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Conversations with self-39

To forgive and be forgiven

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A seriously ill man, sent word to his sibling with whom he had bitterly parted many years ago over a property dispute that he wanted to see him before he breathed his last. He realised he only had a short while to live, and hence, wanted to forgive and be forgiven.

As the sibling arrived, so did the doctor who was attending on the patient, bearing the good news that all the tests had turned out to be negative and, in fact, the dying man was going to live. When the patient learned this he lashed out at his brother saying that he neither needed forgiveness nor was he ready to forgive and the brother could actually leave immediately.

Toxicity in relationships, caused as they are by friction and fissure, do not let go of us, instead it festers and corrupts our very being. How do we combat it and in its place restore well-being and peace?

While it might seem simplistic, the answer lies in employing enabling language, devoid of judgment, harshness and mala fide intent.

Instead of making judgments, based on untested assumption, which leads to manipulation and then making demands on the other, if we solicit the facts, which then encourages us to speak about how we are affected, and own up to our part in the transaction, express our feelings, tell the other that we value them and convert demand to request, we realise that both of us have actually contributed to the possible deterioration. Once we acknowledge our share of the responsibility, we can re-build a relationship if we both choose to.

Let us not forget that 'life is short'; we are here today, and gone tomorrow. Therefore, if we do not forgive or let ourselves be forgiven, it might be too late.

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