



Even when the last thing you want to do is to forgive

Bởi:

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“If we cannot forgive, we end up crucifying ourselves on the very cross we construct for our scapegoats. Our hate will be the hatred in ourselves that we have repressed, and that hatred of others masking our own self-hatred will continue to crucify us in their name.”

Michael H. Crosby: *The Seven Last Words*

I’ve spent many an evening with support groups. I’m always inspired by the sharing of hope and courage that so often turns out to have been nothing less than planting the seeds of future miracles. The one exception was an evening I spent with a support group for parents whose children had been murdered. Most of these crimes remained unsolved. I don’t think I’ve ever seen so much hatred and latent violence in one place. There is no doubt in my mind that, had one of the murderers been dragged into that room, those angry parents would have beaten him to death right then and there. I’m also certain that a month later they all would have felt immeasurably more miserable for having taken out their vengeance.

One man remarked that neither he nor his wife had enjoyed a single a moment of peace in the years since their daughter’s battered body had been found in the trunk of a car. His wife nodded in agreement. I wanted to ask them what their daughter would say if she could return to Earth for just one minute. Would she say: “Mom and Dad, I want to thank you for honoring my memory by allowing your lives to have been ruined by my death.” Or would it more likely have been: “Please, Mom and Dad, let go of the anger and hatred that have turned your souls to ice. I have long since forgiven the person who took my life. Can’t you find it in your hearts to do the same? Not because he deserves to be forgiven, but because you need to forgive.”

When God told Job to pray for his friends, I believe He was telling him to forgive them. Though they were undoubtedly trying to be helpful, they had in effect been telling Job that it was all his own fault. In so many words, they said that because of his past deeds, Job was guilty of causing the deaths of his children and his servants. Had Job not been a terrible person who had done terrible things, they implied, God would never have

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allowed these bad things to have happened to him. Job was clearly angered by these accusations. By instructing Job to pray for his friends, the way Vern told me to pray for the man who'd fired me, God was also telling him to forgive them.

Mahatma Gandhi said that only the strong can forgive. The quality of our lives, and the nature of the world that we pass on to our children, will be profoundly influenced by whether or not we have the courage and the strength to heed that call.