



Editorial

SPIRITUAL NEEDS: FOCUS ON FORGIVENESS

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Every time I turn on a newscast or pick up my morning paper, I learn of more heartache caused by hurting people who so selfishly hurt others. In her book, *Hurt People Hurt People*, Wilson (1993) describes the root of hurting others: unforgiveness. In recent editorials, I have tried to convey that we all have spiritual needs, one of which is forgiveness. Every human being needs to give and receive forgiveness from self, others, and the Sacred (Carson & Koenig, 2008).

In an effort to better understand the process of forgiveness, I have found it helpful to consider what forgiveness is and isn't. Forgiveness is NOT pardoning, excusing, condoning, forgetting, or even reconciling. Forgiveness is letting go rather than seeking revenge. Forgiving is freeing up your energy in order to move on with life. Healing enables us to discover renewed meaning and purpose through our experiences. I think a great example is to think about walking outside barefooted on a warm summer's day when suddenly you step on a thorn...ouch!! What happens if you keep walking? The more you walk, the more it hurts. If the thorn is not removed, your foot will become infected – could even become so badly infected that amputation would become necessary. What should have been done initially? By all means, stop and remove the thorn. The pierced site may bleed or remain sore for a brief time, but it will heal without the adverse effects that result from failure to remove the thorn. Therefore, when pierced by “thorns” (hurt from others), stop and begin the healing process. Without “removing the thorn” (forgiveness), anger, resentment, bitterness, and depression (infection) will result. These results will rob us of our peace and joy; our body, mind and spirit will suffer.

As nurses, we must be holistically well in order to minister to those placed in our care. How can we be instruments of healing if we have not addressed the hurt in our own lives through the process of forgiveness?

“Forgiveness is the scent that the rose leaves on the heel that crushes it.”

Anonymous

REFERENCES

- Carson, V.B., & Koenig, H.G, (2008). *Spiritual Dimensions of Nursing Practice*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press.
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