

The Family Friend

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

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Emotional Residue

The human mind is a strange thing. Recently, a thought popped into my mind while I was in the car. I have no idea what stimulated the thought, but I vividly recalled a childhood incident, one in which I was ashamed of my actions. The incident occurred more than fifty years ago, but I replayed the scene in my memory as vividly as if it took place yesterday. Some time later I ran across the phrase "emotional residue" in my reading. I thought that was a pretty good label to place on my not so pleasant trip down memory lane.

Are your thoughts ever interrupted by emotional residue from the past? Most of us don't talk about it much, but it seems to be a common problem. Emotional residue is like a stain on your carpet. It's hard to get out. In my case, I learned that it still lurks somewhere in the recesses of my brain after a half century. It's not in the forefront of my consciousness everyday, but I'm amazed at how vivid a negative mental picture can be after the passage of a long period of time. Emotional residue is a potential happiness

robber, a prospective relationship destroyer, and a latent family killer. While emotional residue may lie dormant for many years, if you stir it up, it can create havoc. When you start digging up the past, you bring a lot of baggage along with the event - feelings of guilt, inadequacy, failure, blame, projection and who knows what else.

So what can you do about it?

- *Deal with it.* Stop trying to cover it up and pretend its not there. It's not going to leave if you ignore it. It's like the distant unemployed relative who shows up on your doorstep and eats your groceries while never contributing a dime to the food budget and then refuses to leave. You need to recognize the fact that those unwanted memories are messing up your mind and could damage you. If it involves sin, you need to admit it and repent of it if you haven't already done so. The statute of limitations doesn't run out on sin. Time doesn't erase our sins, but God does. The Bible says, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8).

- *Accept God's Forgiveness.* Unfortunately, emotional residue crops up in the lives of

people who have indeed repented and whose sins are covered by the blood of Christ. The problem lies in our unwillingness or inability to feel God's forgiveness. If he has forgiven you, why do you keep beating yourself over the head with it? Again John proclaims, "He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins" (1 John 1:9). And here's a word of encouragement to those who have never been able to totally feel forgiven. It is not necessary to feel forgiven in order to be forgiven. In 1 John 3:19-20, the apostle wrote, "This is how we know we belong to the truth, and how our hearts are set at rest in his presence, whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts and he knows everything." That was a tremendous encouragement to me when I was suddenly attacked by emotional residue. Continued →



• *Get on with your life.* Work on building healthy relationships. Work on developing wholesome character traits. Work on deepening your relationship with God. You are still a valued and worthwhile member of your family. Your family needs you. It's not a time to evade family responsibility. That emotional residue is probably a message from Satan designed to interfere with your family relationships. The event that produced the emotional residue must not be allowed to hinder your growth. It must not be allowed to drive a wedge between you and your spouse or between you and your children. You have worth in God's sight. Let him make something better out of you. None of us are sinless, but we are making progress toward a better time. Again John helps us out, "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2)..

—Norman Bales, via *All About Families*

Who Taught You to Walk?

Personally I don't remember learning to walk. I have, however, helped teach three others that particular skill. It is thrilling to see that first step taken. Grandparents are called. Friends are informed. One would think it was the first time in human history that an unassisted step had been taken and that, somehow, your child is exceptional.

There are few of us who

would learn to stand, much less walk, without the help of others - regardless of which path of life we may choose to stroll. Being a "self-made man (or woman)" is a myth.

Recently, I was able to spend time with a good many of my mentors in life and faith during a quick swing through Arkansas. I saw my mother, who wiped my nose and bottom as a single mother for the first five years of my life. It was she who taught me how to walk, talk and love God. There was my father, who inherited me when I was five. His wisdom, patience, and tolerance, I only wish I had. I still marvel that my parents survived the raising of my siblings and me. Add to the mix, "Sister" Wright, at age 92, she still loves God, His church, and His people. She has given of herself and her blessings to see the Kingdom of God grow for the greater part of her life. In my early days of preaching, she would feed me and house me on weekends, occasionally slipping me extra money. One certainly can't overlook Theron, who is just shy of 90. He, with his precious wife Janie, fed me, financed me, loved me, and challenged me. Theron wrote me every week while I was at graduate school and we still correspond today. One can't forget Mike and Sherry, whose friendship and support has continued far beyond my years at the small congregation of Mount Ida.

That's quite a list... it only scratches the surface of those who have helped me in my life and ministry. Without these folks and others, I would not be where I am or who I am today. They

helped me to stand and taught me to walk. They were there to pick me up when I fell, dust me off and put me back on my feet.

Who taught you to walk? Who has made a difference in your life, encouraged you to make the right choices and discouraged you from making the wrong ones? David had Jonathan. Elisha had Elijah, Paul had Barnabas, and Timothy had Paul. Who has been there for you?

Once you have identified these people, let them know how much they have meant and still mean to you.

—Dr. Eddie Randolph, via *All About families*, August 8, 2001



May you and your family have a bright and enjoyable holiday season . . . And may your best gifts be those from your heart!