

Section Five

That Which Unites Us- Developing Unity and Harmony

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174. That Which Unites Us

That which unites us is greater than that which divides us. What is the glue that holds relationships together? As we look at marriages and families, partnerships and societies, we see a common thread of those relationships that remain intact through trials and difficulties and the opposite in those that dissolve. We are united as we strive to become of one mind and one heart as we journey together. We are united by principles of love and caring, service and kindness, working and playing together. There are many forces that would divide us; contention, jealousy, unresolved conflicts, betrayal and a loss of natural affection. We become united through common goals and having hearts knit together through sacrificing and helping one another. Many marriages are not cemented together until they have had to pass through a major trial or hardship, but those experiences bring a uniting and a bonding force that helps those couples weather the storms of life. As we remember the Savior in His great intercessory prayer, He prayed that we might be one with Him and the Father. As we become one in purpose with Them, we will be united, and then all things are indeed, possible.

175. Love's Ever Widening Circle

We live in a world in which there is much of love and much of hate. Hate seems to be contagious when anger and misunderstandings occur. Love provides a healing balm where it is allowed to enter in, but there needs to be more of it to heal and calm our troubled world. **We cannot affect the entire world, but we can begin where we are; and just like the ripples of a stone thrown into the water, we can affect others for good.**

Love's Ever Widening Circle

Love is an ever widening circle. Love, it touches all,
It glistens in the heart of one, then reaches yet another.
Love, it breaks down walls of stone and warms the ice cold heart.
It breathes the breath of life again into the weary soul.

Hate flows in waves when men wrong others.
Wounding with scars that go so deep.
It sears the heart and minds of men and oft lasts generations.
Hate, it leaves us cold and worn and robs us from all peace.
Its bitter fruit the marrow kills until we make it cease.

Love comes from changing deep inside us.
Love comes from opening our hearts.
It heals the wounds and dries the tears,
Then springs a well of life re-born.
Love, its circle ever grows and gives our lives new meaning.
It opens doors to all men when they reach out arms of love.

Conclusion:

Love, it starts within you, then it must reach outside.
People and nations must open their hearts and trust in the power of love.
So open your hearts, reach out your hands and fill this whole world with love.
Yes, reach out and show love. RTS

176. Build Bridges Not Walls

In our lives there will be differences at times with those around us. There are circumstances in which there are two sides to an issue that we find ourselves on the opposite side from one we care about. **If we can resolve those differences our relationship will become stronger. If we do not resolve those differences, they become a wedge to push us apart. There must be a desire and willingness to draw closer together; to forgive where needed, and to walk hand in hand along the pathway of life.** Years ago there were two brothers who lived in the same house but did not talk to each other for over fifty years. They had drawn a line down the center of the house and neither would cross it. How TRAGIC! **In our lives there are far too many walls and not enough bridges in our relationships. When we find ourselves on different sides of the isle from those we love, let us reach across the aisle and build bridges of understanding, harmony and love.**

177. What You Send Out Comes Back

In scriptural terms, as we sow, so shall we reap. **As we extend kindness and love toward others the chances increase that we will receive in a similar fashion.** If we treat others harshly with unkind words we start a cycle of negativity that will tend to be perpetuated. Of course the Savior taught a higher law. If someone smites us on the cheek we should turn the other as well, extending healing where wounds have occurred and responding in kindness even when an injustice against us has been performed. It has been said that angry words once spoken cannot be taken back. As we set a pattern of goodness in our lives we become more proactive and Christlike.

Let us determine how we will act and not simply react in kind when others offend us. Set the tone with a smile and warm greeting as you meet others and a cycle of acceptance and growth is set in motion. There was a poem written many years ago entitled, "I Know Something Good About You." Be a positive person who acts for the benefit of all around. One of the classic negative cycles tends to be in sibling interactions when one child takes a toy and the sibling hits back; if a sibling teases, the other becomes angry and performs another negative response. **Let us be our best at home, for those are the relationships that will last when nearly all others fade. If we learn to act well at home in private, we usually will not have any worries about how we will act in public.** You set the tone by acting, not reacting; by breaking negative cycles and replacing them with positive cycles. Send out waves of goodness and waves of goodness will come back to you again.

