**Understanding – Stories & Illustrations**

**Affirmation: “Christ of my being, I acknowledge Your presence within me, and I allow You to harmonize all of my relationships. Help me to see the Christ in all others.” *(Richard & Mary-Alice Jafolla, in The Quest, p. 312)***

**Claim is that men in some primitive tribes even today do not understand they have anything to do with the begetting of the tribe’s children. In their view, it’s just something that happens to women from time to time for unknown reasons. Only in fairly recent human history, might add, did men anywhere understand otherwise. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Walter P. Chrysler was 35 and a master mechanic on a railroad when he bought his first automobile, a $5000 four-door Locomobile, on borrowed money. The car was freighted to his hometown in Iowa and towed to a barn at the Chrysler home. Chrysler studied that car for three months before he attempted to drive it. Referring to the instruction book, he took the vehicle apart, spread the pieces on newspapers and made sketches; then he put it back together. When he was sure he understood it, he drove it. *(Leo Aikman, in Atlanta Journal-Constitution)***

**The fourth step in creation is the development of the “two great lights,” the will and the understanding, or the sun (the spiritual I AM) and the moon (the intellect). These are but reflectors of the true light; for God had said, “Let there be light: and there was light”--before the sun and the moon were created. *(Charles Fillmore, in Mysteries of Genesis, p. 19)***

**Son: “Just stop telling me that you understand me. Okay, Mom? Because you don't. I'm different from other people! My problems are unique! Nobody knows what it feels like to be me but me!” Mom: “Everybody feels that way sometimes, Honey.” Son: “Not only don't you understand me, you don't understand that you don't  understand me!” *(Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman, in Zits comic strip)***

**Amy Tan, author of The Joy Luck Club, says that she didn't think she'd ever be able to fulfill her parents’ expectations: “If I got straight A's, they'd want straight A-pluses. If I got straight A-pluses, I'd have to win a Rhodes scholarship. When I finished The Joy Luck Club, it went on the New York Times best-seller list at No. 4, way beyond anyone's expectations.” My mother said, “Hmmm. No. 4. Who is this No. 3? No. 2? No. 1?” But right after that, she said, “I'm not disappointed you're No. 4; I just think you're so good that you always deserve to be No. 1.” It finally hit me. I remember being so angry when I was younger, not understanding. I brought her to a talk I gave, and she sat stone-faced throughout the whole reading, never changing her expression. “Did you like what I read?” I asked her when it was over. “I wasn't listening,” she replied. “All I could do was look at you and say, ‘That's my daughter.’” *(Mark Morrison, in USA Weekend)***

**When Italian-Catholic Sonia Maino became engaged to Rajiv Gandhi, now prime minister of India, her future mother-in-law, Indira Gandhi, was sympathetic. At their first meeting, Sonia told the Hindu magazine Dharmayug, Indira recounted her own controversial marriage to Rajiv's father, a middle-class Parsi. Indira's family were Brahmins. “Sonia, I am a mother,” Indira said. “You need not be afraid of me. I was also a girl like you in love with a boy from a different community and religion. I can understand your love.” As Sonia prepared to leave, Indira beckoned to her, took out a needle and thread, asked her to turn around and then mended a loose hem on her dress. *(Elisabeth Bumiller, in Washington  Post)***

**Making sweeping generalizations: As adults, we are prone to use very general statements to explain dislikes or problems. Take someone who says he hates New England winters. If he lets his thoughts become more particular, he may discover he dislikes feeling restricted by heavy clothing. A down parka or a better heater in his car might change his outlook. *(Ellen Langer, in Reader's  Digest)***

**The two great lights represent the faculties of understanding and will, which should function together. Understanding itself is of little value unless it is expressed by the activity of the will, and man’s will is a power for good only when it is grounded in understanding. *(Elizabeth Sand Turner, in Let There Be Light, p. 17)***

**The “greater light,” in mind, is understanding and the “lesser light” is the will. The greater light rules “the day,” that realm of consciousness which has been illumined by Spirit. The lesser light rules “the night,” that is, the will; which has no illumination (“light” or “day”) but whose office is to execute the demands of understanding. The will does not reason, but in its harmonious relation acts easily and naturally upon the inspiration of Spirit. Divine will expresses itself as the I AM in man. *(Charles Fillmore, Mysteries of Genesis, p. 20)***

