

## Acceptance

Life can appear to be a competition. There is a lot of comparison and judgment going on in our world today and this creates pressure on us to do more, to be more. We are often left feeling as though we have not done enough, as though we are not enough. Life is not a competition. It is a journey toward acceptance of others as equally loved.

In order to break this competitive tendency in every aspect of life we must first accept ourselves and our limitations. Yes, it is true. We all have limitations. Perhaps the most difficult step to take toward acceptance is to start by looking at our own limitations. I am not perfect (this I have known for a long time). Nobody is perfect. But acceptance of that fact does not come easy and often must be relearned.

This summer I was frustrated with myself at a retreat when on the last day I became antsy about leaving to go home. My scheduled retreat time was not over and I was wasting it with an antsy attitude. Grrr! 'What was wrong with me?' 'Why couldn't I embrace the last day of my retreat?' 'If only I could be more like this person or that person', but wait I am not anyone else. I am me and this is my life. That day I came to learn once again that acceptance is a very important part of life. As I reflected on my restless behavior that morning I realized that no matter how long my vacations are, 3 days or 13 days, the last day of the vacation is always an antsy one.

The bottom line is I am who I am and this characteristic is simply a part of me and as long as I am not hurting anyone with my behavior I don't need to change it. I just need to accept it. I need to learn how to work with it! So, that morning I took my behavior to the guest laundry and did my laundry. I found the art room and spent time being creative. By embracing my behavior I found self-acceptance and was able to relax and enjoy the day.

I often hear people say they wish they could do more. They criticize themselves for not being able to do as much as they used to do. They compare themselves to others. They claim they are not good enough, strong enough, or smart enough. Even as I prepare this reflection I hear the very words I have just written from a woman, which confirms

this is indeed the topic I am to share with all of you. We must learn to accept all of our imperfections as part of who we are. If we cannot first accept our own uniqueness, how can we open up to the uniqueness of others?

If we judge our imperfections as problematic we are likely to look at others imperfections as problematic, too. Passing judgment on ourselves and others leads to frustration, anxiety, and tension both within ourselves and with those we meet.

An evil spirit exists in our world that wants to make us feel unaccepted, unloved. It is working very hard and you don't have to look very far to see evidence of this, but there is also a spirit of love given to us unconditionally. We can read about it in Psalm 139:1-18. This bible verse is packed full of loving support for each of us from a loving God. I invite you to read it and specifically verses 13-14. Sit with these words and be moved to unconditional acceptance.

Questions to ponder:

What judgments do I hold of myself?

How do I compete with others in life's daily activities?

When was the last time I thanked God for his marvelous creation in me?

How can I break the cycle of judging myself against others?

May God's Peace be With You,

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### *How Could Anyone*

*by Shaina Noll (CD: Songs for the Inner Child, 1992)*

*How could anyone ever tell you, you were anything less than beautiful?*

*How could anyone ever tell you, you were less than whole?*

*How could anyone fail to notice that your loving is a miracle?*

*How deeply you're connected to my soul.*