178. Work it Out!

We live in a "throw away" society. If an appliance doesn't work we don't fix it like former generations, we throw it away. If an article of clothing is torn, we don't mend it, we buy new. Even in relationships if a problem arises we tend to not work to solve it, but to walk away. The Savior chided those in His day about divorce. He reminded the Jews that Moses granted a bill of divorcement because of the hardness of their hearts but in the beginning it was not so. Of course, there are circumstances where divorce is necessary but it should be the last resort and not the first option. Problems frequently arise in marriage and relationships but instead of just throwing it away let us make every effort to "work it out."

Follow five simple C's of suggestions which may help in your moment of trouble.

1. **Commitment-** Remember the difference between the chicken and the pig in contributing to the breakfast menu. The chicken was quite pleased with her daily contribution of an egg. The pig was a little more reluctant to contribute the ham because it represented a total commitment. Let us be more committed than the chicken.
2. **Communication-** Clear and concise communication will help to express how we feel. If we can take responsibility and use "I" messages of how we feel without blaming the other party we will go further toward a solution.
3. **Change-** We need to be willing to make changes, usually on both sides, to make relationships work. The attitude, "It's my way or the highway," leads to too many failed relationships.
4. **Centered in Christ-** If we will center our relationship on following the example of our Savior, we will be more long suffering, more gentle and kind, more loving and more successful.
5. **Covenants-** If we will remember that relationships are meant to be eternal and make covenants with that end in mind we have a much greater chance of making those relationships successful. Remember that in the Book of Mormon times, even the Lamanites honored their covenants to stop wars and contentions once they had made those covenants. If we keep our covenants, our covenants will keep us safe.

179. No Man Is An Island

A wonderful poem written many years ago by John Donne goes as follows:

"No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a part of the continent, a part of the main, if a clod be washed away by sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the Bell tolls, it tolls for thee." Have you ever seen the ripples caused by throwing a stone in the water? It sends forth tiny waves in all directions, as do our actions for good or evil; all that we do not only affects us but those around us. All our relationships have a dual effect; an effect on us and on those we associate with. **We have the opportunity to send out waves of goodness, waves that are uplifting, waves that bring joy and life.**

180. We Need One Another

We Need One Another

We need one another, we need one and all.
Brother lifting brother, each step lest he should fall.
Each man is our brother, each man we should befriend.
Faithful to our brother, faithful to the end.
May we do to others as we'd have them do.
May we live as brothers, may our love be true.

We need one another, no man stands alone.
Each man needs a brother, each man needs a home.
May our eyes now open, may our ears now hear,
Loving words now spoken, to a sister dear.

Conclusion:

We need one another, we need everyone.
We need hands of service, reaching for the one.
Hand to hand let's reach out, eye to eye let's see.
Arm in arm let's walk now, on toward eternity. RTS

Truly none of us stand alone. Man was not meant to be alone. We are gathered as friends, neighbors, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives. In a world of turmoil we need to build bridges of understanding, harmony, and love with our fellow man. There is more that unites us than divides us is the great truth we must come to understand. Let us each do our part to help make this world a better place and strive to lift one another up rather than tear one another down as we walk the path of life together.

181. Who Will Take the First Step?

In years past there were many altercations and confrontations over the sharing of water in small communities. Neighbors were asked to share turns of water along the same ditch, each taking their turns to dam the water to use for a few hours and then release the water for the next neighbor down to the line. On one occasion there was an altercation between two neighbors which resulted in one neighbor hitting his neighbor in the head with a shovel. The injured man went home in a rage determined to seek retribution. In time the man considered what could he have done that would cause his close neighbor to act so rashly? As he pondered the situation he began to think that maybe he was partly to blame. Slowly his heart softened as he accepted part of the responsibility for this ugly incident. In a spirit of reconciliation he returned to his neighbor and said: "I don't know what I have done to make you so angry with me, but will you please forgive me?" The other neighbor, on hearing this, broke down and cried and he too asked for forgiveness. The relationship of friendship was restored and the anger and hard feelings were diffused. In our lives we may find ourselves in a situation with a family member, coworker or friend where there are hard feelings or misunderstandings. In those times, ask yourself: Am I willing to take the first step to make our relationship whole again and show true Christlike charity.

