

the Encourager[®]

Hope for Those Who Hurt

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the Treasure *of* Relationships

A PUBLICATION OF DAVE DRAVECKY'S OUTREACH OF HOPE

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I WILL GIVE
YOU THE
TREASURES OF
DARKNESS,
RICHES STORED
IN SECRET
PLACES...

ISAIAH 45:3

WELCOME

Dear Friends,

There was a time in life when I thought I didn't really need relationships. Sure, I appreciated my friends and family, but I had no idea that having healthy relationships was absolutely essential to a healthy life! I didn't realize God had created us in such a way that we simply cannot live without relationships.

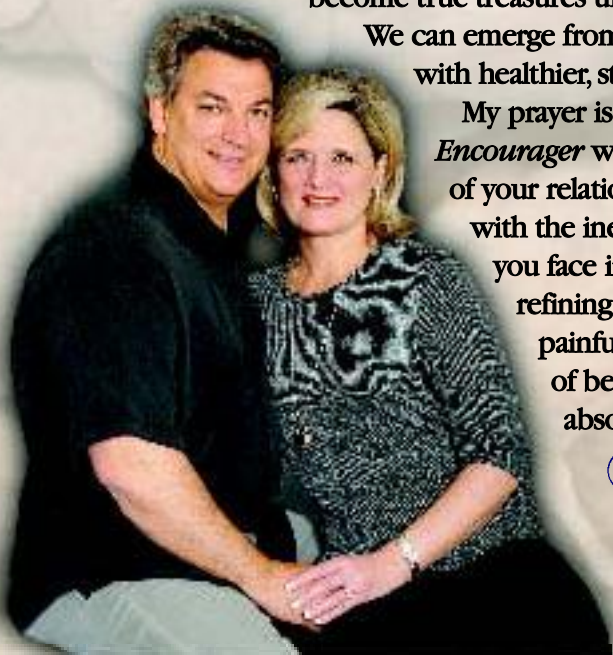
My perspective on relationships began changing when Dave and I went through several years of personal pain and adversity—cancer resulting in the loss of a limb, the loss of a career and depression.

I discovered that when we go through times of adversity or suffering our need for relationships intensifies—and that can be a problem. Why? Because any kind of pain, adversity or suffering will test our relationships. We aren't at our best when we hurt. Our weaknesses, flaws and ugliness rise to the surface and the result isn't pretty. We offend others more easily, and we are more easily offended. Under that pressure, relationships can crumble. At the very time we need good relationships the most, those relationships often become more difficult.

The good news is, it is possible to honestly and lovingly work through the relational difficulties that suffering exposes. Relationships can grow to become true treasures under the pressure of suffering.

We can emerge from the darkness of suffering with healthier, stronger relationships.

My prayer is that this issue of *The Encourager* will help you see the true value of your relationships and enable you to deal with the inevitable relational challenges you face in the darkness. I know the refining process may be difficult and painful, but I also know the rewards of better relationships are absolutely unbelievable.



TREASURE IN THE ROUGH *by Kim Jones*

Experienced treasure hunters know that great treasures may not look like treasures when you first see them. They may be camouflaged, covered up, or in need of cleaning. So serious treasure hunters learn how to spot a treasure in the rough, and that skill is even more important when the treasure they're seeking is a relationship that can endure through the darkness.

Years ago, as an often obsessed rock hound, I learned some valuable lessons about treasure hunting. Nearly every outing produced one or more rock treasures for my collection, but one of my most prized rocks was discovered by accident—right in my own backyard. At the time, our riverside homesite boasted a well-worn path to a swimming hole. After a severe storm, we spent days clearing fallen timber and broken branches from the path. That's when we found it near the base of a fallen tree—a geode, an ordinary-looking rock filled with sparkling quartz crystal.

We had walked the path almost daily but never had noticed the half-buried geode. Even if we had seen it, we probably would have dismissed it because its beauty wasn't apparent at first glance. Its splendor was covered by dirt and moss, so it had to be unearthed, carried to the river, and washed before we could see its magnificence.

That unexpected discovery taught me some valuable lessons about finding treasure, whether we seek a precious stone or a priceless relationship.

Some treasures lie hidden until a storm changes the landscape. When storm clouds gather, treasures, like my beautiful geode, may rise to the surface. Joanie and Betsy, for example, had been casual friends for nearly a decade. Their friendship changed dramatically when Joanie's daughter married. Two days before the wedding, Joanie's mother died. At the same time, Joanie's cousin was battling cancer. "I needed mercy," Joanie explains, "and there was no one but Betsy to offer it. She affirmed me in my pain and never tried to diminish it or explain it."

