

Coffee Chat Devotions

by Patricia J Doucet

1.

Why Are Some Relationships So Difficult?

Relationships can be difficult—because people can be difficult! A relationship is only as healthy as the people in it.

I used to believe that if I tried hard enough, explained myself better, or stayed patient, I could fix the broken places in relationships. But over time, I learned a painful truth: I couldn't do it. I remember a prolonged season when a family member discounted my feelings. I shared my sense of rejection with them, hoping they would understand how their abandonment and indifference hurt me, only to be brushed off.

Eventually, I realized that deliberate apathy and persistent disregard by another person were not a test of my patience but a signal that something deeper required God's intervention. I needed His guidance to accept the situation as it was and to protect my emotions, rather than continually enduring harm and setting myself up to be slighted.

I did, however, learn something I could do: examine my own attitude, words, and actions to make sure I was not the difficult one.

When we want to clarify how we feel about an issue or predicament, frustration arises if the other person doesn't want to or can't see it the way we do. That can turn any relationship into a difficult one.

Even when others are not being intentionally contrary, family relationships can feel strained because of the high expectations we place on them. We can't expect others to think, speak, or act as we would in similar circumstances. The atmosphere improves when we accept that they are different from us and they see life through their own lens.

Also, by allowing God to give us clarity, we choose grace without compromise, while trusting Him to handle ongoing grievances. When difficulties arise with family members, hope comes not from trying to control the outcome, but from accepting and respecting their unique differences, while praying and surrendering the divisiveness to God.

Where are you trying to fix confusion or miscommunication on your own, rather than depending on God for His insight and wisdom?

“Better a dry crust eaten in peace than a house filled with feasting and conflict.” (Proverbs 17:1 NLT)

Prayer

Dear God in heaven, I am desperate for Your help to get along with those I love when difficulty arises. Give me the determination to release what is beyond my control, and faith to believe that You are working even when I can't see it. Give me strength and wisdom to know how to navigate when there is uneasiness. *In Jesus' name, amen.*

2.

When Shame Speaks Louder Than Truth

As we reflect on the word *shame*, we recognize it as a cruel weight to bear. When we can't fix the brokenness in our relationships, we feel like failures. Many of us women carry this type of guilt. It whispers that we are not enough, that our mistakes define us, and that our past disqualifies us from God's love. This burden is especially heavy in seasons of estrangement, separation, or divorce. Unlike conviction from the Holy Spirit, which gently leads us to reflection and truth—shame shouts condemnation, keeping us bound in fear and silence.

Shame tells us we are unworthy, but God's Word declares we are chosen and redeemed. Shame says, *You'll never change*. Shame insists, *You're not lovable*. When shame grows loud, we must turn down its volume and tune our hearts to God's truth. His Word silences shame, reminding us that our identity is rooted in Christ, not in what has been done to us, nor even in what we have done ourselves.

Growing up, I often heard the words, *Shame on you. You should know better*. For a time, shame spoke louder than the truth of who I was in Christ. Every mistake seemed to replay on a loop in my mind. I carried the weight of words spoken over me and believed I would never rise above them. Yet in those shadowy moments, and beyond, the Lord gently reminded me of His truth: I am His beloved, forgiven and free.

Take a moment to identify the lies shame has been speaking over your life. Write them down in your journal. Then, beside each one, write the truth of Scripture that speaks louder. As you do this, you will retrain your heart to cling to God's voice of love, grace, and redemption rather than the enemy's voice of shame.

“Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.” (Psalm 34:5 NIV)

Prayer

Lord, I confess that shame has often drowned out Your truth in my heart. Help me recognize the lies and replace them with Your Word. Remind me that in You, I am forgiven, free, and fully loved. Silence the accusations and let Your truth speak louder than shame. *In Jesus' name, amen.*

3.

The Loneliness of Not Being Understood

Few things feel heavier than sharing our thoughts or opinions only to be dismissed or misjudged. The ache of being misunderstood leaves us feeling unseen and alone. We feel abandoned, disregarded, and unheard—isolated even in a crowded room.

