

THE BULLSEYE PRINCIPLE



UNDERSTANDING HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS



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THE BULL'S-EYE: SELF

I like to think of relationships—healthy relationships, anyway—as being organized and balanced via the bull’s-eye principle.



All of our outer relationships (rings more distant from the center of the target) depend on the health of the more central relationships. Using the target picture above, imagine the most centered mark of the bull’s-eye as your relationship with yourself and your God (the universe, your creator, or your “higher power”). The center circle is the most important relationship in order to have healthy external relationships.

Do you love yourself? Do you love your God? It is impossible to love, respect or forgive others if you cannot do the same for yourself. This is a big concept, not to be brushed over in quick reading. This is the central point of this book. We must be able to love ourselves in order to love others. We must have self-respect and self-esteem in order to see the worth of others enough to respect them and “esteem” (honor and respect) them in a healthy manner. It is impossible to forgive appropriately if we do not know how to forgive ourselves.

To be fair, most people do not know, nor can they learn, how to love, respect and forgive themselves or others if they do not understand their

relationship with their maker or “higher power.” The center dot of the bull’s-eye divided only by a shadow represents how there must be unity or “oneness” in this relationship.

Depending on how one looks at it, we are either an intricate part of this great universe or we are all sons and daughters (children) of a loving creator. I choose to believe the latter, so my perspective is partial to a loving God. In fact, having children of my own and believing we were created in God’s image, my thought process has to assume many of the lessons meant for us to learn on this earth are family or relationship centered, with the perfect example being the one God gives us. In an effort to explain the infinite in a way our finite minds can comprehend, let me use two earthly examples.

1. *The Perfect Earthly Parent.* This parent provides a home, a shelter, a place where we are cared for, loved, comforted, made to feel compassion, heard, helped and supported. All of this is done in a way that still allows us the free agency to make our own choices, learn some hard lessons and venture out but always be welcomed home with loving arms and understanding compassion. Rules are in place to offer structure and boundaries, but there is a delicate balance of love and mercy. The parent loves us unconditionally, regardless of our choices. The parent’s rules provide us with a wealth of happiness and comforts when we follow them, but we may forfeit free rent or use of the car if we fail to obey the rules we know are in place for our growth. Regardless, we know we are loved and accepted for who we are because there is perfect parental love ... after all, we are literally “a genetic piece” of our parent. If they love themselves, they can’t help but love us as their physical offspring.
2. *The Complicated Earthly Parent.* This parent is self-indulgent, with little concern for those around them. The parent works hard for what he/she has and sees spouse and offspring as leeches, sucking the very life and effort out of the parent. At every turn, the family is nothing more than an expense, robbing the parent of the life the parent feels he/she truly deserves, the fun he/she could be having, the relationships he/she would have if not stuck in this miserable existence. The parent feels trapped by circumstance. Every problem is someone else’s doing. Ever the victim! Family members can “do

no right,” and every action or comment is irritating. Th us, the parent drowns the parent’s sorrows in alcohol and self-pity, constantly complaining to and belittling those close to the parent, pushing away any hope of connection, growth or happiness ... for both parent and offspring.

These two polar opposite examples help us categorize a few points.

When we step back and look at the wonder of this great universe, we are struck that out of all the planets in all the solar systems, a loving God created this one for us: this one terrestrial globe with just the right spinning crust of rock and water to produce an atmosphere; with air, minerals and nutrients to sustain life at just the right distance from the sun to give the necessary light and heat to support life on this planet. Wow!

Then we are given this complex “micro-universe,” the human body, to live in for a short period. Created in the image of God, our physical body received “the breath of life,” our spirit and our intelligence. Intelligence being an eternal thing, it seems this body has caused us to forget our own brilliance and connection to God, our maker and loving Father.

This is where that center of the bull’s-eye comes into play. When we realize our own awesomeness outside of this physical realm and recognize our spiritual genetic makeup, suddenly our potential in this life and beyond seems far more promising. Ultimately, we realize our creator loves us more than we can possibly imagine (far more than we often love our selves) ... For us Christians, we recognize that He loved us so much he sent his Son to suffer and die in order to overcome obstacles we could not have overcome on our own. This was done so we could return to live with Him after this life.

With this understanding, we have to come to the realization that God loves us more than we love ourselves. He forgives us more deeply and more often than we forgive ourselves. He esteems us far beyond how we often humbly esteem ourselves or others.

As we come to this understanding, we need to learn to honor and accept the two greatest gifts He has given us: our life itself and the atonement of Christ. When we truly, deeply and fully understand and honor these two great gifts, we begin to finally love ourselves more. Why? Because we can truly love ourselves and forgive ourselves of the shortcomings we too often foolishly cling to. Once these “sins” or mistakes are cleansed from our

mental and spiritual consciousness, we are free to esteem ourselves in a healthier way. With self-love, esteem and forgiveness, NOW we are ready to work on relationships beyond the center circle. When balanced within, we have the strength, love, compassion and desire to then grow the relationships outside.

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