

Touchstones

A Book of Daily Meditations for Men

January 1

He who is outside the door has already a good part of his journey behind him.

—Dutch Proverb

When we see how far we strayed from the kind of men we wanted to be, we are overwhelmed by how far we have to go to get back on the track. Perhaps we see clearly for the first time how unfair we were or how much we hurt those we love. Maybe we see how pervasive our compulsions are in our lives and how much we missed.

That is when we are most ready to do the work of recovery and become most spiritual. It is helpful at those times to remember that this program is a journey. Although at times the distance seems overwhelming, all of us are on the path. As long as we live, we never reach a point where we can stop growing. The important thing is we are on the path, we have a good part of our journey behind us. Once begun, outside the door, we are progressing like all our brothers and sisters in the program.

Today, I will remember it is the reward of the journey itself, not the destination, that I seek.

January 2

When you can't stand criticism you learn to be a perfectionist.

—Anonymous

It's human to make mistakes and to feel incomplete. Perhaps if we were all smooth plastic printouts we could expect perfection of ourselves. Each man is actually a process. We are not things, but events--happenings, and the events are still unfolding. These are our creative spiritual adventures.

We have somehow learned that openness to criticism is dangerous. Perhaps we thought someone would not like us if we were wrong, or that we would get hurt or belittled. When we live with a relationship to our Higher Power, we can stand up for ourselves. A man has a right to make some mistakes! We grow more if we allow ourselves the leeway of simply being in process.

I will not ask to have the power of perfection. I will only ask that I not be alone in the process of living my life.

January 3

Love doesn't just sit there, like a stone; it has to be made, like bread, remade all the time, made new

—Ursula K. Le Guin

Our relationships are alive. We don't control them and neither do the other people involved. We certainly influence our relationships--and if we are aware, we see they also have their own yeast. Whether we are talking of a love relationship with our spouses, lovers, children, friends, or parents, it is a very fluid and dynamic affair. If we are actively involved with the other person and give time and nourishment to the relationship, it will grow. But if we are passive and only waiting, the relationship will grow stale.

God speaks to us through other people. Our relationship with our Higher Power influences our relationships with all the people in our lives. Today we can nurture our relationships with time, tolerance, and honesty. In turn, we will be nourished.

May this day be one in which I give attention to those I love.