182. How You Made Them Feel

There is a marvelous thought expressed by Maya Angelou, noted poet, actress and civil rights activist. She said, "I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision. I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one. I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." **May we always strive with all our hearts to make people feel loved, accepted and cherished, whatever their station or situation in life may be, each and every day of our lives.**

183. Walk a Mile in Their Shoes

It is so human to judge others. We may want to put them up against the measuring stick of our own standards and expectations. Each person has strengths and each person has weaknesses. If we measure our weaknesses against the strengths of others we are probably going to end up on the short end of the stick. When we do take a moment to try to see the world through the eyes of others, to walk a mile in their shoes so to speak, we become less harsh and more empathetic. We may even experience some of the feelings that they have of sorrow, depression, inadequacy, or the burden of sin. As we develop empathy we may see that they are doing the best they can with the circumstances before them. Who are we to judge anyway? The Savior taught, "Judge not that ye be not judged" and first look inward and cast the beam out of your own eye before you try to pull the mote out of your brother's eye. (Matt.7:1-5). Let us be a little less judgemental and a little more loving. Let us be a light, not a judge, and help others to also see the light. Let us strive to see them as the Savior sees them, for He indeed has walked a mile in their shoes.

184. A Stranger's Lamp

A Strangers Lamp (Adapted by R. Tom Sutton)

I met a stranger on the way, whose lamp had fizzled out.
A spark from mine I shared with him and he began to shout.
My lamp was burning bright you see, as brightly as can be.
And his when lit, brought light again and to him joyful glee.

My lamp blew out, I mourned its loss and knew not where to turn,
But traveling on, our paths did cross, the stranger did return,
And to my joy, his lamp once out, how brightly now it shone.
He shared with me his spark now bright and gave me back my own.

The one had helped the other who stood in time of need
And now the favor was returned, with a loving, kindly deed. (Adapted by RTS)

We are to be a light to the world and indeed a city on the hill, but at times we all need
To see and be warmed by the light of another as we walk along the pathway of life.

185. Brotherly Love

Truly we live in the days that were prophesied that “The love of many shall wax cold.” (Matt 24:12). **We live in days when groups and individuals like to argue and belittle one another rather than find avenues of cooperation and mutual benefit. It seems that many people will pre-judge a matter before they ever have the facts and want to turn everything into a win-lose situation rather than seeking for the common good.** In teaching of Christlike virtues the apostle Peter listed the quality of brotherly kindness between godliness and charity. (2 Peter 1:7). In the great commission on missionary work, brotherly kindness is again listed next to godliness and charity along with patience. (D&C 4:6). King Benjamin was wise when he counseled parents: “Neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another...ye will teach them to love one another and to serve one another.” (Mosiah 4:14-15). If we are at odds with another person maybe we can take some time to get to know him/her better, find out how their experiences have formed their attitudes and perspectives and perhaps our hearts will be a little softer toward him/her. In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord instructed, “And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me.” (D&C 38:24). If we will love each person as ourselves and practice holiness and charity, which is the pure love of Christ, the world would be a much better place. We would then have relationships built with trust, cooperation and mutual respect to guide us through the challenging times we live in today.

186. Forgive All Men

Forgiveness is a great part of building unity. We all have had occasion of having differences, misunderstanding, or hard feelings with another person or group. The Lord, speaking through the prophet Joseph Smith taught: “I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to **forgive all men.**” It can be hard to forgive, but forgiving others is a requirement for us to be forgiven of our own sins. In the previous verse the Lord declared: “Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses, standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.” (D&C 64:9-10). **When we learn the lesson that by forgiving others we also receive forgiveness, it should be a great stepping stone toward fully receiving the atonement of our Lord and building relationships with our fellowman.** Let us learn to forgive that we may be forgiven, and let us learn to show mercy that we may receive mercy.

