

FROM MAX HEINDEL'S WRITINGS

Commendation



vs Condemnation

THE ROSICRUCIAN FELLOWSHIP lays stress upon actual service to our fellowmen, and very, often the question is asked, "How can I serve my fellowmen? I do not seem to have the opportunity." It may therefore be well to point out that service does not necessarily mean a great and spectacular deed, such as getting in front of a runaway horse and carriage and saving the lives of the people in it, or going into a burning building to rescue those who would otherwise burn to death. Such opportunities do not come to every one, or every day; but all without any exception whatever have opportunity to serve, no matter what their environment is. The line of service that we shall indicate in this article is of even greater value than any one single act of saving someone from death, which must sooner or later be the portion of all, for surely it is of greater value to help people to live well than to help them merely to escape death.

It is a deplorable fact that the great majority of us are selfish to a high degree. We seek the best there is in life with an almost entire disregard of our neighbor; and one of the ways this selfishness expresses itself most frequently is in maintaining an attitude of self-satisfaction. We are too prone to compare our efforts, our belongings, our faculties with those of others, and where it is manifest that they have more than we, that they are more accomplished, etc., there is a feeling of jealousy and envy that prompts us to speak slightly of them or in some way to minimize their success or attainments, under the illusion that by this comparison we rise to their level, or above it.

If, on the other hand, it is manifest that they have not as much as we, if it appears that their social standing is beneath our own, and it seems easy to establish their inferiority, we may adopt the supercilious attitude, we may speak patronizingly or condescendingly of them, thinking that by such comparison we raise ourselves greatly above our actual position.

If we hear someone speak evil of another, we are usually ready and prone to believe the very worst, because then by comparison we seem to be so much better, so much holier, and so far exalted above the culprit in the case. And where merit is so manifest that praise can not be withheld, we generally give it in a grudging manner, for we feel as if the praise given to others takes away from ourselves, or perhaps even exalts them above ourselves.

That is the general attitude of the world. However deplorable or lamentable it may be, it is a fact, and among the great majority of mankind everybody seems concerned to keep everybody else back. This is one of the greatest items of man's inhumanity to man, which makes countless thousands mourn, and causes them to make other countless thousands mourn in return.

What greater service can anyone render to everyone else than that of adopting a systematic attitude of encouragement and commendation? There is nothing more true than the sentiment of the doggerel: "There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it scarcely behooves any of us to find fault with any of the rest, of us." In the home, in the shop, in the

office, everywhere, we meet day by day different people, every one of them amenable to encouragement. As the sunshine is to the flower, so is an encouraging word to any person in the world. If someone has done well and we speak a word of appreciation, that word will help him or her to do even better the next time. If someone has done wrong or failed, a word of sympathy and confidence in his ultimate ability to achieve or retrieve will encourage him to try again and to win, just as surely as an attitude of discouragement will wither and make a wreck out of the life that might have been saved by a word of cheer. When someone comes along with a tale of evil about someone else, be very slow to believe, and be slower still to tell anyone else. Endeavor by every means of persuasion to stop the one who came to you with the tale from repeating it to others. No good can ever accrue to yourself or to anyone else from listening to and believing in such tales.

This line of service may seem to be very easy at first thought. But you must bear in mind that it will very often require a great deal of self-abnegation to carry on such work, because we are all so imbued with selfishness that it is next to impossible for most of us to put self away entirely, place ourselves in the position of others, and give to them the encouragement and commendation for which we ourselves so earnestly long.

But if we persist in this attitude, and carry it out consistently with everyone in our environment, always making it a point to speak a word of encouragement wherever we can possibly find an opportunity, we shall presently find that people come to us not only with their sorrows, but also with their joys; thus we may gain some recompense. We shall feel then that we have had a large share in their attainment; and in all these successes of other people there will be a joy and a success that legitimately belong to ourselves, a success moreover that no one can take from us, something that will go with us beyond the grave as treasure in heaven.

Let it not be forgotten that every single little act is engraved upon the seed atom in our hearts, that the feeling and emotion which accompanies that act will react upon us in the postmortem existence,

and that all the joy, all the pleasure, all the love that we pour out toward other people will react upon us in the first heaven and give us a sublime experience. This will develop in us a wonderful faculty of giving more and more joy to others, of being of

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greater and greater service. And let us remember that this is the only true greatness, the only greatness which is worth working for, the greatness that helps us to be of service.

Above everything, even more than encouraging others in their work, let us remember the part of the service outlined that deals with stopping tales. When anyone comes to us with a tale concerning someone else, no matter what we may think ourselves, no matter what may be the justification, repetition does not do any good, it does harm. As a snowball that rolls down a mountain accumulates more and more snow, grows larger and larger, so also the tale which is carried from one mouth to another becomes exaggerated, and much sorrow and suffering are caused by the tongue of the gossip.

Therefore we can render no greater service to the parties involved or the community than by endeavoring to get those who carry tales of evil to stop that habit. Homes have been wrecked, communities have been disrupted, men have gone to the gallows time and again, or to a life-long servitude in some institution, which is far worse, because of idle tales carried about. Therefore we can render as great a service by refusing to listen to gossip as by encouraging those who have failed in their ambition, or by commending those who have succeeded. Every day opportunities are knocking at our door, no matter where we are or what our station in life is. □