

Healthy Connections—God's Advice for Your Relationships

20 Devotions based on Proverbs 27

By Sharon Stults

Jesus told his disciples that people would recognize the children of God by the way we love one another. Our relationships in the kingdom are supposed to make lost people say, “I want that.” Our love and affection for one another, our desire to work for the good of all humans, should be so different from anything the world offers that lost folk can’t help but draw closer to find out what’s going on. Most of us could stand to up our relationship game. For the sake of the kingdom. For the sake of the lost.

All scripture is taken from the ESV or NLT unless otherwise noted.

Day One— No Bragging

Don't brag about tomorrow, since you don't know what the day will bring.² Let someone else praise you, not your own mouth—a stranger, not your own lips, Proverbs 27:1-2.

Whenever I think about boasters in the Bible, I think of Peninnah and Hannah in 1 Samuel. It wasn't enough that Peninnah had the joy of children, she had to rub it in barren Hannah's face. How awful that must have been, until Hannah became pregnant with Samuel. Sometimes we forget that no matter how little we have, there are many with less. We may not be deliberately hurtful like Peninnah, but we can sometimes wax too eloquently about the wonders of our lives and families to those who are still waiting on God for their breakthroughs. Some people are barely keeping it together.

The Bible also warns about the other kind of boasting, tooting your own horn about your own accomplishments, in lots of verses. The one that sticks out to me, though, as we consider our relationships, is 1 Corinthians 13:4 where Paul simply says, “Love doesn't boast.” The definition of boasting is, “to talk with excessive pride and self-satisfaction about one's achievements, possessions, or abilities.” This is not the same as humbly, confidently talking about your skills and abilities to use your God-given resources in the right job or position. Boasting is rooted in pride, and that's the problem. A boaster is convinced people don't appreciate them enough. I think that's part of what happened with Lucifer.

Am I repelling or attracting people by the way I speak about myself and my God-given talents and abilities? Have I been insensitive towards the pains and losses of others by talking too much about the wins and successes of my life?

Day Two- Resentment Is Heavy

A stone is heavy, and sand is weighty, but the resentment caused by a fool is even heavier, Proverbs 27:3.

Joseph's brothers resented Jacob's special treatment towards him. Jacob was dumb to play favorites. Joseph was a fool to brag about his dreams. The brothers were the dumbest of all, to allow resentment to so capture them, they sold their own flesh and blood into slavery. The chain of events this created was redeemed by God but caused horrific damage in Jacob's family.

There will always be foolish people who do foolish things that mess up your life. That's an inescapable fact. Will you allow it to blow up your relationship with that person and weigh down your soul with resentment? Like Joseph's brothers? What's in your heart will come out your mouth and direct your actions. I've always wondered if Pharaoh knew Joseph's full story. I think he probably heard it before he allowed Joseph to interpret his dream and before he promoted Joseph to such a high position. What must he have thought about Jacob's family relationships? How did that affect his view of the one true God, I wonder?

Am I struggling with resentment towards someone that did something foolish or sinful to me? Do lost people notice something off about my relationship with that person? Can I forgive and allow God to move me back into a position of love instead of resentment?

Day Three- Jealousy Is A Hurricane

Anger is cruel, and wrath is like a flood, but jealousy is even more dangerous, Proverbs 27:4.

If jealousy is worse than a flood of wrath, then jealousy and envy are a hurricane. Hurricanes do the same damage as a flood plus terrible wind damage. Jealousy and envy are similar. In a relationship, they blow away trust and flood hearts with hurt. There's a trail of bloodshed and broken relationships through scripture because of jealousy and envy. Cain and Abel. Rachel and Leah. King Saul and David. Joseph and his brothers. King Ahab and Naboth. Paul rebuked the entire Corinthian church because of jealousy.

Being unhappy with your current situation is good soil for jealousy and envy to grow. As soon as we come across someone that's where we want to be or has something we want, we will be tempted by jealousy or envy. If we give in, our focus shifts from serving others to serving ourselves. I've seen this even at the top of the kingdom food chain. Sometimes when my husband and I gather with pastors from other churches, we hear jealousy and envy come up in conversations. "Sure wish my church would give me that much vacation." "Wish I had a staff that large." I used to say some of those things. When I gave way to that temptation, bitterness also became part of jealousy's destruction. I resented my church and wallowed in self-pity. Jealousy is a hurricane.

