Spiritual Reflection for
February 2012

Dig Deep

Do you remember as a child digging deep into a cereal box to find the prize? It was never on the surface when you opened the box, was it? I remember being disappointed when I could not see it right away. No, before you knew it you were up to your elbows in cheerios trying not to spill them over the edge yet desperately searching for the prize inside. Let's reflect on the idea of digging deep to find the prize inside.

I had a conversation with a dear friend recently and twice in our time together we discussed people who have surprised us. What surprised us was that we had not realized the gift these individuals had inside because we had only seen the surface. What we discovered was that when we looked deep inside we found a hidden personality that was similar to that of a shiny gemstone, sparkling brightly under the dark covering, just waiting to be found. I began to think about people in general and how quickly we judge them by what we see on the surface. How often have you made judgments based on outward appearance, on what you saw on the surface? How often have you formed an opinion based on your first encounter with an individual? Have you ever been surprised by what you found when you allowed yourself time to get to know the person at a deeper level?

I think all too often we make judgments about someone's character based on first impressions. I shudder to think about the people that have judged me on their first impression when it might have been on a day when I was not feeling well, or a day when I was angry at the computer, or on a day when I was grieving the loss of someone dear. I am sure I did not make very good impressions on those days and I imagine there will be bad impression days in my future (we all have bad days from time to time, right?).

I began to think about a little boy in my granddaughter's classroom. He does mean things to his classmates. He is angry and loud. If we were to make judgments based on first impressions, I can only imagine the labels being placed on this child. But I wonder about whether there is a gem inside of this child just waiting to shine. What is his true spirit longing to do? Is his behavior reflective of his need for survival in a rough world? She, being 5, wonders why God made him bad. I told her mother that I have been struggling with this kind of question for years. I have come to believe that although people might seem bad on the surface they possess a goodness inside that has not been allowed to present itself. Within the right environment people who seem bad can be given the opportunity to reveal the prize they possess deep inside.

I believe we need to dig deep into the lives of others who appear angry, standoffish, arrogant, timid, reclusive, over zealous. Perhaps like the box of cheerios that threatens to spill all over the counter as we reach for the prize we have to be willing to let people spill out the emotion within to reveal the prize they possess. I wonder if their life experiences bury the gift they carry so deep that they forget they even have it. Do you remember when the prize would fall out into your bowl and surprise you with a splash? Maybe you forgot about the prize (because your mother told you to take your arm out of the box and be patient). What a surprise when there it was!

Be patient with people in your life. Look deeply into their life situations before making judgments about their character. Allow yourself to accept the spillage they may need to dump in order to reveal the sparkling gem within just waiting to be revealed. If you dig deep enough you will come up with a prize that is well worth cleaning up the morsels of emotion and it will be a sweet surprise when it lands in your bowl with a splash.

May God's Peace Be With You,

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