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- *Evaluate without judging*
- *The best support offered another is listening*
- *The value of dignity*

God is with each of you as you encounter and embrace the many dynamics of your human lives. The discussion this evening was particularly appropriate, for it brings into relief the need for recognition of the spiritual and the human components of life. These two components need not be exclusive, but rather should be viewed as one supplementing another. It is the human perspective on the interrelationships between people that provides the actual application for the spiritual understandings.

The messages that you have shared together for such a long time constantly focus on the spiritual basis for your interaction with others. You are well aware of the need, the essential requirement, of all to be nonjudgmental. But judgment can be viewed in two specific perspectives. One is a value judgment; the other, an action judgment. There are no grounds for value judgments between people. This you all know and fully embrace. There is, on the other hand, justification for action judgment. Judgment is perhaps not the best choice for a word recognizing disagreement among people.

In human relationships, there is no room for judgment at all. There is evaluation and opinion but no judgment, for judgment implies that there is someone worthy of being judge, of being the one responsible for determining right and wrong, and that is simply not possible. In a general sense, human beings are called upon to evaluate, evaluating their own actions, the actions of other individuals, nations, and philosophies. Critical evaluation which seeks an understanding has a place in life, but when the goal is not understanding but a definitive determination of worthy versus unworthy, absolute right versus absolute wrong, such activity is inappropriate yet common.

It is indeed true, as has been observed, that one can support while disagreeing. Support does not imply full agreement, and that is okay. The difficulty for human beings is that too many connect support with the necessity for agreement. Either they agree and support, or they disagree and therefore do not support, or they interpret agreement as support, and they interpret disagreement as a lack of support. It is difficult to be criticized and yet feel supported. It is natural for all to interpret criticism as the withholding of support. What is important for each of you is to accept the place of disagreement in life while upholding the necessity and the essential relationship of support. It is a most difficult lesson that many are unsuccessful in fully achieving.

You are all on your own journeys, as was referred to earlier. You cannot judge another's journey as being right or wrong, but you can support others as they pursue their own journey. You can acknowledge the importance of that journey for another while not simultaneously embracing the specific journey as valid for you or for anyone else outside that one individual. The move that your friend makes is entirely appropriate for her. One

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cannot deny that. You may agree or disagree, but that is a statement of where you are vis-à-vis where she is. That is a recognition of the differences in the journey of which we spoke. It is not a judgment of value of another's journey.

You mentioned the necessity of cautioning a child to avoid actions which may be harmful. For very young children, such blanket cautions are appropriate. As the child begins to develop a stronger sense of self, of self-worth, and self-respect, one has to be mindful of the way one expresses cautions, of the way one instructs, for the child now has a strong sense of self. Part of the evolution of that self-esteem will be predicated on your relationships on many levels with that child. So it is with adults, whether they be siblings, colleagues, or others. It is important for their spiritual development (and for each of you as you develop) that guidance is offered within the context of a loving support, of an affirmation of another.

We, your guides, urge you in one direction or another, but accompanying that guidance is a spoken affirmation of your value as souls and as human beings. When you feel self-confident and secure, you are more able to move forward in the directions that may be suggested. At times, we have urged certain activities, certain behaviors for each of you, without your response in kind. That is also to be understood. You are human. One of the gifts you have been given is the gift of choice. You evaluate guidance given by us, guidance given by others, and you respond as you are able to respond, and as you choose to respond. But whether you follow the advice or reaction of others, your relationship to those whose advice you seek should not be changed. If you receive advice from another and choose not to follow it, the other has not been diminished. If you express your opinion as loving advice toward another, and the response is not of your choice, your relationship with another must not be diminished. The relationships between people are not predicated on either following or rejecting advice or guidance. Our relationship with you is not dependent upon whether you respond as we would wish or not. Our relationship is constant. And so it should be in your relationships with one another—if advice is offered, then it is offered. It is as simple as that.

Your affirmation of another must always accompany, precede, and succeed any time when your opinions are expressed. Your sense of support belongs to the entire process from beginning to end. You support the value of another's journey. You support the struggles that another may have on their own journey. You support the struggles that another may be having as they relate to a third party. The support must be there.

