



pzís perspective

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The TOLERANCE ZONE!

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In case you hadn't noticed it is getting increasingly harder to tolerate the world around us. Here of late with so much coming at us, from so many different directions, it has been one constant and persistent barrage of havoc and heartbreak. It's impossible to ignore the overload of tragedy that just keeps coming. We have been enveloped to the point of saturation. With the melody of life continuously hitting on so many sour notes, makes you almost want to get under the covers and never come out.

Michael Jackson claims he didn't molest in the past; Mark McGuire won't even talk about the past. Robert Blake is sent home; Scott Peterson is sent to his new death row home. Brian Nichols goes on a rampage in the city; Jeff Weise goes on a rampage on the reservation. Poor Terri Schiavo is in the hands of the courts, while little Jessica Lunsford is in the hands of God.

Whoever has their finger pressing down hard on the tragedy button I implore you to let up at least long enough for us to dry the tears, catch our breath, calm the outrage, and get our bearings. The horrific and unsettling events of recent days have been as rapid fire as the bullets used to kill so many innocent and unsuspecting victims. The senseless acts, divisive decisions and disturbing scandals have been as mind boggling as the

hopelessness and helplessness attached to them.

The conclusion is obvious that not everyone on the planet is on the same page or speaks with the same voice. Nor is everyone in agreement about what is moral or just or acceptable or right. Wouldn't you think that would be the easy part? Wouldn't you think the divide wouldn't be so far apart? Now, more than ever, the rub is undeniable.

Then there is Ashley Smith, emerging from the darkness as a beacon of hope and light. Armed with Rick Warren's 'The Purpose Driven Life,' and courage and wisdom far from logical explanation, Ashley was in precisely the right spot at the exact moment to effect the turn of the tragic tide that had already been put into motion and most assuredly saved countless other lives in the process.

Putting that phenomenal feat of sheer heroism aside, there seemingly are 2 camps, 2 sides, 2 distinct groups who are now rising from the ashes. Ask anyone their opinion, look at any poll, or read any survey, and the middle ground has all but disappeared. Gray is a color that shouldn't be included in the next Crayola batch since it is all but extinct. But before we send gray packing, we should consider it might be a more appropriate space to occupy if only we looked at it through more rational lenses.

It doesn't come down to the strict essence of right and wrong or black and white. It doesn't mean guilty or not guilty, conscious or vegetative state. Those are concepts too nebulous, while too rigid, too limiting, and too open to faulty opinion and interpretation, or, in some cases, misinterpretation.

It does boil down, though, to what you can and cannot tolerate. What is right for you may not be perceived as right by the next person, or by your family member or friend or colleague or loved one. You may agree at times and be in perfect harmony, other times you may not. That doesn't mean either of you are entirely right or dead wrong. No longer is it necessary to assign labels and ascribe categories regarding your actions, opinions and emotions rather you should focus your attention on life in the broader spectrum—on what you can and cannot tolerate.

Tolerance is a state of mind—one that helps you disconnect from the mismatches and chasms of old and connect to the possibilities and promise of new.

Once you tap into what works and doesn't work and have determined your universal truths, then you can apply those principles to your everyday life. You can come down on whatever side or on neither side and not be locked into or subject to any one ide-

ology or group-think mentality or follower philosophy. You can stand up and stand firm and not be afraid, while being flexible and open to ideas and notions you otherwise wouldn't consider even if it turns out you are standing in the gray area or on middle ground. You can be an individual—albeit an imperfect one—a human being with free-will and free-choice ever striving to close the gap between imperfection and that ultimate state of nirvana that exists somewhere out there just beyond reach.

Life and the issues we face can appear complicated at best. The age of information and technology has our world spinning at a wild and crazy pace. Not all mankind participating in the journey are at the identical phase in their evolution on earth. Simplifying how we perceive people and circumstances helps us to break life down into manageable parts. It also helps us to move forward in fulfilling what we were sent here to accomplish. This process doesn't come to us easily or naturally. We are taught to judge.

Narrow and closed minded individuals are judgmental and stuck in an either/or quagmire, fixed steadfastly at the lower rung on the ladder of growth where they unknowingly dwell. They act or react in the old black and white, right or wrong fashion because that is where they are in their thinking and their view of their surroundings. They

will not advance any further up the ladder as long as they remain on that same plane, stuck in that same thinking, and trapped in that frame of reference.

Tough times call for softening your stance on judgment and hardening your stance on what and who you will tolerate. It will become an identifying place where you will live, a zone you will inhabit, a destination you will occupy. All the rest can fall by the wayside.

Still, this isn't about judging others. There is a huge distinction between judgment and tolerance. This is about the reality of the world and events around us and how they trickle down from a large vast scale to a small personal scale. While all the front page and headline stories may not impact many of us on an immediate intimate level, they are symbolic of where we are as a society, as a nation, as a people, and as a whole. So, too, they force us to scrutinize our own lives, look at who we are, at what we do, at who we do it with, at how we go about it, and ultimately, what we can and should tolerate in our pursuit to best live out however much time we are destined to be here.