187. I Shall Pass This Way But Once

A wonderful thought shared by a Quaker missionary, Etienne de Gellet, goes as follows:

**"I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness
I can show to any human being,
Let me do it now. Let me not defer it nor neglect it,
For I shall not pass this way again."** (Etienne de Gellet)

As we walk the pathway of life together let us learn to do good and not evil to all that we associate with. **As we look back at the end of our lives, may we find that we have established a pattern of building relationships, harmony and unity instead of fostering contention, bitterness and strife.** May we realize that everyone on the earth is our brother or sister and we have an obligation to love them as ourselves. We all have good intentions, but many of us think there will always be a tomorrow to take care of needed changes or express love to those that we are the closest to. We should live each day as if it were going to be our last, for we have no guarantee of any tomorrows. We only have today, and today well lived brings us hope and joy as we prepare for tomorrow, and if we live each day to the fullest we will have no fear or trepidation about what tomorrow may bring.

188. The Root of the Problem

In our lives we may spend most of our efforts on combating the signs and symptoms of a difficulty and not the root. In learning to build relationships and harmony we need to understand the sources of division and contention and work to resolve the source of those problems. Henry David Thoreau said, **"For every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil, (the problem) there is one striking at the root."** As we are faced with a dilemma we should first ask ourselves "what is the cause or root of the problem?" If we do not get to the root of the problem we are only hacking at the branches without a permanent solution. If a child is acting out we may look further to what is the unmet need to be addressed. If the money is always gone before the end of the month we should look at a more permanent solution. Many times doctors treat one problem only to create one problem after another until the problem is compounded. The first question to ask ourselves when faced with a difficulty is, "why is this happening?" When we understand the "why," it is much easier to formulate the "how" to resolve it and to prevent it from happening again.

189. I Messages, You Messages

As we interact with others, let us be careful to not exhibit a judgemental attitude as we speak with one another. Many people choose to attack and tear others down in their conversations in order to build themselves up. In the world today there are a few "you messages" that are positive, but there many that are judgemental and negative. As we start the sentence: "You," may we look for the positive and uplifting, not the discouraging and downgrading. Many "I messages" reflect the way we feel in the current circumstances. If we use the words, "I feel" and follow with a description of our perception, we accept the responsibility for our perspective rather than exhibiting a judge and jury approach. There will be many circumstances in our lives when differences of opinion or perspective arise. If we can identify a concern without passing final judgment before attempting to reach a resolution of a problem, the possibility of a positive outcome is much greater. **Really, when it comes right down to it, many of our messages should be "we messages" as we share the burdens and difficulties of life together, supporting and caring for one another regardless of what decision is ultimately made.**

190. Let it Go

The account is related of a young husband many years ago who lost his wife shortly after childbirth. Unfortunately, his wife had died from the same infection that a previous patient had suffered and was treated for by the same doctor that delivered his baby. The husband became consumed with the tragedy that had occurred and could not let it go. His mind became bitter and he became angry and withdrawn from those he loved. Finally, a trusted friend counseled him: "let it go. Nothing will bring her back." As the husband reflected, he finally saw the doctor as doing all he could to save all the lives that he could, but he could not save them all. Finally, as he let things go he was able to move on with his life and show the love that he needed toward his new little baby. Sometimes we let circumstances from the past canker our souls. Often we can overlook the shortcomings in others, but we cannot accept any shortcomings in ourselves. If we are always expecting perfection we will usually be disappointed. When we are worn down we need to say, **"Lord, I'm tired of carrying this burden and I'm going to turn it over to you for a while." He has carried and will continue to carry our burdens if we will but let Him.** We all have things we would change or have done differently if we were to do them again. Sometimes we need to stop beating ourselves up and "let it go;" as we do, our steps will become lighter and our future brighter as we walk hand in hand along the pathway of life with those we cherish.

191. Look Into Each Other's Hearts

"If we could look into each other's hearts and understand the unique challenges each of us faces, I think we would treat each other much more gently with more love, patience, tolerance, and care."