Treasures can be found in unexpected places that are easily overlooked if you're in a hurry, not paying attention or not open to new possibilities. Just as I never thought of looking for beautiful rocks half-buried near trees in my backyard, Karie never thought of looking for help and support from her husband's family. After all, Karie was an energy-filled extrovert. She was everyone's friend and the life of the party. Her mother-in-law was quiet and cautious, an introvert who preferred to talk to one person at a time—if she knew the person. Yet when a devastating illness robbed Karie of her mobility and independence, her mother-in-law gently and without fanfare stepped in to help. She was a quiet blessing who never meddled or minded doing mundane tasks. In time, and much to Karie's surprise, her mother-in-law became one of her closest and best friends.

Treasures may not look like treasures at first glance. Just like my dirt- and moss-covered geode, some treasures need a little TLC to reveal their true beauty. Often people aren't sure what to say, how to act or what to do in response to someone who is hurting. That's when, according to paraplegic Joni Eareckson Tada, you have to look past awkward gestures and fumbling attempts of encouragement and consider the person's "thoughtful motives and willingness to love and care for a hurting person's soul." Once you've spotted a right-hearted friend, allow time and grace for your friend to learn how to navigate the rocky terrain that hurting people walk. There is often a learning curve before family and friends "get it."

Learn all you can about the treasure you're seeking such as where it's found and what it looks like "in the rough." I learned that geodes are often found near water or an old water source, are plain looking and usually are spherical. When it comes to relationships, God, who knows our hearts and motives, is by far the best at spotting treasured friends in the rough. If we ask, He will give us the wisdom to spot them, too. So ask, watch and wait. You never know what treasures the storm may bring.

WHEN WE CAN'T SEE THE TREASURE

After years of pain and despair, Joanie sat down with two friends and talked openly about what it had been like to live with a chronic and crippling lung disease. She described the daily battle that often left her physically, emotionally and spiritually drained. Through tears she talked about the doubts, pain and disappointment.

Wanting to know more about what Joanie had learned through those struggles, one friend asked, "What are some of the greatest treasures you've discovered on this journey?"

"I don't know if I'm far enough out to answer that," Joanie replied. Her answer is not unusual. Sometimes we're too close to our situation to have perspective. We can't see the treasures because our eyes are fixed on the path before us.

Although we may see no treasure in the shattered landscape surrounding us, our family and friends may see it clearly. They can help us see the treasures

we've amassed, sometimes unknowingly, along the way. Knowing this, Betsy, one of Joanie's closest friends, spoke up and began describing some of the treasures she saw in Joanie's life.

Joanie was amazed as Betsy told how Joanie's suffering had birthed treasure in Betsy's life, enabling her to be a better friend and a better listener. Betsy went on to describe how the treasures of compassion and mercy, which had become so evident in Joanie's life, had encouraged others who were hurting. Betsy reminded Joanie of the priceless treasure of her children's faith that had grown strong as they helped carry the burden of their mother's suffering through their prayers. Throughout the afternoon, Betsy unearthed and displayed the many treasures she saw revealed in Joanie's life. Joanie was visibly moved. Perhaps for the first time she saw that her suffering was not in vain, that there were indeed treasures in her darkness.

TREASURE HUNT

Next to God Himself, we need each other most.

A.W. Tozer

In the previous issue of *The Encourager*, we went on a “treasure hunt” to discover some of the gems that hurting people have uncovered in the darkness of suffering. In this issue, we will explore some of the treasures to be discovered through relationships that endure in the darkness.

THE TREASURE OF DEEPENED RELATIONSHIPS

Michelle Dacus considers the time spent with her mom during her long and difficult recovery from life-threatening surgery* to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. “The treasure of spending that enormous amount of time with my mom impacted our relationship for the rest of our lives. Her selflessness was amazing. I never would have known the depth of her love without this experience. One of the greatest treasures God showed me in the darkness was to spend quality time with the people you love, to invest in those relationships and not to take them for granted.”

*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.
Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.*

1 John 4:7

THE TREASURE OF GRACE

Karen knew about grace, but she didn’t realize what a powerful treasure it was until her best friend’s family was shattered by divorce. “Every time a family member would call, all I could do was pray under my breath for grace. I didn’t have answers, and they didn’t want them. I couldn’t share wisdom because I didn’t have any. Each family member’s faith was shaken. What they needed—the only thing I could give them—was grace. Until I walked through this devastation, I had no idea how powerful grace is or how quickly God could send grace to you and through you to nurse the wounds of the brokenhearted.”

