

Spiritual Tip

When We Confess, We Begin to Heal

By Rick Warren

The first step in forgiveness is admitting your guilt. Then, you have to accept responsibility for your sin.

What's the best way to ensure that you are really accepting responsibility for your sin? You're not going to like the answer, but you need to hear it anyway: The best way to get over your guilt is to tell one other person who loves you unconditionally and who will listen and not judge you.

This is important: You don't have to confess to another person to be forgiven. All you have to do is confess your sin to God, and you'll be forgiven. But many of you have already been forgiven, and you still feel guilty. If you want to be forgiven, you tell God. If you want to feel forgiven, you've got to tell one other person. That's the way God wired it. Revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing.

We only get well in community! You don't have to tell a bunch of people. You really only need to tell one person. If your sin is between you and another person, you go to that person.

James 5:16 says, "Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (LB). It doesn't say "so that you may be forgiven," but so that you may be healed.

Forgiveness comes from God. Healing comes in relationships.

So why do you need to drag another person into your own personal sin?

Because the root of all of our problems is relational. We are dishonest with each other. We play games with each other. We wear masks all the time. We fake it. We pretend to have it all together when everybody knows we don't have it all together. We're all broken.

There are only two kinds of people in the world: people who are broken and sinful and know it and people who are broken and sinful and won't admit it. When we refuse to be real with each other, it creates all kinds of fears in our lives and isolates us from each other. It is a roadblock to intimacy, and it creates insecurity.

God wired us to need each other. You need a friend who's going to love you unconditionally and won't think less of you when you share your guilt with them. If you're not in a small group, you probably don't know anybody like that. If you're in a small group, you need to find one person you can share your heart with.

Talk It Over

- Why do you think it's so hard for people to admit their guilt or sin to another person?
- What difference has confession with another person made in your life?
- Describe the kind of person you trust the most and with whom you would be willing to share your sin. Are you that kind of friend to someone else?

Parenting Tip

Build Self-Worth In Your Child

By Parenting.Org

Years ago, experts strongly suggested to parents that picking up their crying babies would spoil them. Today, of course, we know that is false. In fact, the more children receive smiles, hugs, attention and words of love, the less they will cry. You are the single greatest influence on your child's positive or negative sense of self-worth. Children can be hurt when love is not there. They may develop the attitude that there is no use in trying or that they are not worth loving.

It is important to remember that all children go through stages of high and low self-esteem as they grow and face difficult challenges. Fortunately, many toddlers and preschoolers have a high sense of self-worth because they live in loving homes with lots of attention. Others, however, experience severe emotional abuse and neglect that requires professional intervention. If your child has a noticeably low sense of self-worth, consult a professional immediately.

To build your child's sense of self, try these activities at home:

Time-In Fun: Tip your child with lots of 5 or 10 minute time-in activities. Parents can use a token system to remind them and their child to stop during the busy day and take a few moments to have fun together. Place the token in a jar to see how much time you spend with your child each week.

Goodie Vouchers: Build your child's sense of accomplishment by giving him or her chores, activities and learning tasks that are age-appropriate. Place one goodie voucher under your child's pillow at night. The reward written on the voucher should cost nothing, such as a promise of time and attention with loved ones.

Memory Mosaics: Create a gallery of memories on your child's bedroom wall or in the family room where everyone can see. Your child can use photos or drawings to help create positive memories. Update the mosaic each week to focus on good behavior. Positive past memories should be remembered, too.

Love Notes: Leave a few notes (stickers, cards) of praise in places where your child will find them.

Family Tree: Help your child learn about the family and who he or she is by making family tree ornaments each month that can be used as decorations during the holidays.

Marriage Tip

The Difference Between Men And Women.

By Dave Barry, Humorist

Let's say a guy named Fred is attracted to a woman named Martha. He asks her out to a movie; she accepts; they have a pretty good time. A few nights later he asks her out to dinner, and again they enjoy themselves. They continue to see each other regularly, and after a while neither one of them is seeing anybody else.

And then, one evening when they're driving home, a thought occurs to Martha, and, without really thinking, she says it aloud: "Do you realize that, as of tonight, we've been seeing each other for exactly six months?"

And then, there is silence in the car.

To Martha, it seems like a very loud silence. She thinks to herself: I wonder if it bothers him that I said that. Maybe he's been feeling confined by our relationship; maybe he thinks I'm trying to push him into some kind of obligation that he doesn't want, or isn't sure of.