Am I secretly envious or jealous of someone? If so, how do I speak and behave when something great happens for them? Do I struggle to be authentically joyful with them? Do I secretly think they don't deserve what they've got? Can let go of that and ask God to fill me with contentment?

Day Four-Hidden Love

An open rebuke is better than hidden love! Proverbs 27:5

Some folks in the Bible needed rebuking but didn't receive it, until they'd already left a wake of destruction behind them. Samson and his idiotic behavior with Delilah. Absalom and his plan to overthrow his father, King David. Ahab's marriage to Jezebel and passivity about her pagan ways.

There are also people who received the harsh rebukes they needed then repented and changed. The prophet Nathan's rebuke of David after the Bathsheba mess. My favorite - when God knocks the arrogant Pharisee, Saul, off his horse, strikes him blind and then yells at him for persecuting God himself. Whoa.

A timely rebuke can make such a difference, yet so many believers refuse to correct others. We are more afraid of the potential blowback than helping a soul turn from sin. We're afraid of our reputation being damaged. We're afraid of someone's anger. We are afraid of the wrong things. We should be fearful of not loving each other with agape love (Galatians 6:1). How different would the church be if we loved one another enough to consistently correct? Perhaps that's why we still have so many Samsons, Ahabs. and Absaloms running around in the kingdom.

Is there someone in my circle of influence who needs correction? Am I sensitive to Holy Spirit's leading when he says, "Talk to this one about this situation (attitude, behavior, etc.)?" If I'm not being called to directly deal with someone who I see is choosing a sin path, am I praying for God to raise up someone or simply ignoring the situation?

Day Five- Faithful Friends

Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy. Proverbs 27:6

We all need at least one person who is relentlessly truthful with us. Flattery feels so nice in the short term, but it isn't truth. Truth is what sets us free, not flattery. We need friends who will say things like, "Not so sure that dress is the best choice," or "Maybe you need to save more money for a down payment first," or "Did you mean to sound that snarky?" There are lots of dopey choices I've made that I wish I'd run past certain friends first.

Jonathan was a sincere friend to David when he warned David that King Saul, Jonathan's father, was on a murderous rampage against the shepherd warrior and that he needed to stay out of his sight. Paul was a sincere friend to Timothy when he said, "Don't let people disrespect your youth." (1 Timothy 4:12) It's implied that Paul was gently correcting Timothy here for perhaps cowing to older members in his church. Recognize flatterers and choose sincere friends instead.

Is my inner circle of relationships comprised of sincere friends? Are there any opportunistic flatterers I've allowed in? Do I push people away who try to be truthful and sincere with me because I don't like what they are saying? Which role am I playing in other people's lives, especially people who hold power over me? Flatterer or sincere friend?

Day Six- Food Fights

A person who is full refuses honey, but even bitter food tastes sweet to the hungry. Proverbs 27:7

Entire advertising campaigns center around the idea of exasperated parents and their picky-eater children. In my youth it was a grumpy little boy named, Mikey, who magically liked one cereal only. Today's commercials involve parent and child mealtime battles magically resolved by either ranch dressing or macaroni and cheese.

Married couples fight over food too. Foolish husbands through the ages learn that saying, "Doesn't taste like Mom's" is deadly. Some people enjoy cooking so much, they make it part of their identity. That's okay, until someone rejects their food, thereby rejecting them. Others, like me, don't love food prep and become annoyed when, after making the effort, your family complains about the meal. What should be times of refreshing, breaking bread together as family or friends, can become a stressful mess. Can you see Satan's hand in this, trying to corrupt something that should be life-giving and affirming?

Solomon wisely counsels us to leave people alone about food. If folks don't want to eat the good, nutritious food you prepare, *let it go*. Don't take up offense from complaints. People will eat whatever when *they get hungry enough*. As parents we must put up boundaries for a child's sugar and snack intake but don't be a mealtime Nazi. In my childhood home, we ate what was put before us because no other options were given. If we didn't eat, we were hungry for a while. For Americans especially, that's not a bad thing.

Are mealtimes peaceful in my home? If not, why? Is someone chronically complaining? (Refer back to days four and five devotionals.) Am I taking offense when people pick at or don't eat the food I've prepared? What role can I play in establishing and maintaining mealtimes as joyful and life-giving?

