

# Values

A Compilation  
of Real Life Experiences

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The Value of

# *Faith*

By Garhett Colton

When the subject of faith is brought up, the first thing that comes to mind is religion. But faith is so much more than just religion. Faith is a fundamental part, and possibly the most important factor in our lives; whether we realize it or not. From the minute we wake up to the time we fall asleep, we all practice the concept of faith. Faith is exercised in a variety of ways, one of which is having faith in ourselves. To accomplish, or achieve goals requires more than hard work. It requires faith in ourselves and in our ability to accomplish what we set our minds to. Getting a college degree is one goal I dream of completing. This is a goal that I have to exercise an incredible amount of faith in myself.

Higher education has not always been possible or necessary for my family. This includes my immediate and extended family, with the exception of one uncle who graduated with a bachelor's degree in teaching and is now employed at an elementary school. Part of the reason none of my family has pursued a higher education is because of a family trucking company that provides jobs. Growing up, working for the family business was a given. It has always been a comfortable fit for most family members. We grew up knowing how the trucking business worked. The need to attend college is not required or needed in any of the office or labor positions within the company. Although the family employees do not have a higher education they work extremely hard and each plays an important role in running a successful company. As important as my role would have been in the company, I have always felt there is more for me in a career than driving 600 miles, four times a week with a wage of twenty-three cents a mile to deliver food and produce to grocery stores.

Working in the family business would have been easy. I know how it works. College is not the easy path. Core subjects like math, science, and English are not subjects

that come easily, and are hard for me to focus on. I have a creative mind and work well with my hands. I know I can do something and be someone who makes a difference if I have the faith in myself to work through the difficult classes.

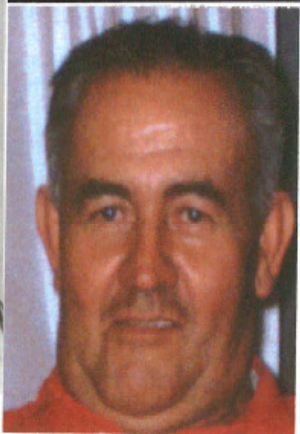
The biggest obstacle in accomplishing my goal is finding the encouragement; someone who will lift me up when I fail and tell me to try again. My family has always been supportive in all I do, but whether I go to college and succeed is not important to them? As a result I have to rely on my own dedication, and have faith in myself to get through my college career.

Hard work, dedication, and most importantly, faith in yourself, is what it takes to accomplish any goal. Despite my family background of no higher education and the comfort of a guaranteed job in a family business, a seed of desire to have a secure career and a yearning to become a better person and make a difference was planted within me.

A couple questions come to my mind when thinking about this concept. Would you plant crops, unless you believed you would gather? Would you look for something that was lost, unless you believed you would find it? All these are examples that we might not have thought would require faith, but they do.

Scared, but eager, I took a leap of faith and entered the college scene. Faith is required because I am working toward something that is difficult for me to accomplish and have little support along the way. I am confident that by doing all I can and having faith in myself I will be able to accomplish anything, including a college degree and obtaining a career.

In Hebrews 11:1, from the Bible, faith is defined as “. . . the substance (assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Faith is in everything. Any task that we attempt and hope to accomplish without knowing the end result, requires faith. It takes wanting something and doing something about it. We have to believe we can succeed, and have faith in ourselves that we can achieve, and we will find success.



The Value of  
*Integrity*

By Jared Gaetz

It has been said that, “The way you live your life is the strongest sermon you will ever preach.” The quality of integrity is something that I have always aspired to possess. To be known as a person who is true to their beliefs and to their word is a reputation that I believe is worth cultivating.

As a young boy, I remember hearing stories about my mother’s father, my Grandfather Stillman. He was a man I never had the opportunity to meet because he passed away before I was born. However, I feel I have grown to know him quite well because of the manner in which my mother has portrayed the sterling quality of integrity that her father possessed. I have always felt that I wanted to emulate that characteristic as I have listened to my mother’s expressions of admiration for him.

