. It was nice to have friends. But it didn't seem to me that I *needed* those relationships. Boy did that change!

I learned that you cannot—and I mean, *cannot*—get through pain and suffering on your own. You eventually come to the end of yourself, and you need another person there to stand beside you and lift you up. To have a friend who is willing to make the personal sacrifice to be with you so that you are not alone is a powerful thing. When I was struggling, it was really important for me to know that my close friends were willing to sacrifice for me. Their sacrifice was a demonstration of God's love for me.

I also learned that in the midst of pain and suffering you need another person whom you trust and with whom you can

share your struggles and your pain. To have a friend who doesn't come with an agenda, but who comes purely to be an encouragement is an amazing thing. When, in the midst of my pain, I could connect with another human being and share what was on my heart, it helped me recognize that God still loved and cared for me. It helped me realize that I could rely on God even in the midst of my suffering.

These lessons still affect me today. I have a tendency to be a loner, but I know how important good relationships are in my life, so building relationships that last is an important focus of my life. The memories of what others did for me encourage me to be the kind of friend that others were to me. They help me remember that when someone has a need, it's important to be there—not to find an answer for the problem or to resolve the struggle, but to be there as a friend and an encouragement.

As you read *The Encourager*, I hope for two things. First, that you will recognize how very important (and difficult) relationships are in the midst of pain and suffering. Second, that the practical helps in this issue will enable you to successfully navigate the inevitable rocky spots. A.W. Tozer was absolutely right when he wrote that we can't do it alone. We are dependent on one another, and "next to God Himself, we need each other most."

# Relationships

## In the Midst of Suffering

by Jan Dravecky



**W**hen Dave was pitching for the San Francisco Giants, we had a good life. We had a good marriage, two great kids, and a growing relationship with God. We had good friends and some close relationships, but baseball life had moved us around enough that we found it difficult to maintain close relationships. We had each other. What more could we need?

We approached Dave's cancer, with all its career- and life-changing implications, in much the same way we handled anything else—thinking that our relationship with each other was all we needed to get through it. After all, our culture teaches us that the one person you can trust, the one person you can lean on, is yourself and that each of us has everything we need within ourselves. So the fact that Dave and I also had each other seemed to be more than enough. We were in for a surprise.

As Dave's cancer progressed, we found ourselves in a predicament. Dave was too sick to be a support to me, and when I became depressed, I was unable to be a support to him. We reached a point at which we no longer had each other for emotional support. By that time we had moved away from our baseball friends, and we had no close friends on whom we could lean. Plus, because we were so accustomed to depending on ourselves, we didn't know how to need and depend on other people. We were surprised to discover how important it is to be able to count on the support that comes through close relationships with other people during an extended time of suffering.

When I lost Dave's emotional support, I didn't know what to do. I was dying inside because I didn't have anyone else in my life on whom I would lean. The one per-

son I had needed most in my life was my mother, and when she died so suddenly, a part of me decided to never need anyone that much again. So I stood alone.

My fear of loss in close relationships didn't change the fact that I was human and that I needed those relationships, however. The line from the song Barbara Streisand made famous, "People who need people are the luckiest people in the world," is very true. God created us with the need for close relationships, and He has provided other people to meet that need. In Genesis 2:18, we read that God considered Adam and said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." That simple sentence helped me realize that we are made to need other people and that we will suffer if we don't have those relationships.



*When you  
are suffering,  
every relationship  
you have is tested.*

We not only need relationships with other people, we also need to have healthy relationships. It wasn't enough for me to know that I needed close relationships in my life and to seek them out. I also needed to learn what makes those relationships healthy. When you go through a period of suffering, it is especially important to have

and to maintain healthy relationships. It is also more challenging to do so because when you are suffering, every relationship you have is tested.

Relationships have to endure through the many changes that suffering brings. In our case, we went from one extreme to another. When we realized that we needed other close relationships, that we needed other people involved in our lives, we discovered that we had friends who would stand by us. They stepped in and let us lean on them. That was wonderful, but we leaned on them too much. We encouraged them to take responsibility for areas of our lives and to make decisions for which we needed to take responsibility. They became used to running our lives, and when we were well enough to once again take responsibility for those areas, they were hurt. By resuming our responsibilities, we appeared to be rejecting them and their care for us, which was not the case at all. We simply needed to take back responsibilities that were rightfully ours. It took time for the changes in those relationships to be accepted and for the hurt to heal.

