

“Stop Throwing Stones”

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The story in the book of John about the woman caught in the act of adultery has been in my recent daily readings. Because of this, it's a story I've read many times during the past week. As often happens, during one reading, the personal message came through. I immediately stopped reading and became still.

For me, it wasn't to stop being an adulteress, LOL. It was to stop throwing stones! The story, of course, is when the Romans bring the woman to Jesus and ask him what should be done. Roman law says she is to be stoned. Jesus calmly pauses, looks upon them and says, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her”. The accusers all step away in which moment Jesus tells her, just as no man has accused her, neither will he. And, of course, “Go, and do not sin anymore”.

Lessons in truth inspire and transform us.

Scripture is merely one source of study for me. “A Course in Miracles” is what I believe most completely. Christian Science as developed by Mary Baker Eddy, has become a powerful companion to “Course”, which I have studied since 1996. The writings of Joel Goldsmith are simply that: “They are gold”. Christian Science has a profound weekly study of Bible Lessons, side-by-side with their Spiritual Interpretation by Mrs. Eddy. These are always lessons in truth that inspire and transform the reader.

It is in these Bible Lessons that I have been reminded we are to cease attack in thought, speech, and action. Each of these constitutes the casting of a stone. We are instructed to love our neighbor. It is the love of God that requires we practice forgiveness when we feel hurt, angry and judge. Yes. We practice forgiveness until love is all that remains. That's the practice that sets us free. Even when behavior seems indefensible, the teaching is to forgive and to not attack.

I feel a call to up my practice of non-judgment. Actually, I feel a quiet and a willingness to do so. In these days since that reading, I sense a subtle shift as I'm able to view people in the news, in TV programs, movies and life, with less judgement. This isn't quite so. Less judgment, yes. But still noticing and still remarking on all I see—still judging. Even so, my investment in judgment is being loosened and I am becoming more willing to love and to love without condition.



I still cling to the idea of casting no stones.

Ironically, in this past week we've experienced the insanity of the killing of another Black man by police. I've observed myself judging the actual event and all that has ensued in peaceful as well as angry, violent, and destructive protests. Alongside this has been the misuse of all we are going through, for political position, the misuse of force on the streets, and more. And still I'm somehow clinging to the idea of casting no stones.

Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror" readily comes to mind as he lays it out for us: "If you want to make the world a better place; Take a look at yourself, and then make a change". When we choose love, our world, our relationships, and our nature will increasingly reflect that love until we can only be the love which we are. Myself, I cannot see another answer.

We are being called to awaken and to remember God.

It's a bit embarrassing to admit how "enjoyable" it can seem to judge. Do I really feel better about me if I judge you? If we judge him or them? "A Course in Miracles" teaches that judging is an attempt to project our guilt onto someone else in an effort to get rid of it and to falsely feel better about ourselves. In line with this, a lot of political news has been entertaining in a twisted manner. Admittedly, it's the allure of judging and feeling superior, along with the attraction to drama that we must overcome in our human experience. It's a call for increased self-knowledge and change. *It is a call to awaken and to remember God.*

During the time I was Student Teaching in Madison in 1973, I picked up my first self-help book in a nearby convenience store. "Games People Play" by Eric Berne. I may be wrong. Maybe it was "I'm Okay. You're Okay". Now I'm not sure. I loved these books, and I loved Transactional Analysis ("Games People Play"). Once I got a job teaching in Columbus, I found myself stumbling with my own ability to know what to say at social gatherings. I was pretty uncomfortable. I needed help.

Then came to my rescue Eric Berne's book, "What Do You Say After You Say Hello?". I thought I'd found a treasure map and immediately purchased it upon spotting it in a bookstore. Actually, throughout the book, Berne never answers the question. I was deeply disappointed. While it didn't appease my searching, I enjoyed the book very much. Early on, I was clearly hooked on the self-help section, which easily expanded to an interest in spirituality. Personal growth must expand into spiritual awareness in order for growth to progress.

Becoming Okay with the silence made all the difference.

Here's what I did notice at some point, in terms of social situations. I became comfortable with the silence between myself and the other person and quit taking responsibility for a conversation

to emerge between us. Maybe a friend suggested this. Maybe it was in the book. But becoming Okay with the silence made all the difference.

This sounds like a good idea in terms of the crisis we are facing in all our hearts and minds and in all that we observe. It's a good idea in terms of the change we are seeking. Let's become observers and practice more silence rather than reacting, judging, and throwing stones. We can choose to step outside of the problem and become an agent for healing. Let's give each other some space. Let's "give peace a chance".

*** About the photo: Aspen trees share a common root system. In this, they are a fitting representation of the One appearing as many. Our brothers are in fact, one with us.*

Shiranda is a Healing Arts Professional and long-time student of Spiritual teachings. Her study includes "A Course in Miracles" (1996), New Thought Christianity (1990), and more recently, Christian Science. Her study of Transformational Kinesiology (TK)[®] introduced her to the study of the Ageless Wisdom Teachings in 1993. Involvement in 12-Step programs starting in 1980 was Shiranda's first spiritually focused study.



Shiranda is long-time admirer of Ram Dass. As a young adult, just out of college, his four-record set, "Love, Serve, Remember" hugely impacted her thinking. She is an educator and a counselor through formal training.

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