My mother was raised on a farm. They had fruit trees, horses, cows, chickens, pigs, and a lot of sheep. Occasionally my grandfather would have a year when the fruit crop would be destroyed by frost or their farm revenue would be down because of various circumstances beyond my grandfather’s control. When he experienced lean times and needed a cash advance, he would call the bank manager at Zion’s Bank and tell him he needed a loan to get him through the difficult time. Without even asking for paper work to be completed or mentioning guarantees and collateral, my grandfather was granted the request for whatever amount he felt he needed at that time. My grandfather was known as a man of his word in every arena—including the banking industry, and was always able to secure any loan he requested with a simple verbal agreement and a promise that he would pay it back.

My mother told me that my grandfather’s C.P.A. often commented to her that her father was the most honest client

he had ever had. Rather than try to find ways to cheat the government or ask for shortcuts or loopholes that would save him money, my grandfather would say that he was willing to pay his fair share and was not looking for ways to bend the rules to get out of paying what he knew he owed.

My mother told me how important it was for her father to know that his children would keep their word. Sometimes he would play tricks on them to see if they would tell him the truth or not. My mother had the responsibility as a young girl of rescuing the orphan lambs from her father's herd of sheep, and feeding and caring for them until they could return to the fold. Her father sternly cautioned her to remember to feed them three times a day because she was their only means of survival. One summer day, she got up and completely forgot to feed her 17 lambs, and instead went outside to play. She came back into the house in the early afternoon and was greeted with her father asking her in an agitated voice if she had remembered to feed her lambs that morning. She told me that for a brief moment she wondered if she should say that she had fed them and then hurry out and take them food after her dad went into another room. But then she remembered her father's remarkable example of integrity and decided to tell him the truth. She hung her head, apologized and told him she had forgotten, but that she would hurry out and see that they were fed. To her surprise, she looked up to see him smiling at her. He then told her that he had taken them in his truck to their summer ranch that morning at 5 A.M., so they weren't even there to be fed when she awakened. He then said that he just wanted to see if she would tell him the truth. My mom has often told us this story and has remarked as to how foolish she would have felt if she had told him she had fed them. It was a lesson she has never forgotten.

Denis Waitley once said, "A life lived with integrity--even if it lacks the trappings of fame and fortune, is a shining star in whose light others may follow in the years to come." I've wondered where my grandfather learned his lessons on integrity. Who was that shining star that lit the way for him? He lost his father when he was only 11 years old and was left with the responsibility of helping to care and provide for his mother and little sisters.

My mother found an old letter that explains exactly where my grandfather learned his sterling quality of integrity--from his father. It was written in 1920 from a Mr. Nephi Hansen, who was a business partner in the banking industry to my great-grandfather Stillman. It was written to comfort my great-grandmother shortly after my great-grandfather's death.

In the letter he said "I have known Forrest for the past twenty five or thirty years and have always admired him for his sterling qualities. When I started to organize the bank, I immediately thought of Forrest as a partner to work with. That admiration I had always had for him grew stronger and stronger as our work became more and more a work of extreme caution and good business judgment, and as all big men are, he was looked to more and more as our problems became more complex."

He then went on to say, "We all have our ideals in life and while we are not always advertising them or talking about them, we can always appreciate the same tendencies in others. And it is because of my greatest ambition and hope that I can rear my family to be honest, fearless, honorable men and raise them with energy and ambition to emulate those ideals." Mr. Hansen then went on to say that he had known Forrest's father to be a man possessing the same amazing qualities of integrity and honor. Forrest learned by watching his father, Charles. My grandfather learned by watching his father, Forrest. And so, it is my hope that I will cultivate this important quality in my life. I do believe that, "The way you live your life is the strongest sermon you will ever preach."