**You don't really understand human nature unless you know why a child on a merry-go-round will wave at his parents every time around -- and why his parents will always wave back. *(William D. Tammeus, in Kansas City Star)***

**It's amazing the number of office and factory workers who do certain jobs day after day without understanding exactly why. They know how to perform the task, sure. But they don't really understand why they do it. Nobody has ever bothered to explain it to them. Explaining why you want people to do something is a lot better than just ordering them around. It shows that what you want them to do makes sense. If they don't agree with your reasoning, the door is wide open for them to speak up and say why. A little personal explanation makes rules more palatable too. When people understand why rules are necessary, they accept them a lot more readily. People like to be in on things. They like to be treated as intelligent creatures. Explaining things thoroughly gives people a better understanding of their jobs. It enables them to use their heads as well as their hands, enables them to make suggestions and makes them feel that they are a part of a team. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**How do we try understand one another when there are so many levels on which we operate? Every one of us is an integrated network of living systems, each changing from day to day but always following a natural path of evolution. These living systems are so many and so complex that it is virtually impossible to completely understand them. The truth isw, there is no fixed location that can be defined as "you." You are a work in progress, a dynamic living system. And you function within a series of other living systems. So when you study "you," you are not studying a painting or photograph that never changes. You are studying a moving picture from every conceivable camera angle. The best any of us can do is to sustain a lifelong process of self-exploration. Only by continually noticing more and more about ourselves will we come to understand who we truly are. *(Jim Cathcart, in The Acorn Principle: Know Yourself, Grow Yourself)***

**Dylan: “I did the assignment you gave me, Miss Patterson.” Miss Patterson: “Thank you, Dylan.” Dylan: “It was fun!” Miss Patterson then says to another  teacher: “I asked him to write a short story without using the letters ‘A’, ‘B’,  ‘C’, or ‘T’ -- and he did it! He's a bright boy, Mrs. Tessier.” Mrs. Tessier: “He is in English, but he's failing Math. He only works hard at the things he likes!” Miss Patterson: “But Math can be fun! It can be like a game or a puzzle! You just have to understand it!” Mrs. Tessier: “You have to want to understand it, Elizabeth.” *(Lynn Johnson, in For Better Or For Worse comic strip)***

**General Billy Mitchell, father of the United States Air Force, found that when his orders were not followed it was usually because they were not understood. “I always kept an officer at my headquarters to whom I read all the orders,” he said. “If he could understand them, anybody could. He was not particularly bright, but he was one of my most useful officers for that reason.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**A previously unknown poem by Robert Frost has been found by a graduate student at the University of Virginia. Written in 1918 in Frost’s own hand, the poem was inscribed in a small leather-bound book in a school library. Entitled “War Thoughts at Home,” it’s about a woman pondering the Great War. “She thinks of a winter camp / Where soldiers for France are made,” it reads in part. “She draws down the window shade / And it glows with an early lamp.” The 35-line poem was published this week in the Virginia Quarterly Review. “Finding the poem is the easiest part,” said Robert Stilling, who made the discovery. “Learning to understand it takes a long time.” *(The Week magazine, October 13, 2006)***

**I got a fortune cookie that said, “To remember is to understand.” I have never forgotten it. A good judge remembers what it was like to be a lawyer. A good editor remembers being a writer. A good parent remembers what it was like to be a child. *(Anna Quindlen, in Thinking Out Loud)***

**Most people are bothered by those passages in Scripture they cannot understand, but as for me, I always noticed the passages in Scripture which trouble me most are those I do understand. *(Mark Twain)***

**Dr. Herbert H. Clark, s psychologist from John Hopkins University, discovered that it takes the average person about 48 percent longer to understand a sentence using a negative than it does to understand a positive, or affirmative sentence. This is confirmation of something every successful person knows: the secret of good communication is positive affirmation. It is not what you won’t or can’t do that interests people, but what you will or can do. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Mailman: “Those Yorkshire terriers hate me as much as I fear them.” Little girl: “Don’t take it personally, all dogs dislike mailmen.” Mailman: “You don’t understand . . . They loathe me on a much deeper level. For you see . . . those Yorkies used to be mine.” *(Steve Breen, in Grand Avenue comic strip)***

**Wisdom and understanding are two separate things. Wisdom is the source of knowledge, and understanding is knowing how to use wisdom. Therefore, wisdom without understanding is dangerous. *(George M. Lamsa, in Old Testament Light, p. 550)***

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