How is such support given? First, and most importantly, it is given by being the patient listener. The best support you can offer anyone is to listen. If an individual asks for advice, then it can be given, but sometimes individuals do not ask for advice, not because they don't want it, but because they are just testing out their own position. It is not a firmly held position that needs to be responded to. Listen first and completely, for that implies and communicates to another an acceptance, not an agreement or a disagreement with another's views, but an acceptance of them as they have their views.

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Beyond listening can come more active participation, but that participation must be asked for.

An individual is ready to be helped only when there is a felt need for such help. You may help through the quiet presence of prayer, even when it is not asked for, but the active help of direct participation in the life of another is only really effective when it has been requested. That request does not have to be spoken in particular phrases. It can be expressed in so many ways, but if the cry for help is evident, however it is expressed, then you are in position to be directly, visibly helpful. Until such time as help is requested, the help that you offer to show support beyond listening is the help of prayer.

No one will resist the help of prayer. The prayer may not be verbal or offered on the spot. It may only be offered at a later time and another place, but that prayer is always effective. Praying for the soul of another is extremely effective in offering support, for the other soul is strengthened and affirmed, and the individual will consequently benefit, even without a full understanding of the source.

Your relationships with other human beings, therefore, reflect first of all the support. It is that support which is the foundation for all that is beneficial in human relationships. When there is no sense of support, any help in a direct and personal way will be greatly diminished, for without support there is no sense of self-dignity. Without a sense of dignity, there is no receptivity, for receptivity requires dignity. Without that receptivity on the part of another, any help you offer will be less than what you desire. Take away a person's dignity and there is nothing left. Allow an individual the sense of personal dignity and that person will feel completely fulfilled. It is the support that ensures their dignity.

Much that you pray for on behalf of others can be responded to as the direct result of dignity. Even health issues involve a sense of dignity. When an individual feels self-validity, self-value, personal dignity, self-respect, call it as you will, the emotional impact of physical ailments is diminished, and a kind of healing of which you spoke can take place. When one feels oneself to be a victim, there is no dignity, and there is no healing. The victim is one who is not aware of the process of healing or the potential for healing. One who is self-aware, one who recognizes value of self, is never a victim.

Providing value to another, affirming the other, enhances their sense of dignity. Their lives are then under their own control. They are not being manipulated by others. This is the support we speak of. This is what is so essential in your relationships with others. With that support in place, it is possible to have a loving exchange of opinions, differences in attitudes, sharing of different perspectives, and an ultimate resolution to those differences, not an agreement but a resolution, an acknowledgment that those differences exist and an affirmation of the valid qualities inherent in those differences.

You are all beings of choice. You can choose to respond in one way or another to the differences of which you are aware. That choice is essential to your human lives and is to be welcomed. Allow for choice to be exercised. Allow for those differences of

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perspectives. Allow time to affirm the value of everyone and everything. There will be no need to judge, for there is no perspective that gives an absolute view of what is right, what is wrong, what is good, what is bad.

Your discussion this evening was directly related to the implications of the two messages you read together. But your consideration of such issues must not end here, for the concerns that were expressed emanate in far wider circles. They involve everyone whom you meet, every policy that you encounter, every political view that is brought to your attention. Issues of world peace, of human justice and social justice across the world or in your own community are intimately bound by these principles.

We pray for your continued openness for guidance and we continue to affirm the spiritual beauty and strength that is shared by each of you. Exercise your freedom, your gift of choice. Allow yourselves and others to move in directions which may prove in the future to be correct or not correct, realizing that the decisions that are made are made within the context of current understanding, current abilities, and current sensitivities.

Life is a flexible product of spiritual development. It is not straight-lined. It ebbs and flows. It turns first this direction and then the next. Allow for those changes. Allow for those unique characteristics to come forward. Welcome them and be guided by your own sense of God's presence in your life, recognizing that that vision, that understanding, is limited and continues to grow.

Amen.