The Value of  
*Cooperation*

By Kristen Mitchell

Cooperation is required when relocating to a new home; speed, agility and engineering are a bonus. We were forced to move out of our family home after finding ourselves victims of the recent “housing crash”. Our ability to work together taught us that cooperation is a valuable commodity. Cooperation made our move to a new house, after 20 years in the same house, a dream!

For several months, our family had been anxiously hoping that this move would not happen. Waiting, wondering, and anticipating some possible help from the government, or some magical way we might not have to move. Then, one day the word came down, it was time. We were for sure going to have to move out of our home.

With amazing ease we found a new place that seemed like the absolutely perfect opportunity. The universe seems to provide when a need arises. We announced our move to a few friends, all of which were unable to provide any assistance, because of prior engagements; it would be just the four of us. I nearly panicked when I found out we had no help; this was a BIG job! My partner, Scott assured me that he and my son Adison could manage it. Scott is super strong and organized, and Adison has the energy of the infamous “energizer bunny”. We picked up a moving truck early in the morning, and away we went.

They started with bringing out some big stuff; Scott looked at the items with his computer brain, and began engineering the truck. Those two boys strategically organized that truck with grace, speed and precision. Every time Miranda or I brought out a new item, the truck seemed to get unloaded and reorganized, to fit that specific piece, by the time we got back with another. Up the stairs, down the stairs, over and over, those men moved like bionic robots.

When the truck was full to the brim, we started on the journey to unload the first humongous truck load of furniture to our new house. The same scene happened when we arrived. It was just like an episode from the 80’s TV show “The Six Million Dollar Man.” I’m trying to help,

my daughter Miranda was trying to help; and we soon realized it was better to hold the door, stay out of the way, and watch in amazement as those two navigated the staircase with items three times their size balanced over their heads like Styrofoam.

We have a thing we call the “kitchen dance” at our house. The four of us have amazing cooperation when working on a task. The

‘kitchen dance’ enables four people to move around the kitchen, doing dishes or preparing meals and no one gets bonked or cut in the process. That’s the way the move went, everything got moved in just a few truck loads, and the process went more smoothly than I could have ever imagined, our family, just the four of us, functioned better than any large group of people.

We found out that moving to our new house had more opportunities than we thought. A bad circumstance turned into a great experience. Learning to work together on a task is an important skill in life. When you master cooperation, life gets easier, relationships get stronger, and the world seems like a brighter place to inhabit.



The Value of  
*Equality*

By Kristen Mitchell

The ultimate expression of Equality can be found in the document called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document was written in 1948, and details the 30 human rights that were agreed upon by the United Nations as those basic rights and freedoms that every human being on this planet are entitled to, regardless of their differences. The Story of Human Rights introduction booklet says, "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

In my mind equality is not a question. It doesn't show-up in my head as an option. I see each person born to this planet as equal; each person is a mix of all of us. It remains a mystery to me how anyone can debate this. We are all together in this experience of life, yet some choose to treat other fellow human beings as less of a person. The question of race or ethnicity is often brought up when debating equality. In my view I do not see how anyone can see ethnicity as a reason to make anyone less human. Especially in our world today; not that in the past this should have been used as an excuse to deny any person rights, but today each of us is a mix of ethnicities, so much so, that most people have a difficult time answering the question: What ethnicity are you? We are all a mix of many different nationalities.

Regardless of the differences two people share there are always profoundly more similarities than differences. We all came out of a woman's belly and began to breathe; this alone should allow us equal human rights. These human rights should be endowed equally to each of us, regardless of our financial status, religious preference, sexual orientation, gender, or choices in life. Because we breathe we are granted these rights; the right to make choices that are right for us and no one else. Because we breathe we have the right to food, shelter and clean water. Because we breathe we have the right to believe in God as we choose, to love and be loved by a person of our choosing and to live where we feel happy.

Because we breathe we should be allowed to work, receive an education and participate in those recreational things that we enjoy.