And God is able to make all grace abound to you.

2 Corinthians 9:8

THE TREASURE OF LEARNING HOW TO LOVE

For more than half of their 32 years of marriage, Rick Rood cared for Polly as she battled a degenerative illness. Rick came to realize “that the burden we had been handed was also, in some mysterious way I could not yet understand, a ‘gift’ from the Lord... Five years into Polly’s illness it dawned on me what God was doing in my life... When Polly became ill, God enlisted me in a life-shaping process. Part of this process involved His gently and patiently chipping away at qualities that He

knew needed to diminish in my life. The other part was gradually instilling in my heart the qualities He wanted me to acquire...the most important was love. I loved Polly before, but God used this illness to transform my love for her.”

*Love never fails...and now these three remain: faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love.*

1 Corinthians 13:8,13

THE TREASURE OF SEEING OTHERS GROW IN THEIR FAITH

“I wouldn’t give up one thing I have been through,” Joanie Thompson, who suffers from a chronic lung disease, explains, “if it meant my children would not know what they know today and would not have experienced what they have experienced...I watched them plead with the Lord to heal me...I’ve seen them allow the Spirit of God to empower them...and that probably is the greatest thing that compels me to keep going.”

I will gladly spend myself and all I have for your spiritual good.

2 Corinthians 12:15 (NLT)

THE TREASURE OF COMPASSION

Before she became a quadriplegic, Joni Eareckson Tada, president of a respected and influential ministry to the disabled, confesses that she “could have cared less about people in wheelchairs. But when God awakened me from my spiritual slumber with an ice-cold splash of suffering in the face, my thinking changed real fast. God used my pain and my heartache to cause me...to care about others who are hurting.”

He (God) comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

2 Corinthians 1:4 (NLT)

THE TREASURE OF A TESTIMONY

A pastor once told his congregation, “Your best argument for your faith is your testimony: how God met you, changed you and continues to impact you daily.” Michelle Dacus would agree wholeheartedly. “My greatest tool and treasure for reaching the lost is my testimony. For the rest of my life I’ll be using it. It’s a treasure I will pull out every day...a gift God gives me to share.”

Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.

Psaln 66:16

Note: Look for more treasures in the darkness in the next and final issue in this series. If you have found treasures in the darkness that you would like to share, please email your story to info@OutreachOfHope.org. Please limit to 500 words.

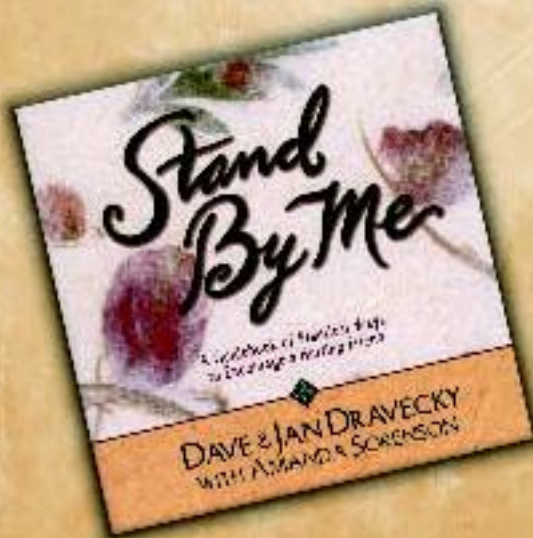
* Michelle’s story was featured in the Summer 2004 issue of *The Encourager*.

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FOR THE JOURNEY

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 TO STAND BESIDE YOU AND LIFT YOU UP.

DAVE DRAVECKY

BUT GOD, WHO COMFORTS THE DOWNCAST, COMFORTED US BY THE COMING OF TITUS...HE TOLD US ABOUT YOUR LONGING FOR ME, YOUR DEEP SORROW, YOUR ARDENT CONCERN FOR ME, SO THAT MY JOY WAS GREATER THAN EVER.

2 CORINTHIANS 7:6-7

EVERY TIME WE GO INTO A DEEPER PLACE OF PAIN AND SUFFERING, ONE OF THE GREATEST BLESSINGS IS THAT WE CAN UNDERSTAND SOMEONE ELSE'S SUFFERING.

