

A practical method to building character and strengthening relationships

Contact and connect: a philosophy of building character and strengthening relationships through the way of the cross

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*A philosophy of building character and strengthening relationships
through the way of the cross*

Brenda Madzima

C.O.N.T.A.C.T A.N.D C.O.N.N.E.C.T

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Brenda Madzima

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INTRODUCTION

A blameless spirit

True power is not with the one who holds things, but one who holds what is incorruptible, a wholesome character. This is the mark of a true leader.

Courage

Building character requires one to draw on courage because one has to learn to let go of the ego in order to connect with others. Character develops when one pursues wholesome relationships.

The strength of a relationship depends on the maturity of the individuals. Each one faces the challenge of growing to maturity by learning to give and not consume the energy of another.

The way of the cross

Jesus walked with courage. He took up the responsibility to love when he chose to accept the Word of God. He took up his obligation and gave his spirit to serve in all his relationships. He shouldered his load to pay his dues; he walked the way of the cross and grew in simplicity. At the end of his road; having fulfilled his responsibilities, his character emerged without liability.

Through his obedience to the truth, he opened the minds of those who witnessed his sacrifice of self in his service to others, so that they also may find life in embracing the truth. All who witnessed claimed that he was indeed the son of God; he was a seed of the living God, one whose character matured to give life to others and not consume it.

He bids the one who follows him to develop this character through all relationships by making a conscious decision to die to the self. As one walks the way of the cross, one is to labor to pay outstanding debts; to fulfill given responsibilities in order to obtain innocence; a blameless character.

The growth of character

Character grows through relationships. Building wholesome relationships is the path to dying to the self. Dying to the self is the path to maturity. The service one gives to a relationship depends on the role one plays in solving a problem; the case that one resolves.

One's resignation to serve is to extend the circle of life. Through a connection with others, one learns to give and not consume energy, and in return live free, a blameless spirit.

Where to begin

Embracing wholesome relationships is the beginning of growing character. Every relationship begins with contact. One's path crosses with another in an exchange of emotions. This presents the opportunity to explore a relationship. One may choose to pass the other, but in other cases, it becomes the discovery of a new relationship.

When a connection fails

Finding a connection is the next logical step after making contact. A connection fails in many cases. One goes only as far as taking a glance and passes another, or stands for a while only to walk away from the life of another. One may take a few steps with another, before going an independent way, or fall short of completing a milestone and the common road ends.

It is easier to find a connection with one individual over another. This is the case where friendships that last for a lifetime grow. These are the relationships that one finds and does not lose.

Work required

Relationships require time, starting new ones, building existing ones and in less fortunate circumstances, losing some. Relationships fail without the energy that connects one's mind to another i.e. they fall apart when there is no understanding / mindfulness.

Solving existing problems will release this energy. In order to keep the relationship together, one must address the problems presented in one's relations with another. The experiences that one continues to share with another will strengthen this bond.

Choices

Character grows or dies in the course of a relationship. The choices one makes affect the development of one's character and the outcome of a relationship. The level of one's maturity determines the strength of one's role in growing a relationship.

Success of a relationship

The success of a relationship depends on the level of maturity as individuals; giving up the ego in pursuit of the truth leaves room for growth. Fulfilling personal expectations should not become the profit that comes from a relationship. The profit of a relationship should be what one builds; a strong character, a blameless spirit. This fruit is imperishable.

Sustaining life

Growing relationships sustains life. A connection of the mind enables the sharing of ideas in solving given problems. Eliminating the gap that exists between two minds removes the event of conflicting ideas. This encourages the presence of shared ideas.

Growing respect

Developing respect for another is the starting point of a relationship. This energy encourages communication. Each one moves to gain familiarity with another's identity in order to determine where boundaries lie. Learning to read a different language by understanding (being mindful) of the personality of another, opens the door for one to reach out to another.

Sacrificing the self

Sacrificing one's self is the result of having respect for another. Reducing personal boundaries creates opportunity for another to draw closer, to grow from a stranger into a friend. Respecting the language of another's personality establishes a foundation to cultivate a relationship. This becomes the foundation to learn to speak a common language, love. Relating to another through love removes the conflict of personalities.

The strength of one's will

The measure of life one gives to a relationship; the strength of one's will to connect to another depends on the level of respect one has for another. Without holding respect, one cannot consider the needs of another.

Contact

Developing contact allows the opportunity to know each other's emotions. Finding a connection is a way of learning to recognize and translate the sensations experienced into questions that attract the right information. Processing this information creates knowledge. Relating to another through knowledge increases the likelihood of developing a sustainable relationship.

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