Day Seven-Don't Stray

A person who strays from home is like a bird that strays from its nest. Proverbs 27:8.

Some people are always chasing after fantasies that seem better than the home life they have. Movies and television paint unrealistic pictures of home and family that don't resemble real life. These then tempt people to wander from marriages and families. Real life is complicated. The young mother, with baby drool on her shirt and a messy, messy bun in her hair shouldn't feel in competition for her husband's affections with the power-suited women at his office. Children shouldn't feel in competition with their parent's hobbies for love and attention. Parents shouldn't be competing with Tik Tok, for time with their kids. There are many ways we can stray from the heart of any home, the relationships within it. Once one family member wanders, others will also, as they try to fill the holes that person left. Now, more than ever, we need nest builders.

Do I honestly prioritize my time and energies outside work towards my family or more towards my hobbies, friends, church ministry or other things? What am I doing this week to strengthen my family, to build our nest up stronger?

Day Eight- Fragrant Words

The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense. Proverbs 27:9

Think of a fragrance that you love, whether it's a perfume, after shave or even a soap. My current favorite is a bar of soap made with citrus, ginger and a plant called sea buckthorn. It makes me happy to step into the shower. When our environment smells good, it lightens our hearts. The other night, a skunk sprayed right outside our open bedroom window. Our sleep was disrupted, and we felt all churned up trying to get rid of the stench. This is why Solomon compares advice from the heart to perfume. It can change someone's internal, emotional environment. I also think that the reverse is true. Careless opinions and words about someone else's life and choices make for a smelly, unpleasant atmosphere.

Whatever your favorite scent is, think about how it makes you feel, then consider the idea that thoughtful, loving counsel can impact someone's inner world powerfully. Good counsel that genuinely comes from the heart makes us feel better. Everyone is dealing with problems and challenges. We can affect the souls of others with whom we have relationship, by speaking good counsel into their struggles. "Have you considered this option, over here?" "I wonder if this thing here might be helpful for you." "I think you're doing a great job of navigating this situation." Let's stop missing opportunities God creates for us to share heartfelt counsel.

Do I even notice the struggles that others are facing today? Am I taking the time to speak truth and life to them? Am I allowing others to share heartfelt counsel with me, or do I try to act as if I've got everything in hand all the time? If people don't know we are struggling, we will miss the opportunity to hear the stories of others who have faced down challenges and navigated trials.

Day Nine-Abandonment Issues

Never abandon a friend, either yours or your father's. When disaster strikes, you won't have to ask your brother for assistance. Proverbs 27:10

I know God brings friends to us for specific seasons of life, yet I think I've been too casual and careless sometimes about how I handle people when seasons change. I think of times when my out-of-town family were unable to be near in a crisis. God provided friends. I'm ashamed as I think about friends who were dear to me in critical times and now.... I've lost track of them.

My mother was an excellent friend. Her funeral testified to that. She was balanced and didn't try to be with every friend she ever made, all the time, but she only ever let go of a couple toxic relationships, in all her eighty years of life. She still exchanged Christmas cards, with personal notes, with her college roommates. She continued to go out to lunch with her work friends many years after her retirement. Daily, she made time for friends. She valued friendships superbly. We need to be more careful with our relationships and not let go of people so easily because.... we need each other.

Are there people with whom I need to touch base, even though years might have passed? What changes can I make today and the days going forward to put better value on my friendships?

Day Ten-Wise Parents- Wise Kids

Be wise, my child, make my heart glad. Then I will be able to answer my critics. Proverbs 27:11

The choice to live godly in a secular world will continue to be mocked and criticized by God-haters. A powerful way to demonstrate that God's ways are best, can be the lives of our children, grandchildren, and the younger believers we are discipling. When we can train up wise people in our homes and churches, the stability and joy of their lives speaks volumes to a chaotic, confused world.

How do we teach wisdom? In families, and churches we should be deliberate to study and memorize God's book of wisdom, Proverbs. Also, there's a saying, "Faith is caught not taught." The same is true of wisdom. How we model wise living will be more impacting than what we say. Watching us navigate the complexities, disappointments, and challenges of life with godly wisdom will stick with those who are watching us. They will remember our attitudes, words, and behavior. A well of understanding and knowledge will deepen in them, and they will learn to draw from it to face their own everyday annoyances and large-scale crises. Fruitful lives, guided by God's wisdom, naturally raise questions in lost folks' minds. Isn't that what we want?