These Human Rights are not odd or outrageous. Not one single person could read any of these 30 Human Rights set up by the United Nations and believe that they themselves are not entitled to these rights in their own lives.

Privilege—Color—Origin—Preference—or any other label that someone might dream up to attempt to deprive another person of equality becomes invalid when you think about if you believe this right is owed to you. If in your heart you believe it is your right; then it becomes the right of every person breathing on this planet. We are all equal, period!!

The Value of

# *Hope*

By Ulualo Vaitu'u Jr.

Uncle Webster defines “Hope” as: “To wish for something with expectation of its fulfillment, to have confidence; to trust”. Hope promotes the belief in a positive outcome related to events and circumstances in one’s life. It is the “Feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best” or the act of “Looking forward to with desire and reasonable confidence” of “Feeling that something desired may happen”.

As the whistle blew signifying the beginning of another football season, the ball soared across the stadium, where thousands have attended and anticipated this long awaited upcoming season. Millions are watching as Martin Jones who is a rookie running back is trying out for the National Football League. He is a promising running back with a lot of skills and ability. As a little kid Martin always had the dream to play on Sunday with the big boys. Throughout little league, high school and college no one gave him a chance. They all thought that he was just too little. Now he is in his first preseason game, he is anticipating his opportunity to play. As the 4th quarter begins, he has yet to enter the game. His hopes of playing were diminishing. As he paces back and forth, a cry was heard, “Jones you’re returning the punt.” Nervously, he jogged onto the field, praying to God that he doesn’t mess up this opportunity. Time seems to stand still, as he focuses on the ball. His teammates form a wall, blocking for him as he evades the would be tacklers. He scurries down the opposing sideline into the endzone as he scores a touchdown. He was having an exceptional game, because he had already scored a punt return, and now he scored on a kickoff return.

Martin was on top of the world. Surely he will get signed with a contract to make millions. Competing for a running back spot on the roster, meant everything to his family and also himself. As the game came down to the closing minutes, Martin was put in to run the clock out. Martin received the hand off from

the quarterback. As he stiff armed and juked his way past the opposing line of scrimmage, a defensive linebacker, came from behind and tackled him. There was a pile of players mounted on top of him. The referees cleared the scrum, and at the bottom of the pile was Martin, cringing with tears and clasping his hands around his ankle. A stretcher was issued to carry him off the field.

Despair sunk in. Martin had received news from the trainers that he had a high ankle sprain. This might not seem that bad, but to a rookie who is trying to make the team and could get cut, this is the worst thing that could happen. If you can't perform, you can't make the team. Martin sat in the trainer's room, crying with a towel over his head, talking to himself, "What am I going to do, and how am I going to support my wife and kids?" Gus, the Head Athletic trainer entered the room and said, "I like the fact that an injury slows you down." Martin, who at this time has abandoned all hope, angrily replies, "What you talking about?" Gus continues to explain, "I mean injury slows you down mentally, so you can think more clearly."

A minor injury and a few days off is a great time to get refocused and think about what you truly want. It's time to get your head right. What good is having a healthy body if your mind is not in the game? I have been around enough athletes to know that how you train the mind is actually more important than how you train the body. Everyone comes into this league with ability. Some have it more than others. But it's not the ability that separates those who make the team from those who don't. It is sustainability. Sustainability has as much to do with mental strength and mental preparation as it does physical health. It's how you handle all the pressure of being in a fishbowl where everyone is watching your move that matters. I can get your ankle ready to play and your athletic ability can carry you in the short run, but it is your mind that will determine how well you perform in the long run. As Sun Tzu said, "Every battle is won before it's ever fought." The lesson we need to learn is the importance of a positive attitude combined with hope.

