



Life Repair: Seeking and Receiving Forgiveness

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In Luke 7:47, Jesus tells us that it was Mary Magdalen's many mistakes that had enabled her "to show such great love. It is the person who is forgiven little" he says, "who shows little love."

Perhaps our relational failures, though painful, are not such a tragedy after all. It is in the best of our relationships that we most often experience the dynamic dance of closeness, distance and closeness again. Long periods of harmony may be interrupted by sometimes unexpected, painful disruptions needing repair, if not for reconciliation, at least for our own peace of mind. Life, death and rebirth. The paschal pattern follows us everywhere. It's in the DNA of the universe.

These, the best of our relationships, are most likely to break our hearts. David Whyte believes it is an illusion to think otherwise. They test the depth of our love and care. It is in the network of all our relationships: family, community, colleagues, friends and other inhabitants of Earth and the Cosmos that we learn and learn and learn again.

Moving from disruption to repair, we may use words. This can be easy or very difficult. Most important is that our actions are authentic with or without words.. Sometimes the gap between disruption and repair cannot be crossed. Reconciliation needs both of us. Sometimes we need to walk away, even in the face of grief, knowing it is not safe or good for us. Sometimes we need to let go of the burden of longstanding irreparable rifts in our relationships, forgiving ourselves where we know we have had a part to play.

An exercise in consciousness – testing our peace-making qualities

Genuine peace-making born of love and care:

- knows the pain we have caused the other and feels pain because of it.
- takes responsibility for our part in the disruption.
- takes the risk of learning more about our self and the other.
- puts aside our own needs and assumptions.
- listens to the other's point of view.
- lets go of the need to be right.
- commits to breaking a present or potential pattern of disruption.

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