And Fred is thinking: Gosh. Six months.

And Martha is thinking: But, hey, I'm not so sure I want this kind of relationship either. Sometimes I wish I had a little more space, so I'd have time to think about whether I really want us to keep going the way we are, moving steadily towards, I mean, where are we going? Are we just going to keep seeing each other at this level of intimacy? Are we heading toward marriage? Toward children? Toward a lifetime together? Am I ready for that level of commitment? Do I really even know this person?

And Fred is thinking: ...so that means it was...let's see...February when we started going out, which was right after I had the car at the dealer's, which

means...lemme check the odometer...Whoa! I am way overdue for an oil change here.

And Martha is thinking: He's upset. I can see it on his face. Maybe I'm reading this completely wrong. Maybe he wants more from our relationship, more intimacy, more commitment; maybe he has sensed - even before I sensed it - that I was feeling some reservations. Yes, I bet that's it. That's why he's so reluctant to say anything about his own feelings. He's afraid of being rejected.

And Fred is thinking: And I'm gonna have them look at the transmission again. I don't care what those morons say, it's still not shifting right. And they better not try to blame it on the cold weather this time. What cold weather? It's 87 degrees out, and this thing is shifting like a garbage truck, and I paid those incompetent thieves \$600.

And Martha is thinking: He's angry. And I don't blame him. I'd be angry, too. I feel so guilty, putting him through this, but I can't help the way I feel. I'm just not sure.

And Fred is thinking: They'll probably say it's only a 90-day warranty...scumballs.

And Martha is thinking: Maybe I'm just too idealistic, waiting for a knight to come riding up on his white horse, when I'm sitting right next to a perfectly good person, a person I enjoy being with, a person I truly do care about, a person who seems to truly care about me. A person who is in pain because of my self-centered, schoolgirl romantic fantasy.

And Fred is thinking: Warranty? They want a warranty? I'll give them a warranty. I'll take their warranty and stick it right up their...

"Fred," Martha says aloud.

"What?" says Fred, startled.

"Please don't torture yourself like this," she says, her eyes beginning to brim with tears. "Maybe I should never have...oh dear, I feel so..."(She breaks down, sobbing.)

"What?" says Fred.

"I'm such a fool," Martha sobs. "I mean, I know there's no knight. I really know that. It's silly. There's no knight, and there's no horse."

"There's no horse?" says Fred.

"You think I'm a fool, don't you?" Martha says.

"No!" says Fred, glad to finally know the correct answer.

"It's just that...it's that I...I need some time," Martha says.

(There is a 15-second pause while Fred, thinking as fast as he can, tries to come up with a safe response. Finally he comes up with one that he thinks might work.)

"Yes," he says. (Martha, deeply moved, touches his hand.)

"Oh, Fred, do you really feel that way?" she says.

"What way?" says Fred.

"That way about time," says Martha.

"Oh," says Fred. "Yes." (Martha turns to face him and gazes deeply into his eyes, causing him to become very nervous about what she might say next, especially if it involves a horse. At last she speaks.)

"Thank you, Fred," she says.

"Thank you," says Fred.

Then he takes her home, and she lies on her bed, a conflicted, tortured soul, and weeps until dawn, whereas when Fred gets back to his place, he opens a bag of Doritos, turns on the TV, and immediately becomes deeply involved

in a rerun of a college basketball game between two South Dakota junior colleges that he has never heard of. A tiny voice in the far recesses of his mind tells him that something major was going on back there in the car, but he is pretty sure there is no way he would ever understand what, and so he figures it's better if he doesn't think about it.

The next day Martha will call her closest friend, or perhaps two of them, and they will talk about this situation for six straight hours. In painstaking detail, they will analyze everything she said and everything he said, going over it time and time again, exploring every word, expression, and gesture for nuances of meaning, considering every possible ramification.

They will continue to discuss this subject, off and on, for weeks, maybe months, never reaching any definite conclusions, but never getting bored with it either.

Meanwhile, Fred, while playing racquetball one day with a mutual friend of his and Martha's, will pause just before serving, frown, and say: "Norm, did Martha ever own a horse?"

And that's the difference between men and women.

Compliments of the District 1 Marriage and Family Ministry, FFWPU

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