When is the last time I studied or read the book of Proverbs? If there's children in my home still, what am I doing to help them understand and acquire its godly wisdom? If your children are living as prodigals right now, take heart. First, God has wisdom for you so you can know how to pray for them and connect with them. Second, the struggles of their current, pigpen life, show precisely how destructive the world's system can be much more than their choices reflect on your parenting skills. Please don't own your children's ungodly decisions.

Day 11- Prudent People Prepare

A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences. Proverbs 27:12

"Clueless" is a hilarious movie, but it's a rough way to live. I remember when cell phones first came out. Slapstick comedy started to occur everywhere people were too in love with their phones and unaware of surroundings. They walked into walls and posts. They fell off curbs and crashed into others. They were like the simpleton in this verse, blinded by phones.

Maintaining relationship with someone who is oblivious, is exhausting. They take foolish risks. They stumble into dangerous circumstances. They don't plan well for daily life. You chronically pull them from the fire. They are forever borrowing your stuff because, of course, they didn't bring the right stuff or any stuff. Being prudent doesn't need to be a killer of spontaneity or creativity. Prudent means you've given thought to the future and made appropriate plans. It's life insurance and umbrellas. It's a shovel and emergency kit in your trunk in a snowstorm. Prudent people make others feel safe. Clueless folks leave a trail of chaos behind them.

Am I someone who is usually prepared for a few contingencies or am I the one running around trying to get others to bail me out of my latest crisis?

Day Twelve- Bad Credit and Bad Debt

Get security from someone who guarantees a stranger's debt. Get a deposit if he does it for foreigners. Proverbs 27:13 NIV

This is godly financial advice from Solomon, the wealthiest man in the world of that time. Beware of someone you don't know well asking you to be a guarantor of a loan for them or to loan them money directly. Some people can spin amazing sad tales that will melt the hardest of hearts. You're better off taking your chances with the lottery and about as likely to come out right. Sadly, our world is filled with grifters and con artists that will prey on a believer's compassion. My husband is the point man for emergency financial assistance in our church. Some of the requests are laughable. This one is struggling to make the payments on their Mercedes. Another would like us to pay their rent for a three-bedroom apartment where they live alone. Ken works hard not to entangle our church with sketchy strangers.

Proverbs contains lots of financial advice, but this piece can prevent relationship damage in your life and keep you from interfering in God's development of someone's character. First, when you become involved with a sketchy financial situation you risk your own stability and your ability to care for your family. Money is one of the top five marital argument topics. Secondly, sometimes people are in a financial fix because of foolish choices. Pain is a wonderful motivator for change, right? Listen and wait for God's leading before giving, loaning, or guaranteeing money.

Do I have a process that includes prayer before I consider gifting or loaning someone money or agreeing to guarantee a loan for them? Am I easily swayed by emotion-filled stories of need?

Day Thirteen- Loud Neighbors

Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing. Proverbs 27:14 ESV

In our former neighborhood, the neighbor across the street liked to snow blow at 4:00 a.m. He didn't need to leave for work until 7 but he liked to "get 'er done early." The blower's peculiar whine was impossible to sleep through. The guy was a great neighbor in every other way, but that snowblower was a curse. We are early risers in this house, but thanks to the cautionary tale of that neighbor, we try to be especially considerate in our new neighborhood. Unless the snow is especially heavy, we will quietly shovel until at least 6 a.m. when many of our neighbors are up.

We are always serious about reaching people for the gospel in every neighborhood where we've lived. Making loud, obnoxious noises at weird hours is but one way to squirrel up your chances to have authentic conversations with your neighbors. Is your dog leaving deposits in other's yards? Are you thoughtless about the hours you allow noise and activity in your yard or pool? Is your home and yard neat or are you dragging down everyone's property values? As neighbors, we need to first earn the right to engage by being thoughtful and considerate. People are going to hell all around us. Don't squirrel up your opportunities with them through thoughtless behavior.

How would my neighbors rank me with 1 being a terrible neighbor and 10 being a great one?

