

## HAVING FAITH IN EACH OTHER

*I feel no need for any other faith than my faith in human beings.*  
--Pearl S. Buck

It often seems that we have faith in “things” more than each other. When we want more light, we flip a switch, expecting light to appear. When we want to take a breath, we automatically breathe, assuming oxygen will fill our lungs. We do not question where the light or breath comes from, we simply expect it to be there.

However, our faith in one another is not always so strong. Recently a woman told me a story about her daughter who was getting married in an exotic place far away from where the family resided. The woman, daughter and future son-in-law wanted very much for other relatives to attend so they sent out wedding invitations which included discounts to nearby hotels, hoping to make it easier for loved ones to attend. As the wedding day approached, the mother became quite anxious about how few people had responded to the wedding invitations. As her fear increased, she became more and more irritable. Eventually, a couple of weeks before the wedding she picked up the phone and lashed out at the relatives she had not heard from. “Why aren’t you coming to the wedding? This is my only daughter and it meant so much to us!” Well, had she had a little more faith (and patience) she would have received a call within a day or so from the relatives who were planning on attending once they received confirmation on a group rate!

How many times have you overreacted to someone because you were lacking faith in that person? Perhaps you believed they wouldn’t follow through with a promise or you perceived they wouldn’t do the best they were capable of? So often we judge another through the eyes of distrust, suspecting the worst rather than the best. Then, lo and behold, under the weight of our judgment the person trips and falls, confirming our suspicion.

Faith in each other requires trusting that people are not innately “bad,” but innately “good.” This reminds me of a recent transaction I made. A couple of weeks ago, I made my first purchase on e-Bay. Having found a good price on a computer scanner, I decided to take the plunge and make a bid. Well, my bid won and before I knew it, I was buying a scanner I had never seen from someone I had never met. The seller resided in Tennessee, a long ways away from where I live in Central Coast California and so my only contact was through e-mail. Within 72 hours I received the scanner and to my dismay, it was damaged and defective. It reminded me of the package actor Jim Carrey delivered to a swarthy character in the beginning of the movie “Ace Ventura, Pet Detective”—a box filled with broken pieces of metal and glass.

Well, I had little faith. Instead of maintaining a positive outlook, assuming that the seller would standby her product, I assumed the worst: Not only was I stuck with a defective piece of equipment, I would never get back the money I paid for it. After all, what guarantees could I expect when buying on e-Bay?

After displaying enough faithlessness, my husband, Tom, chided me, “What happened to your faith in people? What about holding to the fact that people are inherently good?” Ouch. Those were words that I have often stated, and now my belief was being put to the test. He was right, what *had* happened to my faith? Why had I so cavalierly thrown it out the window?

I sat down at my computer and wrote to the woman who sold me the scanner. I explained the situation and she immediately responded and took responsibility. She told me she was very sorry and that she would refund my money. Within one hour, she had not only refunded the money I had paid but she added additional funds to make up for any inconvenience!

Well, I may not have ended up with a scanner but I ended up with something much more important: a renewed faith in human kind. My initial reaction was totally off base and stemming purely from fear. The woman’s response showed me the respect, kindness and integrity that we are all capable of.

We owe each other faith and trust. We cannot possibly hope to have others trust us if we don't trust others. Trust is a way of cooperating with each other. Can you imagine a sailboat where the crewmembers do not have faith and trust in each other’s ability? The boat would soon stop functioning because of the chaos. In our community, we live in close quarters, like a boat crew. Trust for each other is one of the things, which keep chaos from breaking out. When we grow in trust for each other’s abilities, and self-esteem, we soon see how valuable each member of our community (crew) really is.

It's in human relationships that we get to see evidence of whether we're coming from fear or faith. The voice of faith reassuringly says, "Go ahead and take a risk. Open your heart. Be willing to see someone from a higher view." Seize your opportunities this month to respond from faith. To believe the best is faith in action.

Who are you willing to place your faith in today?