PZ'S POINTERS TO UNDERSTANDING TOLERANCE

GIVE THE VEILS A CHANCE TO FALL—When you live your life by a set of universal standards it becomes more and more apparent there are those who don't. The better you get at living up to those standards the less tolerant you'll be of those who enter your sphere of influence. The better example you become the easier it is to attract those who are living their own best example. The cream, as they say, will rise to the top. We are at a place in history when human beings are no longer able to hide behind their deceptive veils. The closer we look and the more in tuned we become with our own true sense of purpose and intention the quicker and easier it will be to spot the frauds, the gamers, the unconscious and less than honorable.

TRUTHS AND STANDARDS ARE INNATE AND A GIVEN—Man doesn't need to make laws to help us determine good from evil. There is an internal gauge that sends us that signal. Unfortunately, there are those walking around who feel they exist by another set of rules or have disengaged

their gauge and have opted to move to their own selfish or destructive beat. People who live outside of the invisible lines of decency demarcation display a disregard for others and the sanctity of life. There are those times when a clear and present sign tells us we cannot tolerate that person or their behavior.

GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR WORTH—Often we are met with circumstances that test our worth as a person. It is easy to allow others to dictate that worth. In our drive to succeed or desire for approval or need for acceptance we may lose sight of exactly how wonderful, valuable, and worthy we are. Never tolerate others devaluing you—no matter what. Decide what you are worth on every level of your existence and wear that worth like a badge of honor.

BEWARE OF BURNING BRIDGES—Some times we reach a point where we just can't take it anymore. We have had enough. So often we hear people say when they have reached that point in the situation or relationship where it is irretrievably broken, the only answer is to burn the bridge behind them. This solution is a sure fired way of setting yourself up for future grief. A burned bridge is one means of assuring that you can't cross back over if your journey happens to travel to that place once again. You CAN eliminate an intolerable situation without burning the bridge. You never know when something will arise and you find yourself in need of that bridge. If you have destroyed it you may discover you wish you hadn't.

WHEN YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW—Sounds a little redundant, but it most assuredly is not. Life is a trip, full of experiences and lessons. Every lesson has a purpose and a meaning. The trick is in getting the hidden or blatant message in the lesson so you don't have to go down the same road over and over. Once you have learned what is staring you in the face or hitting you over the head or whispering in your ear, you come away with knowledge and understanding to draw from for future use. Just when that parallel person or similar situation or familiar feeling or *deja-vous* occur-

rence presents itself, that little voice will do one of two things. It will either nudge you ever so slightly or scream out in deafening tones. Either way, it is that inner voice, your inner voice, telling you a sense about what is currently happening and you must learn to follow those instincts. That is because you just know. Think of all the times you have not gone with what you already sensed only to be full of regret at a later date. We spend much of our short stay on this earth redoing the same mistake again and again when we have the answers in our arsenal all along. Don't dismiss



what you know in your gut and your heart to be true.

DON'T SECOND GUESS THAT INNER VOICE—And speaking of that inner voice—I can't beat this drum loudly enough. That inner voice we all possess is so often ignored or overlooked. Make your assessment of others and of every circumstance by listening to that voice. Give it the credit it deserves. Don't miss the chance to listen. The interesting thing about that voice is it's partial to only one person. That person is you. That is our very own built-in cavalry available at our beck and call to come to the rescue time after time. It is our own built-in internal advisor, analyst, affirmation and assessment party of one. If you sense someone has an agenda—they probably do. If you feel someone doesn't have your best interest at heart—they probably don't. If you suspect a situation is not the perfect opportunity—it probably isn't. If you doubt someone is being forthright—they probably aren't. That sense or feeling or suspicion or doubt you get is your inner voice helping you make

the evaluation right for your life. Go with the information that voice tells you, positive or otherwise—and despite how difficult. Let go of the fear and go with that flow. Never second guess yourself.

Know when to finally flip the switch—I am not a believer in burning bridges. The one who ends up getting burned is the one who did the burning. That doesn't mean there aren't times when you must move on from people and places and situations that surround your life. I am a believer in, what I refer to as, knowing when to

flip the switch. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt and, if you really feel you must, go the extra mile—even when your inner voice has already warned you—but pay very close attention. If you determine you are not putting your energy and effort to its most efficient use and you can no longer tolerate the person or the circumstance, then, it's time to call it a day, flip the switch, let it go, and move on. When you reach that stage and you can't make it work you can walk away from the relationship or situation on your terms, confident and satisfied you have gone the limit and made the best decision. Don't waste time unnecessarily.

BECOME MORE SELECTIVE WITH WHERE YOU PLACE YOUR ENERGY—Each one of us has an energy bank, like a piggy bank, from which to draw. Funny thing about energy, when you put it out there on positive things, positive deeds, in a positive direction,

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