An added trial for relationships that endure through suffering is that all the imperfections in the relationship become exaggerated. For example, you may have been in a relationship in which one particular thing irritated you. For years you may have consciously overlooked that one thing. But after dealing with suffering for a period of time, your patience runs out. You're tired, you've given all you have to give, and that one little thing you have ignored for years comes up. And suddenly you can't handle it. You become angry, you burst into tears, you criticize—whatever. The presence of another's imperfection brings your imperfection bubbling to the surface!

# Relationships

## Balancing Changing Needs



Clashing imperfections can lead to a relational meltdown, but they don't have to. Within healthy relationships there is a recognition that each one of us is imperfect. Healthy relationships are seasoned with grace. Grace accepts a person for who he or she is inside regardless of the behavior that surfaces when the person is under stress. Grace realizes that suffering brings out the worst in a person and loves the person in spite of it. Grace realizes that the person is probably just as horrified about his or her imperfect behavior as you are.

When Dave was battling cancer, he was at times very angry. I remember thinking, *Oh, he doesn't want to be this way.* I knew who Dave really was. I knew that the "good stuff" was still there. Grace remembers that despite the ugly stuff that comes to the surface, the good stuff is still there. I have that grace for Dave, and he has that grace for me. So our relationship endures. It's not conditional.

Conditional love, whether it is in a marriage, a friendship, or another family relationship, will be challenged by suffering. Unconditional love endures because it accepts and loves no matter what. This does not mean that a person becomes a doormat. Appropriate boundaries and respect are essential in a healthy relationship.

It's no secret that relationships suffer when we suffer. Unhealthy relationships can be especially tumultuous. Despite the challenges we encounter, relationships remain extremely important. Relationships help us endure trials that would otherwise cause us to fall. But it's important to walk in grace and forgiveness so that those relationships can be what God intends them to be. If we persevere, we will find that our relationships will mature and become some of the most precious blessings in this life—and in the life to come.

It's hard enough to keep healthy, balanced relationships when life is going well, but when we find ourselves on the rocky, unpredictable road of adversity, it's almost impossible. Relationships get complicated—fast. Family and friends of those who are suffering often feel like they're walking on eggshells, never quite sure what is expected of them, what to do, how much to help, when to back away, or what to say. Sometimes they react in extremes: undermining the cancer patient's self-esteem by doing too much and interfering in every aspect of life or totally withdrawing.

The Bible, God's manual for healthy relationships, provides some guidelines that can help us deal with the changing needs of relationships under stress. These guidelines remind us of our true needs and suggest ways to meet those needs without stepping on toes, abandoning, or demeaning the one who is suffering.

### What I Need

I need your presence when I'm suffering (Job 6:14).

I need your prayers. At times my suffering makes me feel far from God and my prayer life suffers because of it (Ephesians 6:18).

I need your God-given gifts to strengthen and encourage me (1 Peter 4:10).

I need your strength to help me carry my burden (Galatians 6:2).

I need your unconditional love when I'm not lovely (2 Timothy 1:16-18).

Sometimes I need your advice when I'm not sure what to do (Proverbs 12:15).

I need you to accept my tears and to acknowledge the pain that prompted them (Romans 12:15).

I need your silence at times to acknowledge the depth of my pain (Job 2:11-13).

I need to be left alone sometimes to sort out my emotions and to talk with God (Matthew 14:23).

I need your hand to reach down and lift me up when I fall (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

I need to know your struggles so that I can serve you and not just focus on my pain (Philippians 2:4).

### How I Need It

Please keep your promise to be near. Your presence reminds me that God hasn't forgotten me (Proverbs 3:28).

The greatest gift you can give me is to connect me to God, to lift my needs before Him (Mark 2:1-5).

I need your gifts to be motivated by love—not pity or a need to "fix" or correct me (1 Corinthians 13:8, 13).

