

## Accepting Reality

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In the past I have written about how beneficial it can be for us to accept others. This article is also on acceptance, but this time it's about accepting reality. Change is often difficult for us, but positive change can't happen unless we first come to the place where we can accept reality.

When something really big happens in our life, we sometimes get stuck at the acceptance stage. We just can't get past it. If we remain stuck at that stage, we can't go forward. I'll never forget when I realized my first marriage had ended. I kept saying to myself, "I can't believe this is happening to me. This must be a dream." It seemed unreal. Fortunately, with God's help, I was able to move past that stage. After a period of having difficulty accepting reality, I said to myself, "OK, now that this is my reality, where do I go from here?" Once I was able to say that to myself, I moved forward.

I know of people who have an especially difficult time forgiving others. They just can't get past whatever "wrong" the other person has done to them. They think about the injustice all the time, and they feel compelled to tell others around them about how the other person hurt them. They may not have even approached the person who hurt them to give them a chance to apologize. They wait for the person to apologize on their own, and if it doesn't happen, the hurt individual gets stuck and can't go forward with the relationship. Maybe the other person should have approached the "hurt" individual and apologized, but it didn't happen. That's reality. Sometimes we don't like reality, but it is what it is.

If the hurt person, on the other hand, is able to say to himself or herself, "You know, I wish so and so would apologize to me, but the fact of the matter is that it didn't happen. How can I learn to forgive that person anyway and move on with my life?" Even better, the hurt person could approach the offender and tell him or her about their hurt feelings. Whether or not the person apologizes or not, he or she has been given the opportunity to do so. If the person apologizes, that's reality. If the person doesn't apologize, that's reality too. The key is to move on in a positive direction from there.

It's not always just seemingly negative changes in our life that can get us stuck. Sometimes a wonderful thing happens in our life, and we can't believe it, so we miss out on the opportunity. When my current husband Eric came into my life, it really seemed too good to be true. The reality of who he is as a person was actually better than anyone I had ever imagined. If I had said to myself, "I don't deserve such a wonderful person," I might have missed out on the love of my life. Thankfully I didn't say that to myself. Instead I said, "Thank you, Lord, for bringing this wonderful man in my life. I'll take him!" I accepted my reality, which seemed like a dream, and moved forward.

The key to accepting reality is learning to be content in whatever situation in which you find yourself. That definitely is not always easy. Sometimes we would like to just pull the covers over our head and hide from reality. Will that really do you or anyone else in your life any good, though? The reality will still remain, no matter how harsh it may seem. If you can look to God, your loved ones, and your inner resources for strength, get out of bed, and put one foot in front of the other, you will move forward. Your reality will be easier to take with time, forward movement, and the love of those around you and towards yourself. Accept reality, and get on with your life. Believe me—it can only make things better.