Desiring to be seen, heard, and understood does not mean we want to be the center of attention, nor does it mean we think everything should revolve around us. Instead, it reflects the loneliness of being left out of conversations or receiving the silent treatment because no one takes the time to listen. In those moments, we feel unimportant, undervalued, and brushed aside.

This ache seems to surface daily. We may live in the same house, sit at the same table, and yet feel profoundly alienated.

When longing to be understood, we must recognize that we are not responsible for convincing others of our perspective if they refuse to try to understand. This truth is difficult to accept, especially when we know we've done our best to communicate. However, there are circumstances when nothing more can be done.

Loneliness, though overwhelming, is also where God draws near. In such quiet places, His whisper becomes louder, as our hearts are more tuned to His voice when others turn away.

God's plans for you are not canceled when a family member refuses to listen with understanding. He comprehends every word you've spoken, every thought you've wrestled with, and every attempt you've made to explain yourself. He is a witness to your frustration and stands ready to help you. Human love may falter, but God's love is steady and overflowing. Your worth is not measured by someone's inability to understand. God's love is enough to fill the spaces left empty by others.

Where can you trust in God's understanding instead of striving to be understood by others?

“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort.”

(2 Corinthians 1:3 NLT)

Prayer

Lord, thank You for knowing me completely and loving me fully. Be my comfort and strength when I am lonely because I feel misunderstood and unseen. *In Jesus' name, amen.*

4.

When Words Wound

I've heard phrases that still replay in my mind when I'm tired, alone, or discouraged. When words cut deep, we carry the pain over time. It stands to reason, then, that healing from verbal wounds also takes time—sometimes years, even decades. Hurtful words echo in the hidden chambers of the mind and heart, lingering long after they are spoken. This is devastating, as the words go from the mind and heart to seep and reside in our innermost being.

Being unfairly judged, insulted, or ridiculed by others can hurt as much as, or more than, a physical injury. We can't always dodge unkind, uncaring words, but we can guard our hearts so those words don't take root and grow into bitterness.

Perhaps you've heard words like:

"I didn't know you were that stupid." "I was doing okay until you got here." "Stop mumbling. My job is to teach you how to speak properly."

It isn't easy to reject the voice that says we are the problem, especially when we are scrambling to heal from cruel or manipulative speech. It takes restraint, and a whole lot of prayer, to respond with grace and tact. God invites us to let Him define us, as we stop allowing others to shape our identity with their words.

When words wound you, bring them to the Lord in prayer as soon as possible. Let His truth wash over you until the sting fades. In time, His healing presence can keep malicious or oppressive words from crushing you as they once did.

What words have wounded your heart? How can you allow God to transform them into a springboard for your ultimate healing?

"Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing." (Proverbs 12:18 NLT)

Prayer

Lord, heal the places in me that have been intimidated by hurtful words. Replace every lie with Your truth.

In Jesus' name, amen.

5.

The Complexity of Family Estrangement

Estrangement from family can be one of the most perplexing experiences we face. When relationships meant to bring love and support, instead leave us hurt, confused, or isolated, it can feel as though we have been abandoned, without ever knowing why.

I've walked through seasons when once-close family members withdrew from me, without an explanation as to why, leaving long stretches of absence and silence. I wrestled with anger, grief, and disbelief.

When this type of trauma shows up within our own household or extended family, it is not only confusing but deeply unsettling. We sometimes try to cover it up and deny its reality. To the outside world we pretend all is well, knowing we cannot expect those who have not lived through this kind of neglect to understand.

When we are caught in the swirl of someone else's choices, it's tempting to wear ourselves out searching for answers. We carry a burdensome weight when we try to understand others. That heaviness was never ours to bear.

Life rarely goes as planned. We stumble, relationships falter, and disappointments knock the wind out of us. Even when close family members seem to abandon us, we must grant them grace, freedom and blessings to go on without us being a part of their lives. As long as we realize that their absence in our life was their choice, not ours. It's not because they are too busy for us, it's because we are not a priority to them.

During the stress of estrangement, God gives us the courage to forgive without forgetting, to release resentment without excusing harm, and to maintain a tender heart while protecting our own well-being. When we trust Him to help us accept the heartbreak, He provides comfort when once-cherished relationships grow cold.