JOANIE THOMPSON

WHEN YOU'RE HURTING, YOU MAY NOT BE STRONG ENOUGH TO HOLD UP YOUR END OF A RELATIONSHIP. WHAT YOU BASED YOUR RELATIONSHIP UPON IN THE LIGHT OFTEN DOESN'T WORK IN THE DARKNESS.

NANCEE DELHOUSAY

HUMILITY IS THE OIL THAT SMOOTHES AND SOOTHES RELATIONSHIPS. THAT'S WHY THE BIBLE SAYS, "CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH HUMILITY TOWARD ONE ANOTHER" (1 PETER 5:5).

RICK WARREN

THE MOST PERFECT PEOPLE IN THE WORLD HAVE 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.

FENELON

EXPECTING OTHERS TO MEET NEEDS THAT ONLY GOD CAN MEET CREATES A HOST OF RELATIONSHIP DIFFICULTIES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS.

A CAREGIVER

UNCOVERING THE RICHES OF RELATIONSHIPS

by Jan Dravecky

We don't normally expect to find treasures in the darkness of adversity or riches in the valley of suffering, but God gives us rich rewards even in these desolate places. One of the greatest riches God prepares for us in the valley is the treasure of relationships. I will never forget the day I first caught a glimpse of this magnificent treasure. It changed my life.

I had become desperately depressed and was seeing a counselor to help me climb out of the dark pit into which I had fallen. As we talked, the counselor casually asked me if I had any friends.

I immediately answered, "Of course. I have tons of friends."

He then asked me how many of them needed me. "All of them," I said.

Then he asked the question that would rock my world, "How many of them do you need?"

My answer, "None of them," was a shocking revelation to both of us.

My counselor gently explained that God never intended relationships to be the way I had described mine. God never intended relationships to be a one-way street. God made us to love *and* to be loved. No wonder I was dying on the inside: I had not allowed myself to need anyone.

Afterward, our discussion troubled me. I wondered why my relationships had become the way they were. I began praying and asking God why I hadn't allowed myself to need anyone, and the answer came to me unexpectedly in the shower. I realized that the one person I had needed the most had been my mother. When she died, my pain was so great I decided I would never need anyone the way I had needed her. From that point on, I lived to love others but never allowed myself to receive love from others.

No wonder I was lonely and depressed. My relationships were all out of whack! I wasn't bonded to anyone. My relationships needed work.

The realization that I needed healthy relationships in my life was a treasure that prompted me to begin assessing each of my relationships. I determined which ones were healthy, which ones were unhealthy. I began making changes to improve the relationships that were unhealthy. I began to seek out healthy peer relationships in which people were interested in me and I in them.

It wasn't easy. I had to learn to think in new ways and take actions I had never taken before. Because so many of my relationships were one-way, I needed to learn how to set priorities and boundaries. I needed to practice nurturing two-way relationships in which I gave to others and they gave to me. Through the process, I uncovered treasures that still bless and enrich my life today.

One treasure was learning not to expect perfection in relationships. No matter how much we long for perfection, we fail. I have warts, you have warts. I have strengths, you have strengths. I have weaknesses, you have weaknesses.

So learning to accept people warts and all (and that includes learning to accept ourselves!) is very, very important. I had been guilty of thinking that if anything went wrong in a relationship it was over. I learned that relationships are a work in progress. I learned how to work through the challenges in order to experience the richness of the relationships God had given me.

Another treasure was discovering the power of grace. Grace is being able to love others despite their warts and ours. Grace changes everything. The acceptance and love of grace is what makes a relationship a treasure after a failure. What is more precious than the security of knowing that another person loves you even when he or she sees the ugly part of you? What could be more valuable than to give that acceptance and security to a person you love?

There's no doubt that adversity experienced in the valley of suffering tests every one of our relationships. But adversity also has a way of eliminating the trivial, exposing what is false and focusing our attention on the true nature of our relationships. Some relationships will not endure the pressure of adversity, but others—even relationships that have been miserable for years—will emerge strengthened and restored.

For me, the process of uncovering the value of my relationships was scary and at times unpleasant. I made mistakes. Some people became angry with me. I lost some relationships I had valued, but I gained the far greater treasure of healthy relationships that became more precious to me than gold.

*Sometimes it is awfully hard to see life as a gift,
when a loved one is taken
when a dream is broken
when a relationship is severed
when cherished possessions are lost
when children are rebellious
when security has vanished
when we are facing our own death.*

Lord, only you know the gift hidden in the losses in life.

