**Life Lesson**

**Harnessing the Power of Mercy**

 **to Work for Peace and Fairness**

Mercy has an army of powerful cousins: war, blame, hurt, pain, anger, and criticism. They are all ***neutral*** resources. We can choose whether we use them to fight for a more sickening world, or for a healthier one. And either way we choose, we put out what we take in. We become what we eat – garbage in, garbage out, and healthy in, healthy out. We also reap what we sow. Whatever we put out is going to grow and come back into us. So let’s see how to make healthy choices with these issues, in both what we allow to impress us, and how we express ourselves.

**In my parent-child relationships, past and present, and in all of life,**

Do I remind to my loved ones of their limits, failures, and mistakes?

 Or do I more often remind them of their best moments from the past, and their good potential for the future?

Do I see parents as having the power, authority, and responsibility for controlling children, teaching them by forceful consequences?

 Or do I see parents more with the job of protecting and loving children, teaching more by modeling and realistic consequences?

**With my siblings, peers, and friends, and in all of life,**

Do I look for the faults of others, seeking ways to control them?

 Or do I look primarily for my own faults, seeking ways I can grow in self-control?

Do I take things personally, believing my pain is what someone did to me?

 Or do I avoid taking offense, by trying to accept that people are who they are?

**With my beloved, mate, my most significant other, and in all of life,**

Do I mostly absorb anger and injustice in public, so that I naturally discharge it in private at home with my partner?

 Or do I mostly discharge my anger in public, and direct it against others who would threaten my loving partnership at home?

Do I save my anger up for when I see the other person hurting me, to discharge it so I can get even?

 Or do I express anger carefully and constructively, when I see the other person hurting themselves or others?

**In my online interactions with the public, and in all of life,**

**With the social media, news feeds, music, movies, TV, and video games I prefer,**

 Do I take in information and experiences that inspire hate, violence, and slander?

 Or do I take in things that inspire mercy, grace, forgiveness, civility, and patience?

Do I fight for divisiveness and revenge, to get more power for my people?

 Or do I fight for peace and justice for all people?

**When I express myself in public through phone, text, or social media,**

 Do I mostly point out the faults and mistakes of others?

 Or do I draw the attention of others to healthy people, groups, choices, and experiences?

Do I mostly point out what makes us all fear and hate each other (our differences)?

 Or do I mostly point out what makes us all human (our similarities)?

**In all my relationships,**

**When I feel enmeshed with someone, or estranged from them,**

 Do I use anger to push us together or apart?

 Or do I use it to fight for a healthier, reconciled relationship, with healthier boundaries?

**When I have power struggles and disagreements,**

 Do I seek to get my way (fighting for this against that, so I will either win or lose),

 Or do I seek a better way for all concerned (for both this way *and* that, so we can *both* win something)?

**When I feel hurt or offended by someone,**

 Do I react quickly, to relieve and decompress myself, to comfort myself?

 Or do I react slowly, so I can figure out how relieve, comfort, and decompress *the relationship*?

**When I see someone else being mean and hateful,**

 Do I lash out at their behavior, and criticize their motive or character?

Or do I show anger at merely their behavior, and show love for who they really are in most other situations?