Even when reconciliation seems impossible and closure never seems to come, leaving the door open for a reunion and forgiveness is vital for our healing. His presence offers both solace and a path forward. He understands the complexity of human interactions and invites us to rest in His care, even while family connections are severed. We can grieve what is lost while allowing Him to restore our peace.

There comes a time when we must respect the decisions and actions of others, even when we cannot grasp the *why*.

How is God inviting you to release the weight of estrangement with a loved one who remains aloof and distant?

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28 NKJV)

Prayer

Lord, help me pray for clarity of mind and emotion when I am blind-sided by estrangement. Give me Your divine counsel and direction. *In Jesus' name, amen.*

6.

When the Past Keeps You Stuck

Some relationship patterns feel as if they are stuck on repeat. You know, the same argument, the same old hurt, and the same tired cycle. Sometimes the cycle only breaks when we dare to do something different: seek godly counsel, set a

healthy boundary, or change the way we respond. Breaking free rarely happens all at once. It is an ongoing journey of progress and setbacks, oftentimes with one step forward and two steps back.

The memories of past pain rarely fade easily, especially when they echo over and over in our thoughts. And releasing those memories does not mean the past never mattered, it means we are choosing not to let it hold us captive.

When we choose not to let old wounds define our future, we face hurtful memories in a new way, which does not erase the past; but redeems it. New habits and mindsets feel uncomfortable at first, but they open the door to God's transforming power. His grace meets us right where we are, at our place of beginning again. Even when old struggles resurface or familiar triggers stir our hearts, He does not grow weary of meeting us there.

Staying in counterproductive patterns of communication, feels like trying to speak a different language with someone who cannot understand us. Seeking peace and common ground with those we love is always worth the effort. With God's help, we can step out of what has kept us stuck and walk forward in His freedom. Each time we surrender our hurts to God in prayer, He gently reminds us that His grace is greater than our pain and His healing stronger than our history.

What old patterns are holding you back today? How can you invite God's wisdom and grace to help you move beyond them into His peace?

“No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling me.” (Philippians 3:13,14 NLT)

Prayer

Lord, I trust You to make me new. Give me courage and strength to take the steps needed to break ineffective and repetitive cycles of communication. *In Jesus' name, amen.*

7.

Clinging to Hope When Trust is Broken

When someone we love hurts us, trust feels shattered. The wound cuts deep. Whether it comes from a spouse, parent, sibling, adult child, or even extended family, betrayal leaves us questioning everything.

We may find ourselves asking: *Why did they do this? What will I do to move forward? How can they sleep at night?*

When people let us down in significant ways, it feels as if the ground beneath us has shifted. Suddenly we don't know what to do or who to turn to. The disappointment sits heavy, and despair seems more inviting than hope.

However, hope does not erase the hurt or ignore the pain. It does not minimize deception, hypocrisy, or betrayal. Instead, it redirects our focus away from the one who failed us and toward the One who will never fail us. Broken trust may take years to rebuild—and in some cases, it may never be rebuilt.

Yet in every circumstance, we can trust God to carry us, heal us, and lead us into a future anchored in His hope.

Even amid unfairness and disloyalty, good can prevail. Jesus Himself understands betrayal, and He heals its sting. He offers stability when relationships shake and strength when our hearts ache. Even after the proverbial *stab in the back* from someone we least expected, we have hope, not because the hurt disappears but because God remains faithful.

He calls us to cling to hope, even when we don't understand why trust was broken by someone we thought had our best interests at heart. Real hope is found in trusting God, who never breaks His promises.

Have you ever experienced betrayal or injustice from family? How have you seen God's hand guide you through it, and how is He inviting you to trust Him to bring good even from deep hurt?

“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13 NLT)

Prayer

Father, You know the ache in my heart because trust was broken. I confess it is hard to hope when I feel hurt and disappointed. Remind me that my ultimate hope is not in people, but in You. Heal my heart, protect me from bitterness, and let Your promises carry me through this season.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Devotions from the Book:

“Coffee Chats 30 Redeeming Devotions for Navigating
Difficult Family Relationships”

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(To be published October 2025)

www.patriciajdoucet.com