*Only you see the treasures in the darkness,
the riches stored in secret places.*

*Until you are ready to reveal them to us,
Give us your grace for the waiting.*

VERDELL DAVIS

POLISHING THE TREASURE

The Starting Point

The darkness of suffering creates an environment in which misunderstanding and miscommunication can flourish. When we are forced to navigate through that darkness, we all too often bump up against the rough edges, impurities, flaws and weaknesses that mar even our most precious relationships. Our greatest treasures at times may appear to be nothing more than worthless stones.

In such an environment, we may need to refine our relationship skills if we want our relationships to endure and become the priceless treasures God intended them to be. Just as we need to cut and polish precious stones to reveal and enhance their beauty, we need to chisel away rough edges, cut out impurities and polish our relationships.

Whether we need a crash course in relationship building and maintenance or simply need to refine our relationship skills, the first and most basic truth about relationships is that we need God's help. No matter what relationship challenges we face, we need to ask for God's help before we do anything else. He is our starting point for polishing the treasure of healthy relationships.

God is the author of relationships, and the trinity is the perfect example of relationship unity. No relationship problems ever exist between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God wants our relationships and love for one another to emulate His love. In fact, He commands us get along with others. "Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible" Romans 12:18 (NLT).

God knows firsthand how challenging that can be. Jesus lived with a large family in cramped quarters. He was a son, a brother, an employee, a co-worker, a neighbor and a friend. So when we talk with God about our relationship problems, He completely understands. But more than that, He can help us deal with our relationship challenges.

Just as it takes knowledge and wisdom to cut a gemstone, it takes knowledge and wisdom to bring out the beauty of our relationships. We don't have that on our own, but God does. God alone knows the hearts and motives of all men (1 Chronicles 28:9), so He knows all about the flaws behind the relationship challenges we experience. As the creator of relationships, He can guide us through problems we can't begin to solve. As the source of life and love, God has the power to fix what's broken, to correct what is wrong. He can empower us to love and forgive others even if it's the last thing we think we can do.

I HAVE LEARNED TO GO
TO GOD FIRST WHEN A
RELATIONSHIP HITS A
ROUGH SPOT. EVERY TIME
I TRY TO HANDLE IT ON
MY OWN, I MUCK IT UP.

WIFE OF A CANCER PATIENT

The Power of Honesty

The most beautiful and highly valued relationships are honest ones. In an honest relationship we don't need to hide, deny or cover up our shortcomings, hurts or disappointments. We let others see us, as Dave Dravecky says, "warts and all." Honest relationships allow us to invite others into the deepest parts of our lives and enable us to know and bear each other's burdens.

Of course, being honest is risky. There are no guarantees that our honesty or vulnerability will be handled properly. Many who have tried to have honest relationships have been, as Joanie Thompson described, "creamed in the process." Yet honesty is absolutely essential. "We learn discernment from the times we are mistreated. It's not easy to become vulnerable, to become known," Joanie has learned, "but we'd better because that's our safety net."

Before we can be honest in our relationships, however, we have to be honest with ourselves—something we aren't naturally inclined to do. We are quick to see flaws and failures of our would-be treasures. But before we get out the stone polisher and line up our treasures for a buff, we must heed Jesus' warning in Matthew 7:3-5 to "take the log out of our own eye" before we attempt to take "the speck out of someone else's." In other words, we must ask God to help us deal with the flaws in our own heart before we try to correct those of our family and friends.

Honesty is a two way street, a mutual exchange that enhances the value of the relationship for both people. Pastor Ron Benson describes it like this: "More honesty brings more intimacy—and more intimacy brings more honesty." That's exactly what God intends, but having such a relationship can be a challenge.

We must remember that each of us is an "unfinished person," a work in progress. We all have needs and shortcomings, and we all have something to offer. But hurting people can easily (and understandably) become self-engrossed, and relationships can become one-sided. While family and friends of a hurting person may have much to offer, they still need to know that the hurting person loves them, even if he or she is unable to be as supportive as in the past.

Wayne DeReu found the give and take of honest relationships to be essential during his lengthy cancer battle. He made the extra effort to take genuine interest in the lives and hearts of friends and family members, and he was richly rewarded. It strengthened his faith to hear how God was working in their lives. It helped him feel useful, needed and valued despite his personal suffering.

Developing honest relationships is not easy, especially if our trust has been violated or if we've never experienced relational intimacy. But relationships in which we can bear our soul are priceless treasures. They are worth every risk.