Day Fourteen- Nobody Likes a Nag

A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike; ¹⁶to restrain her is to restrain the wind or to grasp¹ oil in one's right hand. Proverbs 27:15-16

In the book of Judges, you can find Samson, a life of great potential train-wrecked from giving in to nagging. Read chapter 14 where you will find not just one nagging wife, but two. Each one nagged so much he made horrible decisions just to shut them up. This isn't the only proverb about nagging. Check out 19:13, 21:19 and 25:24. Nagging is not limited to wives, however. Parents, teachers, bosses, and co-workers can all be repetitive micro-managers. "But they'd never get anything done, if I didn't nag them," can be overhead at Nagger's Anonymous meetings. This may be true, however, nagging reveals something about the nagger also. "Getting stuff done," is more important than relationship. There are lots of reasons people under-perform. The wise person takes time to figure out what those reasons are. God never nags. He wants us to serve him because we love him not because we are trying to get him off our backs. The Hebrew word here for "nagging" is "contentious." These folks are never quite happy no matter how much you do or how fast you do it. It's an easy sin to fall into and damages relationships tremendously.

Am I consistently nagging someone that I feel isn't pulling their weight or living up to their potential? How might that be damaging my relationship with them? Am I consistently frustrating someone by my under-performing ways that it provokes them to nag me?

Day Fifteen- Iron Sharpens Iron

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

Iron can be used to sharpen another piece of iron, but there will be friction and sparks. If you don't like friction and sparks then you need to content yourself with dull knives, scissors and pruning shears. The same is true of a relationship. We can sharpen and improve one another through disagreement and debates, friction, and sparks. Some believers teach that unity should be friction and spark free. That's not unity, it's uniformity. When did we get so afraid of respectfully disagreeing with one another? I see Satan's hand here trying to convince us that disagreement is divisive. It can be if truth is not spoken in love, but it doesn't need to pull people apart. God designed friction to strengthen things, not weaken them. If we only hang with people who agree with us all the time (or at least pretend to with their silence), our character growth is stifled. We become dull because we aren't forced to examine our beliefs about anything and how we came to those beliefs. Some of our beliefs are wrong and we need to be challenged to change.

Do I allow people to disagree with me without me withdrawing from them or being less open with them in the future? When I debate or disagree with other believers, am I gracious? Do I care more about being right or about helping myself and others to learn and grow? This is an important question to answer because it reveals our motives for disagreement and debate.

Day Sixteen- Guard Those Above You

As workers who tend a fig tree are allowed to eat the fruit, so workers who protect their employer's interests will be rewarded. Proverbs 27:18.

I lead a writer's group that meets twice a month in a nearby coffee shop owned by my daughter and son-in-law. With recent changes in my state's COVID restrictions, I double-checked with them to be sure that us meeting as a group of twelve, pushing tables together and such, was not going to be a problem. My SOL assured me that we were free to meet and move tables and use any part of the facility. The first time we met live, after months of Zoom meetings, I arrived at the shop early to start moving tables and chairs into a backroom area. Little signs on each table reminded me that tables shouldn't be moved, "per health department orders," but my SOL had insisted that this was no longer the case and the signs hadn't yet been taken off the tables. Within minutes, a sweet little employee, who hadn't gotten that memo yet, came up to me and kindly let me know that tables shouldn't be moved. Good for her! She was protecting my kids' business by gently enforcing the last set of rules she knew about, even at the risk of offending a customer. God-followers should hands-down be the absolute best employees in any workplace, always looking out for the interests of the owners and managers. This is not only respectful and God-pleasing, but also common sense. If the rules about tables were still in effect, my kiddoes might have gotten in a world of trouble and fines and possibly had the shop shut down with all employees laid off. A faithful employee looks out for his boss's best interests.

How would my employers, past and present, rate me as an employee for loyalty, work ethic, honesty, punctuality, and productivity?

Day Seventeen- Heart Issues

As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person. Proverbs 27:19

I wonder if Jesus was thinking of this Proverb when he said, "The things that come out of the mouth, come from the heart," in Matthew 15:18? A mirror doesn't lie and neither does the heart. Our true nature is stored in our hearts and is revealed by words and actions. We can wear masks and some of us are skilled at projecting a persona that doesn't reflect our true selves. I think this is part of why God lets our hearts get stirred up sometimes by difficult circumstances and challenges. Sometimes, we find out what's lurking in the corners of our hearts when we are agitated, stressed or afraid. Are you ever surprised by what comes out of your mouth, at those times? God designed humans to connect soul to soul. Hiding our struggles and sin and our true natures, hinders the ability to create authentic relationships. God's design is for flawed hearts to connect with other flawed hearts, so we can encourage one another to Christ and good works.