(Marvin J. Ashton) Who knows and understands the heartaches, trials, and emotions of another? None of us understand perfectly, but there is one who does; our Lord and Savior descended below all things that He might comprehend all things and be able to succor us in our hour of need. Although we do not understand perfectly, we can understand enough to develop empathy, compassion, and charity for those we hold dear. In our familial relationships let us take the time and effort to truly look into each other's hearts, so that we may be able to begin to carry some of the burden by our words and actions. Let us walk the road together with those who carry the burdens of loss, grief, or sorrow. May we help them to see the sunshine through the clouds of life as we journey together. As we gain greater understanding, our capacity to lift and heal grows as we become instruments in the hands of the Master. May we strive to ever become His hands to lift up the hands and heads that hang down, to help them see and follow the path of faith and hope.

192. Be a Peacemaker

The world needs more peacemakers! The world has too many who are stirring up contention, anger and hatred one toward another. When the Savior visited His other sheep in the America's after His resurrection He taught: "He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with one, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away. (3 Nephi 11:29-30). In the Sermon on the Mount as the Savior spoke of and commended the peacemakers. He spoke of those who had experienced a broken heart and had come unto Him; they had become meek and hungered and thirsted after righteousness and then were filled with the Holy Ghost. Using the Gift of the Holy Ghost they had become merciful and had become pure in heart. Those individuals were prepared to become peacemakers, not always striving to obtain their own will, but to do the will of God. Even though we may not see peace in the world, we can find peace in our lives and among those we associate with. **May our circles of influence be toward peace and not contention, harmony and not division, unity that we may prevail and not fall. Truly, united we stand together, but divided we will fall.**

193. A Life Worthwhile

“Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.” (Albert Einstein). So many in the world today are always asking, “What’s in it for me?” Lives that are self centered are missing the great lesson that **“we rise by lifting others.”** Lives that are always focused inward neglect the great blessings of sharing true love and devotion. It is true that we must look inward for self improvement and self mastery but it is through looking outward to bless the lives of others that we truly come to find ourselves. Life is a journey that no man (woman) walks alone. Life is enriched through gaining knowledge, paving the way for others to follow, and finding light in our lives. Einstein was a deep thinker who discovered principles that have helped to advance science and our understanding of the world around us. Our lives become worthwhile as we make the world a better place for those who will follow after us. Our lives become worthwhile as we partner with God in accomplishing His purposes of bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

194. The Creed

There is a marvelous poem written by Edwin Markham entitled “The Creed.”

The first half of the poem goes like this:

“There is a destiny which makes us brothers;

None lives to self alone;

All that we send into the lives of others

Comes back into our own.”

Just as the Savior taught that the second great commandment is to love our neighbors as ourselves, we must be sure that all that we send out in the way of actions, words and deeds are built upon principles of charity and love. So many times we think that we have to do something great or grandiose to make a difference. **As we examine our lives let us follow a pattern of living that exemplifies service, love, compassion, kindness and charity in all of our dealings and we will find that we will have little to apologize for when our lives are measured in the balance of the scales of life.**

195. I Love You Son

The experience is related of a father and son who were involved in a heated argument. The son stormed out of the house vowing never to return home again. As the son was leaving the home the father felt helpless in the situation. As the son was in the driveway about to leave, the father’s final words to his son were, “I love you, son.” The family heard no response for months, but finally the prodigal son returned. **The words that kept coming to his mind and brought him back home were the final words spoken by his father, “I love you son.”** That love bridged the differences of misunderstanding and anger. What are the final words you speak to your loved ones as they leave for work or school? Is it an expression of love and kindness or a message of rebuke and condemnation? That message is the one our loved ones carry with them until we see them again. Likewise, as we are reunited, our first message should be one of a positive and uplifting tone. **The words of greeting sets the tone for the upcoming hours together, and the expression of love as they leave carries an umbrella of caring and peace as they go out into a perilous world in great need of that message of love and peace.**