The Power of Forgiveness

In the darkness of suffering, our flaws stand out like beacons in the night. Family and friends don't meet the hurting person's needs. They interfere when they shouldn't. They say stupid things. They don't say anything at all. They don't understand the pain. And the actions and attitudes of hurting people are no less flawed. "Hurting people aren't always nice," Joni Eareckson Tada explains. "Suffering can really breed selfishness or insensitivity... sometimes downright rudeness."

How is it possible to find treasure in such an environment? The key is in one word: forgiveness. Whenever we find ourselves in the darkness, we must learn to live a lifestyle of forgiveness if we want our relationships to survive and grow.

Unfortunately, many of us don't understand forgiveness. We may agree that forgiveness is a good and right thing to do, but we often insist that the other person's behavior must surely be the exception to the forgiveness rule. Under our breath we may secretly say, "except in this situation...except for this person." But true forgiveness acknowledges that we will fail others and they will fail us. Some of us may be further along in the treasure polishing process, but we all need forgiveness.

Learning to forgive requires divine assistance. We may know that we need to forgive but feel utterly unable to. That's when we can confess our predicament to God and ask for His help. That's what concentration camp survivor Corrie ten Boom did when, after the war, one of the "most cruel" guards asked her for forgiveness.

"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," he thrust his hand out to Corrie, "will you forgive me?" "I stood there and could not forgive...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.

As is true of many of God's instructions for living, researchers have learned that forgiveness is healthy. A recent article in *Reader's Digest* highlights a few findings on the healing power of making peace.

- Giving up grudges can reduce chronic back pain.
- MRI scans revealed that just thinking about empathy and reconciliation sparks activity in the brain suggesting we all have a mental forgiveness center set to be tapped.
- Letting go of a grudge can slash stress levels by up to 50%.
- Forgiveness can increase energy, mood, sleep quality and overall physical vitality.

The Power of Grace

Grace is God's love in action. It is the glue that mends our brokenness. It fills in the cracks, covers over the chips and holds the broken pieces together. No wonder it is essential! Grace puts the finishing touch—the brilliant shine—on our most precious relationships.

Some have said that if we would “walk in grace,” most of our relationship conflicts would never occur. So what does grace look like? What does it accomplish in our lives and relationships? These highlights will give you a picture:

- Grace takes the high road in human relationships. It chooses to reach out rather than retaliate, to forgive rather than turn away in contempt or indifference.
- Grace doesn't judge or condemn. It doesn't presume to be better than others.
- Grace accepts us right where we are and places no expectations on us. It is given freely—no strings attached.
- Grace has thick skin. It isn't easily wounded, offended or put off. When wounded, it refuses to wound others.
- Grace isn't shocked by the depth of human brokenness and sinfulness. It embraces the one made in the image of God no matter how marred the image may be.
- Grace makes God's love real to even the hardest, most wretched, wounded and hopeless heart.

No wonder we need grace! It is a powerful commodity in the darkness of suffering. “When Dave and I were in the depths of our valley,” Jan Dravecky explains, “we were hurting. We weren't fun to be around. We didn't look like model Christians. We needed grace! The people who extended grace to us forgave, accepted and loved us as we were—with all of our pain, ugliness, anger and doubt. Healing came as grace was given to us.”

What a precious treasure! Because God first extended grace to us, we have the privilege of passing it on to others. Grace is a commodity of heaven that perfects the beauty of our most treasured relationships. At any time we can “approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

We need to ask God for grace when...

- We find ourselves responding to others in inappropriate ways.
- We're irritable, demanding, defensive or short tempered.
- We're with people who “don't get it,” who don't understand suffering.
- We've been mistreated, neglected or hurt.
- We're facing a difficult conversation or confrontation.
- We need to respond in love but our feelings are quite the contrary.
- We feel that we have failed ourselves or others.

For Further Help

If you are struggling with a difficult relationship problem, consider talking with a caring professional, perhaps a pastor or Christian counselor.

“A Burden Shared is a Burden Diminished,” and “The Gift of Grace” issues of *The Encourager*. Available online at www.OutreachOfHope.org or in print for \$2.00 plus shipping, 800-295-5880.

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13840 Glenridge Drive | Colorado Springs, CO 80921
Return Service Requested

NEVER
LET US FORGET
THE THINGS
WE LEARNED
IN THE VALLEY.
IT WAS IN THE
VALLEY THAT WE
LEARNED TO
WALK BY FAITH
AND NOT
BY SIGHT...
THAT WE
LEARNED JOY
IN THE ABSENCE
OF HAPPINESS...
THAT WE LEARNED
THE RICHNESS
OF OUR
RELATIONSHIPS.

VERDELL DAVIS