



Marriage Rules[©]

“FORGIVENESS”

By: Larry B. Gelman, Psy. D.

Longevity in a marriage is not possible without “forgiveness”. Forgetting simply will not do. Human beings are wired not to forget very much of anything. So if something impacts an individual, one might just as well forget about forgetting altogether! If a relationship is to last, it must commit to endure the “for better or worse” part. “Forgiveness” is the key.

According to my friend, Webster, to forgive is to give up, pardon, remit and cease to blame. When we forgive, we overlook an offense and treat the offender as not guilty. In a sense, there is a tacit collusion between the forgiver and the forgiven.

It is not that the forgiver is not offended and it is not that the forgiven is not guilty. Rather each intercedes on behalf of self and other by way of other to self, to stop the coming punitive blow.

To forgive or be forgiven implies something from inside-out; to pardon or be pardoned implies something from outside-in.

Words and deeds may be pardoned yet not forgiven, or if forgiven, not pardoned.

To complicate matters further, if marriage is also viewed as a “wedding” of the disparate parts of self into a unified self, for each to each and each to the other, then to forgive is to give forth as in “surrender” to a higher principle.

In my opinion, that higher principle is one of mature love; the lesser principle is one of righteous indignation coupled with moral superiority. Mature love gives forth of self to other; immature love gives not of self to other.

To forgive is at once to be “for” and to “give” to another. And if there is equivalence in the exchange over the life of a marriage, then the marriage shall endure the entirety of its life! “Forgiveness” is the key.

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