196. Are You a Giver or a Taker in Life?

In life there must be a balance between what we take and what we give. This is true in our use of resources as well as relationships. In years past, farmers would grow the same crops and the soil became depleted. Then crop rotations became implemented and the situation improved. Our first President, George Washington, was far ahead of his time. He established a seven year crop rotation to keep the balance in the soil. In relationships some individuals always need so much emotional support that it drains those around them. Some individuals strive to take advantage of others in business relationships, in work settings and even in social relationships. There are those who want to be served at the effort and expense of those around them and there are those who serve. Our natural resources and in particular the timber industry is another example of taking instead of giving. Over the years we have had to learn conservation techniques to allow for healthy forests, clean water and air. Some of these situations will be ongoing for years to come and we owe it to the next generation to try and find the balance between taking and giving in a manner that benefits all concerned. In our families our mothers frequently give so much yet often are returned so little in thanks and assistance. Ask yourself how you are doing in the balance of life. Yes, there must be some taking, for we must eat, breathe and hopefully enjoy life. May we do it in such a way as to try and give back at least as much as we take and especially in relationships may we increase energy, light and knowledge and bring joy and happiness to those we associate with, instead of misery and sorrow.

197. Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

There was a husband and wife that had gone to a counselor to help improve communication in their marriage. She was concerned that he didn't pick up his socks and he didn't put the toothpaste away, along with several other things that bothered her. She had talked to him about it, but somehow the needed changes had not taken place. Unfortunately, some time later the husband suffered a serious injury and was paralyzed. When the counselor asked the wife what she missed about their relationship she said it is those little things that used to bother her that now she wished he could still do. Isn't it interesting how the perspective changes. In our lives there are little things and big things and most things are little things. The big things are our marriage covenants and fidelity to spouse and children, and to be true to our testimonies. So it is in our relationships with our fellowmen. There are big things and little things, don't get caught up in the little things but focus on the big things in life and in our relationships. We always need to strive to be and do better, but change starts by accepting responsibility for where we are at this moment in time and determining to improve one day at a time. Too often in life we make mountains out of mole hills and don't see that focusing on too many small details results in missing the big picture. The things that will still matter in five or ten years or in eternity are the things that truly matter; sometimes we need to cut a little slack for those we associate with. If we treat people as they are, they will tend to stay as they are; if we treat them as we hope they will become, the chances are much greater that they will grow into that person that we visualize them being. In the meantime, don't sweat the small stuff and you will have a lot less stress and worry.

198. Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

The Following was written by Saint Francis:

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.**

**O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love.
For it is giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.**

Let there be peace and not hate in our relationships. Help us work to build the common good rather than win at all costs. Let us bring a smile and not a frown in our conversations with others. Help us to see the others point of view as well as our own. Help us to take the first step toward acceptance and understanding rather than always saying: "What's in it for me." Help us to understand that we rise by lifting others not by tearing them down. Help us remember that united we will stand, but divided we will fall in our relationships, in our communities and in the countries we hold dear.

199. A Soft Answer

It was said of the prophet, Joseph F. Smith, that if he needed to discipline one of his children that he would take the child to a quiet place and in a calm, quiet and soft manner speak with the child. In today's world we hear too many loud voices, arguments and angry words. In Proverbs 15:1 we learn: **"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."** In the footnotes it refers to the qualities of patience and self mastery. The apostle James instructed the saints: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James 3:2). James goes on to instruct that a tongue that is not bridled "setteth on fire the course of nature. (James 3:6). Loud angry voices stir a spirit of contention that the Savior said should be done away. Let us follow the pattern of President Joseph F. Smith and use the soft answer of love to gain the self-mastery needed to overcome any obstacle or challenge we face in life.

200. Think Win-Win

We live in a world where everything appears to be placed into a win-lose situation. Have we considered that our efforts would be better served by being synergistic rather than destructive? Our minds seem to be geared into tearing another person or group down instead of lifting them up. Have you thought of the higher law, "We rise by lifting others?" When it comes down to it, what is the great quest of life? Is it to gain riches, wealth, honor, and power, or could it be possibly a higher objective to help ourselves and everyone around us qualify for the greatest gift of God, that of eternal life? Of course there are competitive sports games where we test ourselves to see who is the best in a particular event, but that attitude seems to spill over to all aspects of our lives. If we change the paradigm to start to look at circumstances in a win-win rather than a win-lose situation when possible, we will find greater cooperation, greater satisfaction, and greater achievement than if we always look to tear the other person down. When you consider a situation in the future ask yourself "What will accomplish the greater good." Maybe there will be a little more of give and take, a little more synergistic efforts and a lot less competitiveness in our relationships one with another here upon the earth.