Martin still afraid that he would be cut from the team, survived another week. He knew there were only four more pre-season games left. Gus projected that he would be ready by the last game. To Martin, that was an eternity; he was sure he would be cut. Gus suggested that Coach Ken who was the offensive line coach and an incredible motivational speaker come in to speak

with Martin. Coach Ken advised him, “Start your day off right! Instead of the world creating you, you create the world.” “What do you mean, coach?” replied Martin. Coach Ken explained, “What oxygen is to the lungs, such is hope to the meaning of life.” Genuine hope and desire turn into action. Everyone hopes to be great and to accomplish something meaningful. The best that you can do is keep that hope alive to want it more. The best of the best are willing to do what it takes to be great. The best don’t just hope for the desire of greatness – they act on it. They have a high capacity for work, they do things that others won’t do and they spend more time doing it. The best are never satisfied with where they are. The best have a willingness to be uncomfortable and embrace it as part of your growth process. Coach continued to say, “It is selfish not to be your best. To deny being your best is to deny the gift you were meant to give others. If you aren’t getting better, you are getting worse.”

As the upcoming weeks came and went, Martin continued to focus to improve himself each day, physically and mentally. The coaches saw the talent in Martin and didn’t cut him from the team. Martin spent a lot of time in Coach Ken’s office, learning about life skills. Coach Ken had honestly taught him, to be the best of the best; whether you are a salesperson, athlete, teacher, nurse, entrepreneur or musician.

There is a formula for success. There are things that the best do that others don’t and things that they do better than everyone else. There is a way that the best of the best approach their life and work and craft that differentiates themselves from others. And this formula is predictable, repeatable and simple to understand. But it is a process and it requires absolute hope, initiative, dedication, focus and loads of positive energy.

With hope, we can find joy in life. It is hope that helps us overcome afflictions. We should always have a firm hope. There is so much despair in the world surrounding us; at times hope leaves us at the mercy of our moods and events. Hope helps us to walk by faith, not by sight. Sometimes our natural sights shrink from the odds; despair suffocates us, as to bind our mind, blind our vision and lock our hearts. Every time hope is fulfilled, it builds trust, confidence and leads to greater hope. Remember, “In all things, it is better to hope than to despair” and “Hope never abandons you; you abandon it”.

The Value of  
*Unity*  
By Garhett Colton



“Unity in Diversity”, found on *YouTube*, is a short film that portrays different cultures in different places around the world. In each place and with each culture the same practices and images are shown – early morning rituals, religious ceremonies and buildings, singing and dancing celebrations, and landscapes and artwork. . The film shows that, despite our differences of where we live, what we look like, and how we worship or celebrate, each culture and type

of people around the world share similarities that create unity among the human race.

The unity comes from seeing the differences, but recognizing the similarities in each of our cultures and practices. This short clip uses all three concepts of rhetorical analysis to prove its point. Ethos, logos, and pathos are used to convince the audience of the profound message in this film of unity in diversity. The creator of the film uses a few distinct methods to make his piece credible (ethos) to the audience. One method is using a variety of different cultures in the film. This increases the sample size and helps convince the viewer that there are truly similarities between cultures because they can see it from multiple groups rather than just a comparison of two or three. Another method that gives credibility to the piece is using live footage of the people, places, practices, and structures that are portrayed. The creator could have made a slide show of pictures that showed the same similarities between different cultures. Instead he chose to travel to each of the places to get a personal and live view to prove that though diverse, we are unified. Another example is by the way the film is organized. The creator uses repetition to drive his point. Each practice, event, or image is shown in every culture, then a different practice, event, or image is shown, again in every culture. This process is repeated each time a new subject is introduced and is a technique that shows the same concept can be represented in many different ways.

The second concept the filmmaker uses is Logos, which is the facts that help support the argument. This film is filled with small examples to convince the audience of unity around the world. The filmmaker shows images of several structures around the world including the Taj Mahal in India, the “Christ the Redeemer” statue in Brazil, a Gong on a Chinese watchtower, and The Wailing Wall in Israel. Each of these structures is very different but has a common theme; they hold a significant meaning to the people they belong to and who created them. Each culture creates in

different ways, but they all create. Cultures around the world are seen worshiping, singing, and dancing; each culture in a different form, but performing the same act. The most significant example of Logos is shown in the beginning of the film with a sunrise. This image is a very subtle but powerful point that shows unity around the world despite differences. The sun rises and sets in every part of the world and for every single individual no matter where or who they are.

