

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

by Brian Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

Sometimes life comes at you hard. I wake up each morning grateful that I have breath in my lungs, food to eat, a healthy body, comfortable accommodation, a source of income, and transportation to get around. What a blessing all those things are! Then there's the beautiful earth that God has provided. Above all I am grateful for relationships.

I have the most amazing wife of 37 years, still beautiful, and still very active and intelligent. She usually writes this column, but unfortunately she had to go to New Zealand this week for her brother John's funeral. He succumbed to cancer after a year's battle with asbestosis. We're not on earth very long and it blows me away when people harbor grudges and unforgiveness. Sally and her brother were close, but their father did not have a close relationship with John. Nor did their father have any relationship with their biological mother for the last 57 years. He never said an unkind word about their mother although he had reason to do so.

At the funeral Sally's father and biological mother had a five-minute conversation in which she apologized to him liberating her from the tyranny of the past. They had both remarried and lived in different countries. Now Sally's dad is apparently asking questions about his first wife's other children. Why am I telling you all this in a parenting column and being a little vulnerable? LIFE IS TOO SHORT NOT to forgive. It's unhealthy to procrastinate in repairing a relationship. John thankfully repaired his relationship with God before he died. He knew he was dying so he recently called friends and relations and told them how much they meant to him.

Following the 9/11 Twin Towers disaster people took time out to examine and repair friendships and associations. It brought to light our mortality. It caused me to make sure I dealt with any anger before sunset. It made me realize that when I left for work in the morning I had no guarantee of returning home that night. A survey conducted by a Catholic priest and a Jewish rabbi following 9/11 came to the conclusion that what children want most from their parents is time and love. Resolve to spend more time with your children and tell them daily that you love them. Don't throw money their direction. That was not on their 'most wanted list'. I need to constantly update my attitude, my feelings, my liaisons, and to put right the things I have done wrong to others, and to forgive what they may have done to me.

When we can do this, our children are more likely to see how we handle these situations and should consequently maintain positive relationships. They watch us with eagle eyes and will usually default to what they have seen and

heard. I've had to ask myself, "What sort of heritage have I laid down for my children?" I am grateful that we did a lot of things right, but we were remiss in others. Let me encourage you to get things right in your relationships before it is too late. It is liberating! It is right! It feels good!

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.