201. Tie a Yellow Ribbon

The story is related about Vingo, a man returning home after spending four years in prison for a crime. As he was returning home on the bus he was visiting with some teenagers and talking with them about his apprehension on returning home. He had not heard from his wife, Martha, for three and a half years and didn't know if she would take him back. He had written to her telling her that if she wanted him back to tie a yellow ribbon around the old oak tree as he entered town. If a ribbon was there he would go home, but if not he would ride on by and find a new beginning. As the story goes he could not bear to look so he asked his traveling companions to look for him. The traveling companions watched earnestly and in joy told him that there was not only one ribbon but the entire tree was covered with yellow ribbons. In our lives we may find ourselves at one time or another on either side of that circumstance. On occasion, someone may have offended us or we may have offended others. We have the opportunity to show unconditional love and accept them back, as others also accept us back. Know that as we forgive others we will also be forgiven. **May we extend that yellow ribbon of acceptance to those who have offended and bring them back into the circle of love, companionship, joy and happiness.**

202. What Can I Do For You?

Just as the Savior made Himself the servant of all, He often did so by asking what each individual needed. **He ministered to the one.** On some occasions He cleansed the lepers, on others He healed the blind and brought the dead to life again. He knew what each person needed and gave according to their needs and faith. We are not as in tune as He was, but we can simply ask how we may help those around us. Often the requests are simple and easily met. It is one thing to ask what can be done, but it is even better to perceive the needs and respond without asking. We should do something good for someone on a daily basis without them having to ask or maybe without them even knowing what we have done for them. When our lives are turned outward toward blessing the lives of others our lives become fuller and with greater meaning. **The gift of service is a wonderful thing that blesses both the giver and the receiver as we help one another through life's experiences.**

203. Two Seas in Palestine

There is a marvelous poem written by Bruce Barton which teaches a profound truth. It is entitled "Two Seas in Palestine."

There are two seas in Palestine, one is fresh and fish are in it. Splashes of green adorn its banks. Trees spread their branches over it and stretch out their thirsty roots to sip its healing waters. The River Jordan makes this sea with sparkling waters from the hills. So it laughs in the sunshine, and men build their houses near to it, and birds their nests; and every kind of life is happier because it is there.

The river Jordan flows on South into another sea.

Here there is no splash of fish, no fluttering leaf, no song of birds, no children's laughter. Travelers choose another route, unless on urgent business. The air hangs heavy above its water, and neither man nor beast will drink.

What makes this mighty difference in these neighboring seas? Not the River Jordan. It empties the same good water into both. Not the soil in which they lie, nor the country round about.

This is the difference. The Sea of Galilee receives but does not keep the Jordan. For every drop that flows into it, another drop flows out. The giving and receiving go on in equal measure.

The other sea is shrewder, hoarding its income jealously. It will not be tempted into any generous impulse. Every drop it gets, it keeps.

The Sea of Galilee gives and lives. This other sea gives nothing. It is named The Dead.

There are two kinds of people in this world. There are two seas in Palestine. (Bruce Barton).

204. I Am Only One

There is a quote by Edward Everett Hale that was frequently quoted by Helen Keller. It spoke of perspective and action based on ability. None of us can do everything but everyone can do something in this world that we live in. The poem is entitled "I Am Only One" and teaches an important truth for us to observe in this life.

I Am Only One

I am only one, but still I am one.

I cannot do everything, but still I can do something,

And I will not let what I cannot do

Interfere with what I can do. Edward Everett Hale

And that which I can do,

By the grace of God, I will do. (Adapted by R. Tom Sutton).

(The verse seems incomplete so I added the last line which felt like it was needed to complete the thought of the poem.)