Please don't try to carry my whole burden. You'll undermine my self-esteem and independence (Galatians 6:5).

When you withdraw from me, my sorrow only increases (Job 6:14-17).

I need support and encouragement more than advice, so please give advice only when I ask for it (Proverbs 12:18).

Tears may be uncomfortable, but I need to express my pain. Don't minimize my sorrow. Let me cry (Ecclesiastes 3:4).

Suffering is sacred ground that often defies explanation and, therefore, words (Ecclesiastes 3:7).

I know my needs can be hard to figure out. They're confusing to me, too, so you'll need to let the Holy Spirit lead and direct you (Galatians 5:18).

I don't need an explanation or judgment as to why I'm down (James 4:12).

Don't try to protect me from your pain. It makes me feel as if I have no value as a friend or as a believer (Galatians 6:2).



# Relationships in Trouble

## The Ripple Effect

**He that cannot  
forgive others  
breaks the bridge  
over which he  
must pass himself;  
for every man  
has to be forgiven.**

GEORGE HERBERT

**F**ive years ago, Jennifer Smith descended into the valley of adversity. Like many others who travel the lowlands of pain and sorrow, she began her journey by walking upright—strong and full of faith. But during the years that followed, a series of devastating events and a crushing relationship problem undermined her strength and her once rock-solid faith, reducing her walk to a crawl.

Her journey through the valley began when William, the youngest of her three sons, was diagnosed with cancer. William endured three months of daily radiation and hypothermia treatments, but the cancer in his arm continued to grow. When he was 19, William's left arm had to be amputated in order to save his life.

At first, as is true for many amputees, William handled the changes in his life well. But the prolonged stares, the unanswered questions, and the shattered dreams proved to be more than this athletic, sensitive young adult could manage. Like many other amputees, William slid into a deep depression. The next few years brought four failed suicide attempts, drug addiction, and admission into a treatment facility that required his entire family to move halfway across the country so that they could be near him.

In their new surroundings, they were very much alone. But Jennifer's strong faith and deep bonds with her husband and other two sons seemed to meet her relationship needs. After all, she was battling

for her son's life. Who but family could possibly understand?

Three years after her youngest son lost his arm to cancer, her oldest son, Cody, was in an automobile accident. When they got to the hospital, Cody lay in a coma, hooked up to life support. The doctors held out little hope for his recovery, but the family refused to give up.

For the next year, despite William's suicide attempts and near fatal overdoses, Jennifer, her husband, and their middle son, Andrew, fought tenaciously for Cody. Although he regained consciousness, severe head trauma left him with the functional and intellectual capabilities of a toddler. Still, the family prayed, accompanied him to grueling physical therapy, and—despite professional recommendations that Cody be institutionalized—brought him home.

Even though her oldest son didn't know her or recognize her as his mother and her youngest son was racing headlong down a self-destructive path, Jennifer still had the support and love of her husband and middle son. Or so it seemed. That's why the call caught her by surprise. It was one of Andrew's best friends from back home. He had called to confirm what day Andrew would arrive.

Arrive? Jennifer didn't even know he was leaving! She knew that he was having trouble watching Cody struggle. She and her husband had even gone apartment hunting with him, hoping to help him find a place of his own so he could have some much-needed space yet remain close to the family. But why would he move halfway across the country? Why didn't he tell her?

Shocked, hurt, and feeling deeply betrayed, Jennifer confronted her son, asking how he could possibly walk out on his family when they needed him so much. His only response didn't ease her pain: "I just can't take it anymore." Jennifer "couldn't take" her son's response. Days later, locked in her bedroom in self-imposed exile, she listened as her son

loaded his belongings into his car and left. She didn't say goodbye. She didn't even speak to him for a year.

Despite talking with her priest and continually asking God to help her forgive her son, Jennifer couldn't bring herself to forgive him. "I understood why he had to leave" Jennifer explains, "but the way he did it hurt so much." She tried to forgive him because she knew she had to, but she didn't think she could ever truly forgive him—and many times she wasn't sure she wanted to.

