

# The Family Friend



A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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## Mother

She is a shelter in a time  
of storm,

A haven safe and sure.

She's hugs and looks that  
keep you warm,

A love that's kind and  
pure.

She's fussin' when you  
don't do good,

Her love's too true to  
hush.

She's taught you how you  
can and should

Do right without her push.

She's cook and tailor, doc-  
tor too,

Her touch can often cure.

She's wise and bold, and  
precious, too,

A friend forever sure.

She's firmly fixed within  
your heart,

Her touch, her voice, her  
face.

And even when you have  
to part,

No one can take her  
place.

## Confessions of An Evader

In his book *Discovering Yourself*, Bob Rigdon concluded that people respond to fear and anxiety in four different ways.

1. **Fighting** - launching an attack on the persons, institutions, or influences that appear to be responsible for causing fear and anxiety.
2. **Trembling** - refusing to respond to the source of fear and anxiety, while dreading the inevitable moment when one's worst fear will be realized.
3. **Fleeing** - distancing yourself from the situation, so you want have to deal with it.
4. **Solving the problem rationally.** - obtaining information about possible solutions, choosing the most workable solutions, and acting to implement a plan of action that will hopefully lead to a satisfactory solution.

The author elaborates on these four options (pp. 22-31), and argues persuasively, "There are times when fighting, trembling, or fleeing are rational, but the general rule is that they are irrational. They do not solve the problem; they do not restore an order with which one can live." (p. 22). While I agree with Dr. Rigdon, I'm also con-

vinced that most of us are naturally inclined to go with one of the first three options. I'm well aware of the fact that I prefer fleeing. I'm an evader. I see evidence of it in nearly everything I do.

Recently, I began to hear a strange noise that sounded like it came from the rear wheel of my automobile. My first inclination was not, "I need to take the vehicle into a mechanic to see if there is something wrong." I was slowing to a stop near a traffic light when I first heard it, so I figured it must have come from the car in the next lane. The next time I stopped, I heard it again, so I thought, "Well it is my vehicle, but I probably ran over some debris on the highway it caught on the underside of the car." I stayed with that rationale for a few days. I didn't look underneath the car because I was afraid I might not find anything (the trembling response). Eventually I looked underneath the vehicle and sure enough I didn't see anything. I finally took it to my mechanic, and he said, "O. K. Norman, you need a brake job."

I didn't like the solution because the price tag was rather steep, but he took care of my brake problem, and I like the result. I don't hear noises coming from wheels. My bank

account took a hit, but we're still financially solvent.

Unfortunately I tend to do the same thing in human relationships. I don't like it when Ann says, "We've got a problem." I tremble a bit when I hear those words. Usually the problem isn't nearly as threatening as I imagined it to be, but I can find dozens of excuses for not solving it rationally. I'm afraid I approach these problems the same way I approach car repairs. I put it off as long as I can.

But, when I do get around to dealing with a domestic problem, I soon realize we can discuss it without rancor. Fighting is rarely our style. I also realize that I'm not going to lose something valuable if I admit that her concerns are legitimate, and I don't really give up anything important if I have to concede that my ideas weren't all that great. If we can discuss our problem rationally, we can usually come up with a workable solution. The end result is fantastic. We both like the solution.

Conflict really isn't a bad thing. Diane Sollee of Smart Marriages says, "The number one predictor of divorce is the habitual absence of conflict." I'll have to admit that I don't like conflict, but I sure do like it when we can find a way to manage it.

So if solving the problem rationally works so well, why do I end up going into the evasion mode after a certain amount of time has passed and another problem presents itself? Again Dr. Rigdon offers helpful insights. He contends that human needs are circular in nature. In terms of having our needs met, we move from imbalance to balance, and back to imbalance

again. For example, when you wake up hungry, your nutrition need is in a state of imbalance. You eat breakfast, and you move to a state of balance, but by noon you've returned to a state of imbalance. Our emotions work the same way (Discovering Yourself. pp. 32-53). That's why you have to keep working at keeping your marriage alive throughout the years.

As Christians we have made a commitment to live up to certain spiritual standards, but we still live in the flesh. Paul writes, "Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want" - Galatians 5:16-17 NRSV. For me, the inclination of the flesh says, "flee" when there's a potential fear and anxiety-producing situation. But the Spirit is directing me to find rational solutions to those issues. My challenge is to live by the Spirit.

—Norman Bales

## Unwed Pregnancies

Unwed pregnancies occur in our society with frequency. Sadly, but not unexpectedly, many also occur in our church families. Shame and hurt all around are inevitable results.

Having a baby is not, of course, the sin; the act in which the baby was conceived is the sin. It would have been just as egregious a sin if the baby had

not be conceived. Pregnancy does, however, make the sin public, and the girl the obvious guilty one. But she is no more guilty than the boy involved, and there should be no discrimination in how they are handled.

Since a sin has been committed, repentance and confession need to occur. Repentance takes place in the heart of the one who committed the sin, and it includes a resolve not to repeat it. Confession helps clean the soul (1 John 1:9). It also allows those who know of the sin to know repentance and confession have occurred.

Public response in an assembly is a good way to make contrition known. It is not, however, the only way. However it is done, those involved should demonstrate sorrow for sin and avoid indications of arrogance toward those who are looking for evidence of penitence.

An important balance needs to be struck.

A sin has been committed. Sin is not an occasion for parties and celebration. Other young people facing similar pressures and temptations need to be discouraged from similar offenses.

Where repentance has occurred, full forgiving acceptance should follow. That too is important for all to see.

To create that balance is difficult. Care should be taken not to de-emphasize one at the expense of the other. The baby is an innocent participant and should not be stigmatized.

—Cecil R. May, Jr.