

Running From My True Self

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by Kerry (used by permission)

The Lord has been doing some major renovation in my heart. The bottom line is I don't have a gender identity problem, for I know exactly who and what I am. I am a man, I am a child of the living God, I am the husband, lover, and friend of my wonderful wife (Patricia) and most of all I am who God created me to be — namely ME. To say anything else would be a lie. The truth is I've been a runaway. I have lived the last forty or so years trying to be an island unto myself. There is a wonderful song written by Bill Deaton (and recorded by Bob Carlisle) that expresses my heart perfectly.

It's called "A Chance I Have to Take."

Down deep inside this heart of mine, there's a door locked by design.

Hinges of rust from all the tears, I keep it shut from all my fears.

But you ask me to let down the wall, with no defense to catch my fall.

It's too late to play it safe, it's a chance I have to take.

So I choose Love, a Love that can take a heart so cold and teach it to break.

Tears may fall along the way, but it's a chance I have to take.

For I've seen a mockery made of love, everyone talks but no one does.

So I hide my heart upon a shelf, to never give to anyone else.

But I fall apart when I hear your words, healing will come to those who learn.

Change never comes to those who wait, it's a chance I have to take.

For true joy in living is found only in forgiving, those who've scared you so – let them go, let them go.

Now you are asking for my trust that's been abused so very much.

So I give to you the me that breaks — It's a chance I have to take.

My Own Reflections:

I knew from the time I was a small boy that my mother wished that I had been born a girl. I don't remember her ever dressing me in girl's clothes — I guess the wish itself was enough. My father was a very hard worker and worked the strangest hours to this day I've ever heard of – 1 week of days, 1 week of 2nd shift, 1 week of 3rd shift and then a week that consisted of 2 day shifts, 2 days of 2nd shifts and a day of 3rd shift. And he did that for over 30 years. So he was always tired (and a little cranky). I'm not trying to make excuses for him. When he didn't show up for my music concerts, my (few) athletic events, or even my wedding day it still hurt me. He always seemed to have time to play a round of golf or listen to a baseball game. But since I was born 10 years after my brother I always felt like I was an accident anyway – perhaps even a burden.

In the summer (especially after my mother was diagnosed with cancer) they would pack me off to my grandparents. I adored my grandmother; of all the people in my childhood I wanted to be just like her. She made time for everyone

— and maybe even more importantly (to me) she was the best cook on the face of the planet!!!! I realize now that she had qualities I desperately wanted. She was a very loving person; she would go out of her way to be kind or helpful. She just seemed to have a personality that you wanted to be around. It's not that she couldn't be tough if she had to be. Believe me, if she could handle my grandfather she could handle anybody!

My Grandfather on the other hand was rather self-absorbed and he loved to play mind games.

He would take me fishing from time to time but the thing he enjoyed the most was scaring the bejebers out of me. One of his running gags was to stare at me (just a little crazy) and tell me he was going to take his strait-edge razor and cut my hair off in the middle of the night. Or that some morning I would wake-up hanging by my feet from the ceiling. It gave him great joy to pass me the butter at the table and just as I was taking it he'd give it a little push and there would be my thumb in the middle of the stick. His favorite game was "hot hands"— you know where you put your hands on top of the other players hands (palm to palm) and you try to move your hands out of the way before the other player flips his hands over and slaps yours. My granddad had the fastest hands in the world and when he slapped you he didn't play around. Many a time my hands were beet red because I just wasn't fast enough. My Grandmother was always after my Granddad to stop teasing me, but Charley just had an odd way about him. The funniest (perhaps saddest) part of it all is that I'm a lot more like my granddad than my grandmother. But it's true that whatever you hate the most (and don't forgive!) ends up shaping you more into its image than you could ever imagine.

So my image of masculinity was not the best, and my image of femininity was overly glorified and false. This has led (in my case) to one screwed up life.

The hardest person to forgive in all this mess is of course — me. Why would anyone like, (let alone love), me. If they only saw the mess I've made of my life they would avoid me like typhoid Mary. Time to refer to the song lyric's above. Yet amazingly I am very loved. The Lord has proved over and over again how very much He loves me and so has Patricia. If the Lord loves me so much why didn't he protect me when I was growing up? The simple truth is — He did and He is. But without pain there is no growth and more importantly there is no empathy for the pain of others. The truth is the Lord has shaped me for a purpose and though I may not always understand what that purpose is I know He allowed it because He Loves me. That's not just a platitude or convenient saying. I know that as bedrock truth in my heart. It was not an easy lesson to master but I'm finally seeing the truth of it.

Not only that but I don't want to run away from who I am anymore. Are there many things to learn and face up to — YES! But to be an "island unto one's self " is a miserable way to live. My wife and I are finally starting to rediscover intimacy — it is a work in progress. There is sometimes pain — but there is also great reward! The Lord through the Holy Spirit is constantly illuminating my self-centeredness and my selfishness. Is it a pleasant thing to behold — NO! But I must allow the Holy Spirit to deal harshly with these things. I don't want to be in charge anymore — I have found through experience that it's really lonely at the top.

Let me make mention of the house church I attend. I have stated, "There are Christian people here (including ALL of my pastors) who know about my struggles. I belong to a care-ring of believers as well as my regular church yet I have no real support system concerning these issues. The simple truth is it's more reality than most people want to know. Most of the time they don't know how to respond anyway." The Lord has been leading me to the conclusion that these are exactly the people the Lord wants to use to deal with the issues I'm facing. Once again, this isn't about gender confusion — I don't need to be convinced that God didn't make a mistake by making me male. It's simply about living the Christian life — it's about discipleship, it's about my sanctification for Gods purposes.

Bob forgive me for taking up so much space and time. I guess I just needed to write these things down and talk with someone who has been (and is going) through the process. I also know I needed to hear them myself. I'm sorry for all the junk and hurtful things you have to deal with just to minister to the needs of others. Hurt people, after all, hurt people. Yet I constantly am blessed and helped every time I drop by the website. This ministry has been a lifesaver and a rock to me. I have — and will continue to pray for you and Betty.

May God Richly Bless You — Always!

Kerry :~)