Jennifer didn't know how to break the cycle, how to break free from the hurt, so she held onto her anger. Her bitterness grew. In time, she discovered that her relationship with Andrew wasn't the only troubled relationship in her life. Although she never lost her faith in God, Jennifer concedes that she lost the ability to sense His love and presence. "I still believed in God and went to church, but I knew something was missing. I didn't feel the presence of God during that time. I had no joy or happiness."

One year after he left, Andrew called home during the day—something he never did because he knew his mom wouldn't talk to him. But this call was different. He was crying. He was scared. He had developed several painful lumps on his back, lumps that reminded him of William's cancer. He needed his family.

And Jennifer needed to look at their relationship from a fresh perspective. She had nearly lost two sons to tragedy. As she found herself facing the possibility of losing a third son, her anger and bitterness seemed out of place and inappropriate. She dropped to her knees as soon as she hung up the phone and prayed for her son like she hadn't in years.

She found herself praying for forgiveness, too. "I had to ask God to forgive me for walking in bitterness for a year. I had lost a year with my son, a year that I can never get back." As one who had felt the sting of betrayal and disappointment

firsthand, she learned an important truth about forgiveness. “Life is so short, you have to forgive. How could you ever live with the guilt if the person you haven’t forgiven were to die?”

Andrew’s lumps turned out to be bone fragments from a previous injury. But like Jennifer’s unforgiveness, bitterness, and anger, they had to completely surface before they could be dealt with and removed. Today, Jennifer would say their relationship is fully restored, although she still wrestles with occasional angry thoughts. But she realizes that hurt was at the root of her anger toward her son. The trust between them was damaged, and Jennifer knows that restoring trust takes time. She also knows that a lack of forgiveness can rob us of the fellowship, joy, and peace that comes from the most important relationship of all—our relationship with God.

## The Painful Truth

Like many others who have traveled the rocky road of pain and suffering, Jennifer discovered some painful truths about human relationships:

- ◆ Count on it—relationship problems that were manageable before affliction become markedly worse during affliction.
- ◆ The more we love someone, the more it hurts when the relationship encounters difficulty.
- ◆ Relationship problems can’t always just be prayed away. They may also require time, appropriate action, or even outside intervention.
- ◆ Emotional pain can blind us from seeing the conflict clearly and taking the steps needed to bring reconciliation.
- ◆ Unresolved relationship problems often lead to depression.
- ◆ When we have relationship problems with family and friends, our relationship with God is always affected, and usually the effect is negative.
- ◆ A lack of forgiveness can cause us to lose our way spiritually.

# Relationships

## When Forgiveness Seems Impossible

*Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”*

MATTHEW 18:21,22

Corrie ten Boom lost her entire family in a Nazi concentration camp. She barely escaped with her own life. After the war, she spent her life preaching throughout the world about God’s love and forgiveness. And then one day, her message faced the ultimate test.

I saw him in a church in Munich—a balding, heavysset man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. People were filing out of the room where I had just spoken. It was 1947 and I had come from Holland to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives.

One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat; the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones. It came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights; the pile of clothes in the center of the floor; the shame of walking naked past this man. The place was Ravensbruck and the man had been a guard—one of the most cruel.

Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: “A fine message, Fraulein!” And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. I was face-to-face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

“You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk,” he was saying. “I was a guard there. But since that time, I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from you as well. Fraulein”—again the hand came out—“will you forgive me?”

I stood there and could not forgive. My sister Betsie had died in that place—could he erase her death simply for the asking? He didn’t stand there long, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do. I had to do it—I knew that. And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart.

Jesus, help me! I prayed silently. *I can lift my hand. You supply the feeling.* And so mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. “I forgive you, brother!” I cried. “With all my heart.” For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then.

