

HEART-TO-HEART

We are reminded that Christ is in our hearts and we are in His and that love connects us all in unity.



*A flower cannot blossom without sunshine,
and man cannot live without love.*

Max Muller

It's About Relationships

During COVID the one thing that almost everyone experienced was the feeling of isolation. We saw many negative effects of that isolation - paranoia, fear of going outside, not wanting to be with others, lack of hope, suicide.

Social interactions are what humans need to thrive, although some of us may not be willing to admit that. When we are connecting with others, we feel a sense of belonging.

One of the great things about being a follower of Christ is that He doesn't want anyone to be isolated. Jesus emphasizes relationships in all of His teachings. He also modeled that for us as the Bible is full of stories of Jesus interacting and connecting with others.

Especially in "the church" we are called to become a family of believers in Christ. How will you welcome others into "the church" so they have a sense of belonging? All it takes is the first conversation.

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Our Daily Bread

by Jeanne Nagatani

Charles F. Stanley wrote a devotional that spoke to me:

“Give us this day our daily bread. Matthew 6:11

The concept of daily bread goes far beyond a loaf of whole wheat bread for physical nourishment. Bread is a term that refers to everything that is necessary for wholeness in life. It refers to the things we need physically, but also to the things we need mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.... When you ask the Lord to give you your daily bread, you are also to mean, ‘Give me today what You know I need to carry out Your purposes for me on the earth. I trust you to meet all my needs.’”

When we say the Lord’s Prayer and it says, “Give us daily bread,” I never really thought about what it really meant. I thought that this was asking for our daily sustenance. This devotional made me understand better what I’m really asking God to do for me. I hope that this brings insight to others when reciting the Lord’s Prayer.



You Know(z) What I Mean?

by Julie Morita

I met with my friend one day and saw a nose hair peeking out of their nose. It was a long one. During the entire conversation I wrestled with these thoughts: “Should I tell them? But if I tell them, then they’re going to obsess and try to pluck it out the whole time we’re talking. But if I don’t tell them then I’ll be obsessing about it the whole time. Why don’t they notice it when they look in the mirror? Oooh, sometimes it gets sucked back in their nose.” And the conversation in my head goes on and on. Sometimes I get so focused on it that I don’t recall the actual conversation that my friend and I have.

I decided to tell my friend as we were saying goodbye. “Oh, by the way, you have a nose hair peeking out that you may want to take care of. Bye, see you next time.” My friend contacted me later with, “OMG! I can’t believe you let me walk around with that python coming out of my nose. No wonder the cashier was staring at me the other day.”

And don’t get me started on those folks who have “wana” (sea urchin) or a booger coming out of their nose. LOL

Conversation starter: How do you handle these situations?

**This story is gender neutral to protect the innocent. 😊*



If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
John 15:7

The Power of Belief

by Alli Oshiro

My favorite teacher in high school was Mrs. Cowell. She taught speech and I was deathly afraid of public speaking. For those of you who don't know, I went to Punahou. And Punahou is a terrifying place for people who don't like to talk. In every class, from English to math to science, we were expected to present and speak in front of the class. Every time I had to stand up to speak, my throat would close up, my hands would shake and the words would get stuck in my mouth. I hated people looking at me and would avoid speaking up at all costs. From 7th grade to 12th grade, I'd just stumble through any presentation or speech I had to give. But everything changed my first semester of senior year when I took Mrs. Cowell's class.

A few months into the semester an announcement went out that the Commencement Planning Committee was looking for speakers and anyone could audition. It has been 18 years to the month, and I know it was God prompting me to audition, even though I didn't know who He was yet. I decided to sign up because I wanted to challenge myself. My goal wasn't even to get selected, it was simply to get through the audition. After I signed up (so nervous I had a hard time writing my name), I went straight to Mrs. Cowell's office to tell her what I decided to do, and then beg her to coach me. Without even blinking and with a big smile on her face she said, of course!

Over the next several weeks, I'd spend my lunch breaks in her cubical. She'd have her sandwich and chips, while I stood in front of her practicing my speech. She'd fix my posture, breathing, intonation, pace, and facial expressions. Never once pointing out my flaws or shortcomings, rather, coaching me to be the best version of myself. Her belief that I could not only get through the audition but also get selected was infectious. Over the weeks I spent with her, I began to believe it too.

When audition day came, I was nauseous all day, and could barely pay attention in any classes. After school, I went to Alexander Hall (yes I remember the building) and I sat in the waiting room between my class president and the speech and debate captain. I felt like David in front of Goliath. There was no way my speech would be better than either of theirs. They were polished and experienced. They had no fear and more confidence than I could even dream of. I went in the room and presented my speech exactly how I rehearsed a hundred times with Mrs. Cowell. When it was done, there was no feedback, just a few small smiles from the judges, I left the room and went home.

Later that night I got a call from the graduation planning chairperson- I couldn't believe what I was hearing "Hey Alli, it's Ben from school, just wanted to call to congratulate you. We selected you to be our commencement speaker..." everything else just faded into nothingness. I had been selected. I was in complete disbelief and thought they were playing a really terrible trick on me. But they weren't, and it was true. Mrs. Cowell's belief was so powerful it turned into my own belief. And even more than that, it was in this moment I also began to believe, God, you must be real because there's no way I could have done it on my own.

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If you believe, you will receive
whatever you ask for in prayer.

Matthew 13:45

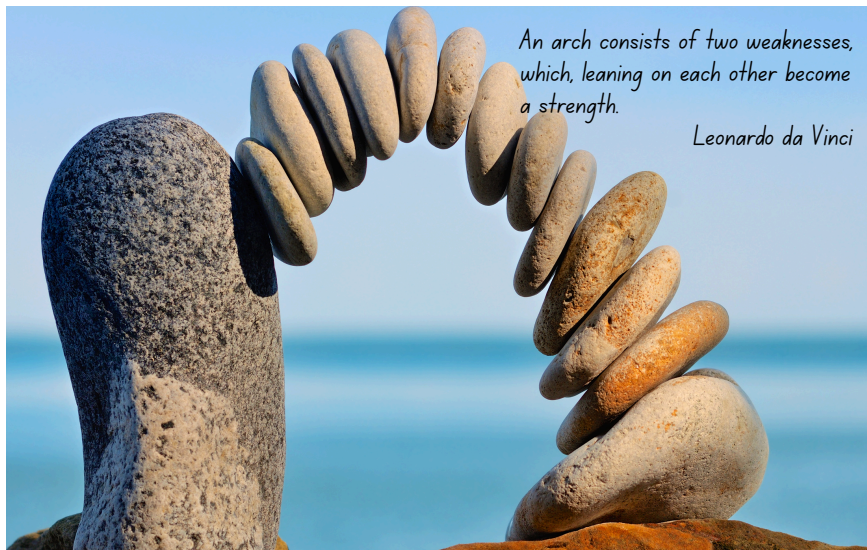
The Power of Belief cont.

Mrs. Cowell was part of a much bigger story and wider trajectory for my life than I could ever have imagined. God used her to change how I saw myself and it led to my own personal journey with Him.

I share this story with you because the power of our words is greater than we can even see or comprehend. The power of encouragement and exhortation goes far beyond a simple conversation. And even more, it is not just something left for teachers to do, it is something we can all do. If we are in relationship with people and have the opportunity to pour into someone else, there is no limit to what God can do with our words. Belief in a person is infectious and faith that God will do immeasurably more with our belief is what changes lives.

I leave you with two verses of encouragement:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
- Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.



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The purpose of human life is to serve,
and to show compassion and the will to
help others.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

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