If the contents of my heart were displayed on a computer screen, would I allow anyone to see them besides me? To what degree am I keeping my true self hidden from people? Am I desperately trying to hide a secret sin? Am I projecting a persona that isn't the true me because I fear rejection?

Day Eighteen- Never Satisfied

Just as Death and Destruction are never satisfied, so human desire is never satisfied. Proverbs 27:20

There is a potential in all of us to live in a state of dissatisfaction, always wanting a bit more than what we have. In his commentary on this verse, Adam Clarke, 19th century theologian says, “As the *grave* can never be filled up with *bodies*, nor *perdition* with *souls*; so, the restless desire, the lust of power, riches, and splendor, is never satisfied. Out of this ever-unsatisfied desire spring all the changing fashions, the varied amusements, and the endless modes of getting money, prevalent in every age, and in every country.” (Clarke) This mindset is another poison for relationships. When someone always seeks better and more, how long do you think it will be before they decide someone else would be a better friend than you? I believe this is also why people hop from relationship to relationship, marriage to marriage, job to job and church to church. God is not against change when it’s by his leading, but he will never lead us to break his laws and commands. He will never lead us to treat people as disposable. He will never lead us to make those around us uncomfortable because of our dissatisfaction.

Is there some area of my life where I’m frequently longing for something better or different that goes beyond healthy, God-given dreams and vision? Am I causing sorrow in those closest to me because I’m often discontent? Are my dreams of improvement for myself and the world around me God-given or flesh-driven?

Day Nineteen- The Praise Test

Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but a person is tested by being praised. Proverbs 27:21

How we handle compliments reveals what’s in our hearts. First, we need to say, “Thank you.” Don’t insult the judgement and taste of the giver by being dismissive. “Oh, it’s nothing” is a put down to the person who thought what you did or said or created was enough of a something to compliment you for it. Secondly, don’t play compliment ping pong. Women are notorious for this. Someone says, “I love your dress,” and instead of saying “Thank you,” you say, “I love yours too,” because you feel you must. You don’t have to. Finally, if you are being praised for an accomplishment, it’s your job to say thanks and then direct that praise to God and the people that helped you develop those skills and abilities. As my pastor frequently says, “If you see a turtle up on a fence post, you know he didn’t get there by himself.” Take the time to acknowledge how you came to this moment of success. “I’m so thankful God put it in my parent’s hearts to pay for my piano lessons.” “I’ve had so many great teachers, (mentors, coaches, etc.) that God put in my life at just the right times.” “God opened doors for me that I just can’t believe sometimes.” Another way you can get squirreled up by praise, especially if you receive a lot of it, is to start believing and acting like you’re just a bit more special than regular folks. Having worked backstage security for several well-known Christian artists and speakers, I can tell you, this is sad to see.

Have I developed the art of receiving praise graciously and then re-directing it towards God?

Day Twenty-

You cannot separate fools from their foolishness, even though you grind them like grain with mortar and pestle. Proverbs 27:22

Simple and profound advice that will save you time, energy, and emotional resources. When a person chooses to live a fool's life, as the prodigal son did, for the most part you need to leave them be until they are sick of it, as happened to the prodigal son in the pigpen. When it's someone you love, this is so hard. We want to shield them and prevent the pain we see coming. Frankly, this delays them feeling the pain of their choices and makes pigpens more tolerable. Prayers that they will come to their senses are far more effective in the long run. Besides the person who chooses foolish as a lifestyle are the rest of us who, at various times, choose to be foolish and pigheaded in clinging to wrong belief systems, skewed paradigms and flawed decision-making protocols. When are we usually willing to listen to someone trying to point out where we've missed a turn? When the wheels come off for us, in some way. Stop trying to persuade people away from wrong thinking. Instead, wait for openings and invitations to share what you've come to discover as true to people who are authentically willing to listen and consider fresh ideas.

Am I currently pounding my ideas onto someone I believe has chosen a destructive path or is living in a false reality? Am I willing to shift my focus to strengthening that relationship with love (sometimes tough love) and compassion and patiently wait for the opportunity to share the truth they need?