But even so, I realized it was not my love. I had tried, and did not have the power. It was the power of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Romans 5:5,

“... because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

Condensed from “I’m Still Learning to Forgive” by Corrie ten Boom.  
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# Relationship Repair

*Even when you're tired of trying to work things out with others, someone understands your frustration, your confusion, your indifference. God understands because . . . He was the most misunderstood man ever to walk the earth. His parents didn't know how to handle his intellectual maturity. Political and religious leaders accused him of blasphemy and anarchy. Townspeople tried to throw him over a cliff. His co-workers questioned his motives. His closest friends turned their backs on him in his greatest hour of need. Yet in the midst of all the criticism, betrayal, and abandonment, this man called Jesus did not angrily defend himself or retaliate with harsh words or unkind actions.*

— from the Tapestry Series booklet, *Connected* ©1999 by International Bible Society

**G**od knows how difficult relationships can be. As evidence of His concern for us, the Bible is full of stories of relationships gone bad. It's also full of wisdom and instruction on how to conduct our relationships and how we are to respond when we encounter the inevitable problems that arise when human beings co-exist.

Are these instructions clear? Yes! Are they easy to carry out? No! In fact, obeying these instructions will require all of the integrity, character, patience, grace, kindness, gentleness, and perseverance we can muster—and more besides!

But do not lose heart! The road to healthy relationships has some rough spots, but it is not impassable. God has walked the road before us. When Jesus came to earth, he had to deal with all kinds of “people” problems. He has had personal experience in dealing with relationship challenges just like the ones we face. So He offers us far more than dos and don'ts. When we are overwhelmed and brokenhearted in our relationships, Jesus our Savior, who has borne the same burdens, can sympathize with us. And He goes far beyond offering His sympathy. He has also given us the gift of His Holy Spirit to empower us as we work through even the most difficult human relationships.

So let's take a look at our relationship problems. In one way or another, most of them are rooted in some type of hurt or woundedness. Sometimes the relationship goes awry because we are hurt, sometimes

because we have hurt another.

## What should I do when someone has wronged me?



- ◆ Although our initial reaction may be to respond with anger or even to retaliate, the Bible tells us not to “repay anyone evil for evil” (Romans 12:17).
- ◆ When our feelings are hurt, we need God's wisdom to help us identify and evaluate the reasons for our pain and then to determine how to respond. “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all” (James 1:5).
- ◆ Sometimes others hurt our feelings unintentionally and may even be unaware that we are hurt. Perhaps the reason for our hurt is that we are being overly sensitive or have placed unrealistic or improper expectations on our offender. But we can ask God to help us search our heart to see if the offense is warranted. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts” (Psalm 139:23).
- ◆ If we are to respond or take any action toward restoration, we need to make sure that we are operating in God's love, not just our own. We can ask God to help us love our offender. “May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other” (1 Thessalonians 3:12).
- ◆ Because God pours out His grace (which means undeserved kindness) on us, we also need to offer grace to those who mistreat or wrong us. The grace we offer to one another says, “You are broken, just like me. So I choose to treat you with kindness and favor.” Grace is something God will give to us (2 Corinthians 9:8).
- ◆ When others hurt our feelings, they often are responding out of their own pain or woundedness. They need our prayers. In fact, the Bible instructs us to “pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).
- ◆ When we have been offended, the Bible instructs us to forgive our offender. We do this not because we feel like forgiving. Few people ever feel like forgiving. We forgive because God tells us to. Forgiveness is an act of our will, not our emotions. “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).
- ◆ Sometimes an offense hurts us so deeply that we have to forgive our offender many times. We may need to forgive our offender not only for the offense, but also for the painful consequences that may have resulted. God understands the pain we can inflict



upon one another. He knows that we need His help and offers us His Spirit to help us forgive. Scripture promises that God will “give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” (Luke 11:13).

- ◆ The Bible tells us to go to our offender (note that it doesn’t say go to our neighbors, friends, etc.) and discuss the offense. The goal of this private discussion is to present the offense with honesty, humility, and gentleness so that the relationship can be restored. Scripture tells us that “if he listens to you, you have won your brother over” (Matthew 18:15).



