

abundance than we could imagine all around us. We can't see the world around us because we spend so much time being in our own way. We become so absorbed in trying to manipulate people and circumstances to get what we need that we would not be able to see what we really need if it hit us over the head. One cannot get out of self-centeredness through self-will. The way to deal with self-centeredness is to do things for others, to be of service. Self-centeredness is harming to us and to others. It is not worth what it costs us."

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SECOND CHANCES

I believe in second chances! As Helen Prejean said, "People are more than the worst thing they have ever done in their lives." There is a tendency to believe that people who have done something wrong or bad are bad people and will always be bad people. There is a deep, usually hidden and unspoken belief that people can't really change and that they are no more than "the worst thing they have ever done in their lives." This belief results in a great deal of secret keeping and the need to try to keep our pasts hidden. When I met my wife, Diane, the first thing she said was, "We both have a past and that is exactly what it is, the past."

I believe people can learn and grow from their mistakes if they can forgive themselves. Once that occurs, then the greatest opportunities for learning and growing are waiting to be discovered. For me personally, the worst thing I ever did was the most important because it offered me the opportunity to learn and practice the process of forgiveness. I also learned that self-forgiveness is conceivably the most difficult of all. Second chances are only advantageous if we acknowledge our mistake, learn the lessons from it, forgive ourselves and move on. For me, that

took more than a few weeks or months. By the time I finished beating myself up, all of the critics were standing in line to throw the first stone. People who didn't even know all the facts were making heavily-weighted negative judgments. My best friend, Todd, always reminded me that without the knowledge of the facts and outlook of concern, an opinion is simply that – an opinion! As Margaret once said, “It requires less mental effort to condemn than to think.”

THE PROCESS OF FORGIVENESS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROCESSES WE CAN LEARN IN LIFE, AND SELF-FORGIVENESS IS PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT OF ALL.

Second chances allow us to approach each day as a new day which, of course, it is. There is something about the freshness in the idea of a new day that encourages us to forgive ourselves from past mistakes and give life a new try. I know firsthand that when you get a second chance, it brings you the opportunity to come up with fresh ideas, fresh approaches and fresh behaviors. It allows you to approach each morning as a new day with new possibilities. I became a better son, husband, father and friend. Embrace your second chances and see what happens. The only thing you have to lose is all the guilt which can hold you back from ever reaching our potential.

DON'T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS BEFORE THEY HATCH

Most people have a tendency to count their chickens before they hatch. It's a tendency we must work hard to overcome as we move to maximize our potential. Success isn't handed to anyone on a silver