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- *Caring relationships*

God and we, your guides, surround all of you as a group and individually with God's peace and calm.

Your responses to reading the message together were interesting, for everything that you mentioned related to "enduring" was directly associated with people. No mention was made of enduring one's own physical limitations. It was oriented towards others. If you reflect upon that sharing, you will recognize fully how important each individual is in the development and progress of another's life. So often we've said that no one lives on an island, fully alone. Life is not meant to be lived alone. Life is to be experienced in concert with others.

Each of you has a significant effect on the lives of others, whether students, associates, friends, relatives. Regardless of where you look, you are definitely an influence. What a magnificent responsibility you have! The responsibility is one of care for another, not just *caring for* another. You actually do care for another individual. When someone comes asking for help, your response is a response of care, of taking in and accepting another's needs. It is not merely one of being interested in another.

A nurse cares for a patient; a nurse may care for a patient without caring. Care can be motivated out of duty and not necessarily love. When anyone approaches you and you respond in an accepting manner, in effect you are taking care of another. You may think of yourself as one who takes care of the soul of another, just as one takes care of pets, children, patients, and so on. Part of your responsibilities in life, therefore, relate to taking care of another.

The soul while growing is very sensitive. You can hurt a soul. You cannot destroy it, but you can hurt it. How does this hurt take place? What is the nature of that hurt? The nature may be one of serving to block the soul's vision of its origin, namely God. The soul may be hampered in its growth thereby. You say, at times, you hurt someone's feelings—you may be hurting someone's *soul*. You may feel that, "Well hurting another's feelings is not intentional, and it's that person's problem for being so sensitive," but we can assure you that if you interpret hurting someone's feelings as hurting someone's soul, you would think more carefully about your relationships with others.

If you speak unkindly *about* someone, the effect is exactly the same as if you speak unkindly *to* someone. The only difference is, you may feel you save face through anonymity by not being identified as one who is criticizing, but anonymity is meaningless here. Speaking against someone, whether present or absent, creates the same hurt, creates the same barrier to the soul, and therefore we urge you to mold your approach to those around you in such a way that you search for what is good in others, and you think about what is good in others, and that you actively encourage what is good in others.

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You must do all that is possible to support the growth of another human being. If you are a physician, you take an oath to help others. We tell you, if you know God, you must take an oath to help others, for any knowledge of God in life is associated with a contract between you and God related to your dealings and your sensitivity to others. You would not knowingly hurt God, therefore you should not knowingly hurt another.

Certainly there are mistakes which are made. There are times when you speak out and then wish that you could retract what you said. That is normal and one should not be ashamed of those instances. You should, however, learn from them—learn about the power of words and thoughts and their effects on others.

Your response to endurance is so often categorized as a response to others that we urge you to consider the importance of others in your lives, and recognize the corollary importance of *you* in the lives of others. You feel, perhaps, that you endure someone else. Consider also that others must at times endure you. Living is a two-way relationship. When you believe that you are enduring another, you are, in effect, placing the responsibility of a relationship on another's shoulders when rightly that relationship is secured mutually. Life means mutual living. Relationships are *mutual*, not one-sided. There is no such thing as the single-sided relationship.

There are relationships which are shared but not the same. The husband's perception of the marriage may be much different from the wife's perception. That is understandable, but both have a perception. The husband perceives the relationship with a wife, and the wife perceives the relationship with a husband. It never works just one-way.

There is no such thing as one-sided love. You will never find one person loving another and the second person not loving the first. Perhaps you believe there are such relationships, but they in truth do not exist. What one individual seeks from a relationship may be different from what another seeks, but there is a mutuality to the relationship which must be recognized. This mutuality, this common concern, is what must be addressed in *all* personal relationships. When you respond to another with patience and are rebuffed or offended, do not give up. Continue that relationship at whatever level may be possible for you, and do not worry about the nature of the response to your efforts.

A parent may have difficulties with a child, but the child also has frustrations. The relationship is really two-sided. In the end, both must learn how to live and work effectively with each other. Neither is to blame, but both are responsible for the relationship.

The element of endurance here is really an element of potential—potential for reconciliation, potential for growth, potential for understanding, potential for greater love, a potential for patience on both sides. Yes, you do live in a community. You must deal with people every day, either with their presence or with their absence. When you are alone, you are aware of the absence of others. This, too, requires endurance, but that absence is not a relationship in a vacuum. The absence of another who is missed can result in a kind of longing, wishing for another's presence. The feelings which go out are positive—they're

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ones of love. Those feelings are beneficial, both to the seeker and to the one being sought. Those thoughts are as powerful as words directly spoken.

When life creates its difficulties which must be overcome, center your attention not on yourself but on another. Remember that your lives are greatly blessed. Your lives are far easier on you than the lives so many others must endure. You have been chosen by God to live the type of life you live, when you live it, and where you live it. It is not by accident that you are here. It is not by accident that you are spared a life of continual hunger and suffering. You have been placed into your corner of the world for a particular reason.

Each of you has much to offer. What you offer must be for the benefit of those with less. The strength that you feel must become the strength that you offer. The faith that you feel must be the faith that you offer. The love that you feel at times must be the love that you offer. The peace that you feel must become the peace that you offer. Your responsibilities are to give and to give abundantly, for in so giving, you are promoting the growth and responsiveness of the souls of others. It is a way of serving as a kind of matchlight which shares its brilliance from a torch and spreads that brilliance, and in spreading the brilliance, truly grows.

When you feel love and offer love, there is more love. When you feel peace and offer peace, there is more peace. When you feel a sense of closeness to God and offer a sense of closeness to God, there are more who will feel that closeness, and God's presence will be more strongly felt.

What we mean to show you at this time is the very importance which must be placed upon your relationship with all others. It is not a new theme, for we have taught this for many years, but it must be reiterated because it is in the practice of all that we teach that your souls become strengthened and your perceptions deepened. It is through this practice that the meaning of your lives becomes clearer.

We offer you God's peace and understanding. Take hold of it and pass it to another with confidence and love. And now we bless you in God's name and with God's presence.

Amen.