

The Best of Roland

Timeless advice, insight, and guidance
from twenty years of helping people



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Ann Landers Had it Right

Remember Ann Landers? She was the famous advice columnist who had a daily column in hundreds of newspapers from coast to coast. People sent her troubling personal problems. She gave advice, often quite good.

I'll never forget something she said. Near the end of her long and illustrious career, she was interviewed by someone who asked her: After all your years of giving advice, if you could give people just one piece of advice—what would it be?

Being in the advice business myself, I could not wait to hear her response. She thought about it for a moment and then responded:

“If I could give people just one piece of advice, it would be to be more forgiving.”

She had seen too many relationships and families destroyed by resentment, unforgiveness, and grudges.

She had seen too many people destroyed by bitterness and unhappiness, the result of not forgiving another. Her advice: Be more forgiving.

All I can say is “amen.”

If a person were to set out to ruin their own life, there would be no “better” way than through harboring resentment against others.

Resentment (hatred), you see, is a big trauma for a human being. We were never meant to hate. We were created in the image and likeness of God. We are creatures of love. When we are patient with others, our Heavenly Father is patient with us. When we forgive others He forgives us.

When we do not judge and do not resent, we remain in His good graces and we enjoy His love and warmth. Just like the plant lives in the sun and gets its life from the sun, so the human soul was made to live in God’s light.

When we resent another, we cut ourselves off from His love. When you resent, you can actually feel the negativity and emptiness.

Resentment is a very big trauma. It forms a memory that sticks in your craw. Worse yet, resentment and hatred cut us off from our own good.

It is true that others are cruel or mean, others are confusing and others made errors. But when we resent them, we lose patience with them. This negative energy of impatience and hostility then sustains the fallen ego that lives apart from God and experiences conflict with God.

We think we have a right to judge and resent. We think we can get away with resenting. But we only reap what we sow. When we exercise our right to hate another, we are doing a terrible thing. It is unfair to the

other person. It tempts them to hate us back. Being cut off from life devastates our own being.

Many of us were abused, rejected, mistreated or traumatized when we were young. Our being was devastated, and some of us have never fully recovered.

We went out in the world seeking love to fill the emptiness. We used people, food, substances and distractions. But none satisfied. When they did not, we felt betrayed, resented them and then felt all the more empty.

Others of us were not really mistreated or abused and yet we too felt empty, loveless and went out into the world looking for love. There we discovered abuse.

Why is it that we become so empty and feel so unloved? Why are we so needy that we grovel before others for a few crumbs of approval or settle for the most lowly and sometimes loathsome substitutes for love?

It is not what others did to us. Nor is it because of what we were denied or thought we were denied. It is because we became resentful and hateful. Resentment cuts us off from our connection to God within.

Resentment cuts us off from the wellspring of good to which we have access when we are not resentful. It was our own resentment that hurt us more than anything.

We feel empty and we then blame those who did something to us. But blame only reinforces and adds another layer of resentment, keeping us apart from our Creator. Whether we blame others or turn the blame on ourselves, blame is a way of justifying our hate. All it does is keep us tied to bitter memories and cut off from the healing balm of God's love.

Our need for human love is to fill the emptiness from not having God's love. That is why what we call love often ends up in fighting and hurt feelings. What we call love is a substitute for the agape, emotionless love we all need. This agape love would correct our childish need for love. And when we found the love of the Father it would immunize us from hurting or being hurt by others.

But remember what Christ said: "If you forgive others, your Heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, He will not forgive you."

Therefore, I would like you to consider watching for resentment in yourself. When you see it, stand back and let it pass. You will be glad you did. By learning to be patient with others, you will find the love from God welling up inside you.