

JUST A WORD.....

Words affect me. Always. For better and for worse. They matter. So I thought I would write these....

Fear

Are you wondering why I have chosen this word first?

Because it seems to lie at the root of so many of our actions. Dress it up how we will!

Telling little lies when we are children to save us from punishment.

'Sneaking' about the little boy who teased one in class.

Being the saintly one who told teacher about who talked in her absence.

Trying out cigarettes, drinks, drugs, sex, because we may otherwise be considered 'out' and not 'in'!

Having the 'right address'. The 'right' spouse. The 'right' friends and acquaintances and social circuit; which has the corollary of dropping the wrong ones when there is discomfort!

Don't mistake me, I am not talking of acquaintances who are bad friends, who do not really mean any good to you! Who cause divisions in your mind and in your relationships.

Fear, that's what I'm talking about. Trying to avoid looking at a friend of the opposite sex when your spouse or his/hers is around.

Viewing our work environment or world with cynicism, considering it out of step with us.

This is the 'adult' view. Anyone who takes on the world with a sense of wonder and awe is a half-wit! If you are happy with the little joys of the day, you are an idiot.

If a colleague smiles at you across the corridor or over a shared cup of tea, you want to look for the motive first. There must be a hidden agenda. Why else would someone smile at you?

The root lies in fear.

Fear of what people will think or say. Fear of not being in step with the Great Social Order. Fear of authority. Fear of ostracism. Fear of criticism.

And the bigger fears: of illness; of being dependent; of death.

Some fears are legitimate: both natural and healthy. Fear of snakes or tigers. Fear of speed. Fear of fire, or mountaintops or ledges on a skyscraper; of speed; of shards of glass or knives; of guns and grenades; of losing your job; of hurting people; of causing destruction; of breaking a law that is rational and sensible.

But that is about as far as fear should go.

Let it not become the primary factor dictating our attitudes and our lives and our relationships. Whether personal or official. For somewhere the tentacles of fear strangle a life.

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Jealousy

This is not something I wish to accept in myself. I don't think any of us wish to accept it as a part of our instinct. It leaves one feeling so small and deficient.

And yet.....

It flows like a subterranean river inside us. Gushing out in a spout of anger when it finds a weak surface or crevice in our relationships. It seeks justification. Like all instinct. Hunger seeks food. Thirst seeks water.

And it seeks someone to blame.

So its outcome is one which has wrecked more relationships than one can imagine. Often growing out of suspicion. Real and imaginary.

Like a river eroding its bank relentlessly. Suspicion does not give peace to the river or to its banks.

The one suspected can sing himself/ herself hoarse about innocence. But it is the old, old story of the rope seeming a snake. Nothing convinces the jealous one. One can fight substance. But how does one fight shadows?

The best psychoanalysts suggest that the suspected one must make that extra effort to convince the insecure one of his/her love and commitment. With due respect to the psychoanalysts, this often only aggravates the situation!

The suspicious one frequently finds in the loving efforts only an attempt to cover up the grounds for suspicion. Wallets, briefcases, purses, cupboards, phones and motives are all surreptitiously scrutinised. Great scenes of confrontation are enacted. And then there are periods of self-flagellation and further insecurity, followed by exhaustion and illness. And the cycle goes on and on.....

There is one, and only one cure for this.

Introspection. Hard, real introspection. Not wrapped in the candy coloured paper of wishful thinking.

What is causing my jealousy? If it is my insecurity, then I must deal with it without blaming the significant other. If there has been reason for it, then let me lay it out between us and be done with it. One way or another. Live with it, or decide to live without it. With him/ her or without him/her.

Because nothing is as corrosive of the being inside a human than the acid of suspicion. Don't expect your insecurities to be laid to rest by anyone else. Parent, child, spouse, friend, lover. Anyone.

Sort yourself out first and then think of relationships. Without jealousy.

And beware of the jealousy of the 'Iagos' among your friends! Their 'motiveless malignancy' is dressed up as friendship and concern. But it is like the iceberg that shatters your life and all the precious relationships...just because you failed to recognise it!

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Trust

How do I trust someone when I don't feel it inside me?

That one nearly floored me. It was my son who asked the question. And which led me to finding a rationale for something I had grown used to as a way of life.

I recall that there was a time when I had this problem. Wary of people. Mistrusting my instincts. Distrustful of people. With reason.

And because of the reasons, I felt it was just and right.

So how did things change? How did I change?

First, I started finding reasons for why people did what they did, were what they were.

Second, I did not have to agree with their reasons for doing things.

Third, I did not need to have any compulsion to change them to my way of thinking.

Fourth, There is nothing in the universe that demands that I and he/she be alike. Trees, birds, animals, all have different shapes and sizes and instincts. No tree I know of suffers from a superiority or inferiority complex. A neem tree doesn't seem to mind if it doesn't sprout mangoes or mayflowers! They live companionably in the same street.

Fifth, I do not have to run in anyone else's track in proof of my excellence!

Sixth, with all the planets in their proper orbit, I don't need to feel threatened by anyone else! Whether they are nice to me or not! Whether they are achievers or not!

This was the beginning. It made for a degree of comfort from which I viewed the world around me. Since I had accepted me, there was no reason why I should not accept you.

If I give you something of me or mine, it is from the fullness of my being, not because I felt cheated out of something that you took or because you took advantage of my folly or simplicity in any way. I let you have something; I trusted you.

I am not attempting to play God. I have Him inside of me. As you do. And if I trust Him, I cannot distrust you. And if you cheat me, hurt me or harm me, there will be a part of yourself you will damage, willy-nilly! Some day, in some way.

And that is why I trust you. Because I trust me.

