

ROADS TO

NOWHERE!

By Gael McInnes

Anger, hatred, resentment.

Harsh words, but these feelings rage throughout the world, and rear their 'ugly head' every day in conflicts between individuals and countries. They rage in our local communities and in our families. Neighbours 'war' with each other, often over trivial annoyances. Families are in conflict because of money issues, divorce, drunkenness, abuse, or whatever. Time and again these feelings of anger, hatred and resentment arise from misunderstandings, or comments that insinuate jealousy, pride, arrogance, racism or just plain ignorance.

Our schools are full of angry children who are often in the middle of these conflicts, and the only way they know how to vent their feelings is through teasing, bullying and/or fighting. What does the future hold for them, if we adults can't get it right?

I hope you're not on one of these roads to nowhere!

Human nature is sensitive. We take to heart what is said, and inwardly 'stew' things over. Unfortunately, we humans don't talk much about what is bothering us, and this is when we begin to hatch 'revenge' plans. These revengeful thoughts and intentions can lead either to actual verbal or physical action, such as abusing, assaulting or even killing someone. What a tragedy if this happens.

Others literally let the anger, hatred

and resentment 'eat' away their bodies. A doctor once said, "The digestive tract mirrors with fidelity every emotional state."

Our mental processes can also be upset – thoughts becoming distorted and irrational. Joints can become riddled with arthritis. The list goes on. These emotions of anger, hatred and resentment are disease producing. The Bible says, "As he thinks in his heart, so is he".¹ The more you think about what is on your mind when you are angry, the more ideas (often bizarre) you have. Another warning from the Bible: "And don't sin by letting anger control you."²

Hatred consumes the consumer! Elsie Robinson put it like this: "But even if our rage seems fully justified, and our plans succeed beyond our blackest hope, we will never get even. For life doesn't work that way. Instead of finding peace, renewed self-respect, and healing of our hurt, each attempt at revenge leaves us frustrated and cheated. Instead of punishing our enemies, we have simply played our own debasing game and sold ourselves down the river."³

Jesus said, "Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause will be sentenced by God."⁴ The modern sentences by God present as inner decay (illnesses), frustration, conflict and neurosis. If you give out hate, you will become hateful. If you are resentful, you will be resented. If you do not like people, you will not be liked by people. That is the sentence of God, and it is going on in people's lives all around us. How sad.

Here's another helpful statement from the Bible: "As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man."⁵

Howard Thurman says, "If we nourish within our hearts hate and fear and self-centredness, we shall spend our days stumbling in the dark. Why? Because hate, fear, and self-centredness are not the way to live. Life doesn't work that way."³

As someone has said, "Revengefulness is a powerful poison. It will destroy you if you try to repress it, and it will destroy you if you express it in action."

Why is it that in human history peace treaties have lasted only on average 2½ years? One reason is that they were often founded on revenge! You can have peace or revenge, but you can't have both. They are incompatible!

We must see the effects these feelings have on us. Holistic care responds to the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs. It's no good working out at the gym and getting your body into shape, or eating healthily, if your emotions are in turmoil, or you have no friend because you can't relate to people socially, or if you have unmet spiritual needs.

The body is made for good will, not ill will. So if you have a problem dealing with feelings such as anger, hatred and resentment, it is well worth considering making a choice to change your attitude for the better. This may mean talking to someone about how you feel and why, and seeking help to work through these

feelings. It may even involve confronting the person/s who have caused the problem, and forgiving them, or asking for forgiveness if you have hurt them. Saying 'I'm sorry' can be the most healing words you could ever say.

The Bible is full of helpful suggestions. When Paul wrote to the Ephesian Church he said, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour. Instead be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God, through Christ has forgiven you." ⁶ James said to his people, "My dear brothers (and sisters), take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God deserves." ⁷

E. Stanley Jones reminds us: "Love is positive; hate is negative; love heals; hate wounds; love lasts; hate stings itself to death." ³ Love and concern for others is the only way to keep families and nations together. Love holds a person together.

Go out with love within and the world will be lovely. It will respond in love and your road will lead to a healthy emotional outlook.

Notes:

1. Proverbs 23:7, NKJV
2. Ephesians 4:26, NLT
3. Quoted in "The Way", by E. Stanley Jones. (H&S, London, 1952)
4. Mathew 5:22, NLT
5. Proverbs 27:19, NLT
6. Ephesians 4:31-32, NLT
7. James 1:19-20, NLT



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