### What should I do when I have wronged someone?

- ◆ If we have done anything to hurt or bring retaliation to another, we need to ask God to forgive us for our actions (Matthew 6:12).
- ◆ God wants us to go to those we have hurt or offended and ask for their forgiveness (Matthew 5:23-24).
- ◆ When we ask for forgiveness, we’re not supposed to bring up the failings of others as the reason for our actions (Matthew 7:1-5). For example, we don’t say, “Please forgive me for calling you a hypocrite. I know it was wrong for me to say that, even though it’s true.”
- ◆ When we ask for forgiveness, we don’t offer excuses for ourselves. There is no justification for sin. We risk undermining reconciliation when we try to explain away our actions or minimize the pain we have caused.
- ◆ Saying, “I’m sorry” is not the same as asking for forgiveness. “I’m sorry” expresses our feelings but it doesn’t address the offense. The person we have hurt needs us to identify our wrongful action and ask for forgiveness for that action. For example, “Please forgive me for calling you a hypocrite. It was wrong for me to make that hurtful comment.”
- ◆ Reconciliation in our relationships is so important to God that the Bible tells us that it must be done before our worship or service to Him (Matthew 5:23-24).
- ◆ If our actions warrant restitution, we should return, pay back, or repair what’s been damaged (Exodus 22:1-17). Our offenses may at times cause emotional damage that cannot be repaired simply by asking for forgiveness. In such cases, we can continue to pray for healing and we can reach out in love to that person. Our love is not sincere, however, if we give gifts or manipulate circumstances to win back someone’s favor (Romans 12:9).



### What should I do when I’ve tried everything to restore a relationship but nothing has worked?

- ◆ Remember, we are responsible before God for our actions toward others. We are not responsible for their actions or responses. “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18).
- ◆ Regardless of how we are being treated in a relationship, we need to continue to pray for the other person (Matthew 5:44).
- ◆ We need to resist the temptation to engage in a verbal volley. It takes two to keep a fight or dispute going. The Bible tells us that a “gentle answer turns away wrath” (Proverbs 15:1).

- ◆ Emotional pain can impair our ability to see a situation clearly. Sometimes we need an objective and caring professional such as a pastor or counselor to help us sort through a relationship conflict. The Bible gives us abundant permission to seek wise counsel (see Proverbs 15:22; 19:20; 20:18).

- ◆ Ultimately we need to hand our conflicts over to God. “Let the LORD, the Judge, decide the dispute this day” (Judges 11:27).

- ◆ We need to trust God to handle our conflicts justly. “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:23).

We can’t heal every wounded relationship. But we can do our part. We can reach out with God’s wisdom, grace, and forgiveness and take the steps that lead toward restoration. And we can trust God for the result.

Editor’s Note: These guidelines are not intended to be an exhaustive study on relationship reconciliation. If you are struggling with a difficult relationship problem, consider talking with a caring professional, perhaps a pastor or Christian counselor.



## Don’t Go There!

In the Bible, God provides a number of cautions related to relationships. He especially warns against certain behaviors that are easy to fall into when we face difficulties in our relationships. He doesn’t want us to:

- ◆ Walk in judgement of our offender (Romans 14:1-13).
- ◆ Slander our offender (Leviticus 19:16-18).
- ◆ Dwell on the offense (Philippians 4:8).
- ◆ Deny the situation and walk away wounded and potentially bitter (Hebrews 13:15).



**E**ven the best of people  
leave much to be desired, and  
we must not expect too much. We need to  
be very patient with the faults of others.  
The most perfect people in the world have many  
imperfections, and so do we. And sometimes it is quite  
difficult for us to tolerate each other. We are to "bear  
one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of  
Christ" (Galatians 6:2), and I think this  
means, among other things, that we  
are to bear the burden  
of each other's  
imperfections.

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Dave Dravecky's  
**OUTREACH**  
OF  
*Hope*

13840 Gleneagle Drive  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Phone: 719 481-3528

Fax: 719 481-4689

E-mail: [info@outreachofhope.org](mailto:info@outreachofhope.org)

Internet: [www.outreachofhope.org](http://www.outreachofhope.org)

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**Our mission** is to offer comfort, encouragement, and hope through Jesus Christ to those who suffer from cancer or amputation. We accomplish this mission by offering prayer support and non-medical referral services and resources for cancer patients, amputees, and their families. We also provide support materials for churches, healthcare professionals, and individuals who work with those who are battling cancer.

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Dave Dravecky's  
**OUTREACH**  
OF  
*Hope*

13840 Gleneagle Drive  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

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