



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Compromise, Tolerance, and Truth

"Oh, come on! Don't be so stubborn. Why does it have to be your way? What about what I want? Don't I matter? You're just being difficult. Okay, let's compromise."

Whether the words sound familiar or not, it's not difficult to feel their passion and power. After all, no one really wants to be seen as selfish, or difficult, or stubborn, or uncaring. We prefer being seen as mature, sensitive, flexible, and accommodating. All this increases the push to compromise, to retreat from our original position and seek a "middle ground" which both we and the other party can (hopefully) accept and feel good about.

Much of life involves compromise, often on a daily basis. We give up breakfast so we can sleep longer, but we're unwilling to sacrifice our shower time. We negotiate a better price for a house, a car, yard sale items, or new tires for our car. We take to heart the message that a good marriage is built on the ability to compromise and build a mutually acceptable life path.

While much about compromise is positive, it also has a dark side. We hear of bridges that fail because their girders were compromised by years of

rust and neglect. At airports, compromised security results in extreme measures to restore safety and the proper level of security. And no one wants their sterile field to be compromised during their surgery.

Apparently, compromise can be either a healthy, constructive activity, or one that results in danger, destruction, and fear. While obvious examples of each type are fairly easy to identify, much of what we face in life is not so clear-cut, especially in the area of relationships.

So, let's consider a few guidelines for compromise.

1) Compromise works best in the area of preferences. We tend to have preferences about most things in our life, including where we would like to vacation, what we would like for dinner, who we would like to go out with, what color to paint our bedroom walls, and so on. When we live with others, it quickly becomes apparent that not all our preferences match. This is where compromise becomes a healthy process of give and take. That's give and take. If one side does all the giving and the other all the taking, then compromise has been lost.

2) Compromise is designed to create

a sense of "win-win" with its participants. If one party feels they have won and the other feels they have lost, then compromise does not exist, since compromise is built on mutual sacrifice and commitment to a greater good.

3) Compromise does not apply to the areas of morals, values, or truth. The nature of these areas does not allow for compromise, since compromise, by its very presence, violates the standards themselves. Either our personal standards exist intact, or they cease to exist. There is no middle ground.

4) Compromise is a choice that flows from a willing heart and a confident spirit. When it is coerced, whether by threat, harassment, or guilt, it digresses into a symbol of the disrespect and need to control found in all abuse. Any claim of "mutual benefit" is simple fantasy.

Clearly, compromise offers us the opportunity to step beyond selfishness, unite with others, and willingly embrace a greater common good. Yet, as with all good things, it must be exercised cautiously and with wisdom, so that it does not ultimately "compromise" what is most important to us.



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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Spirituality and Compromise

We live in an age where compromise is king, and tolerance is promoted as evidence of intellectual, social, and spiritual maturity. Great efforts are made to be "politically correct" and to not "offend" others who think, believe, or act differently than we do. Equality is preached, and lines of distinction are blurred until we gradually morph into a homogeneous mass of commonness.

Spirituality is promoted as a virtue in and of itself. The nature, teachings, and practice of the spirituality are not important, since tolerance embraces all equally and compromise focuses on similarities. Any attempt to question or challenge a religious dogma or practice is viewed as extreme, offensive, insensitive, narrow minded, prejudicial, inflammatory, phobic, and ... [shutter] old fashioned.

Yet, while "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" (a preference), there is only one spiritual truth. There is one, and only one, God. There is only one payment for our rebellion against this God. There is only one way to reestablish our love relationship with this gracious God and live with Him forever.

Is this insensitive intolerance? No, it's loving truth. To compromise this truth into some generic spirituality for the sake of "spiritual unity" is to value comfortableness over clarity and over the eternal significance of each individual life and soul.

Let love flow universally. But let truth and faith stand in their power and shine.



"If I trim myself to suit others, I will soon whittle myself away."

-Anonymous