The last concept the author uses is Pathos, or the use of emotional and motivational appeals through sensory details. The film in its entirety accomplishes this concept. The filmmaker uses only images and music to portray his message, there is no dialogue. Hearing music, and viewing images and practices from cultures all around the world appeals to emotions by causing feelings of peace and love in the viewer. Tapping into the emotions of the viewer is the most effective way the filmmaker could convince the audience that there is unity in diversity.

By using ethos, logos, and pathos the creator of this film convinces all who watch the video that there can be unity in diversity. Cultural groups all around the world are practicing, building, creating, worshiping, dancing, and singing, in their own unique ways. No one group is the same, but we all do the same things. That is where unity is found.

The Value of

# *Love*

By Ulualo Vaitu'u Jr

As gunfire fills the night, and sirens are constantly screaming, there is a distinctive sound one automatically recognizes, and that is the sweet voice of your mother yelling out for you among all that chaos and havoc. Welcome to the city of Compton, California, the concrete jungle in which I was raised.

We were brought up in a family-oriented environment, with deep religious roots. Mother was a ruthless devout Mormon, of the Latter-day Saint faith. She had committed to herself that she would send all of her three sons on a mission. Mother had taught us the Polynesian discipline and way of life, which consisted of one thing: fear. Our fears for her outweighed our fear for God. Needless to say, we all grew up wanting to be a missionary at a young age.

Finally we grew to be teenagers, where we knew it all. My older brother had moved to New Zealand, supposedly to continue his schooling. My little brother had just entered high school, and I had just graduated from Compton High School, home of the Tarbabes, our mascot.

By this time, the streets had got a hold of me. I enjoyed the constant companionship of hoodlums and thugs, as my mother would call them, over my immediate family. I had been adopted into a new family and a thug life. I no longer desired to serve a mission. My police records overtook my church accomplishments. My mom decided that this was the last straw and with haste, made a drastic decision to send me to stay with my aunt in New Zealand, hoping that a different environment would change me.

It was Saturday afternoon; we were having a community homeboy barbeque, with all the ghetto extras. There were loud music, cars, drinking, ladies, and of course, the fellas. Mother had booked my flight back to New Zealand on the upcoming Monday, so it was party time. Louie, who is our neighborhood bully, was present, and he happened to have had a little too much to drink

and decided to bully us baby gangsters. Our feelings towards each other were mutual. We hated his guts. He was jealous that our claim to fame had been raised above his, and that his fellow peers, the original gangsters, were accepting our fame as gang worthy.

As the party continued, one thing led to another and we got into a confrontation with Louie. Some words were exchanged, and the homies broke it up. As I walked away, I broke one of the laws on the streets, and that was to never turn your back on your enemy. Louie had picked up a brick from the cracked concrete and came at me from behind. One of the boys yelled, "Watch out," at which point I turned and he stabbed me on the crown of my forehead, rendering me unconscious, left for dead.

At the hospital, doctors notified my mother that they didn't know if I would make it or not, and that if I did recover, there would be is a high possibility of brain damage. This is where my mother's religious beliefs came into play. She had asked my father to give me a religious blessing, and miraculously I had a full recovery. The doctors couldn't explain the fast recovery from surgery. I was hospitalized for over a year.

Six months after my last surgery, I had returned home from playing basketball. I had received a letter from Salt Lake City, Utah, from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Hesitantly I opened the envelope with confused emotions, thinking to myself, why would they be writing me? Well, (I would take out well) after reading the headings, the letter continued to say, "You have been called to labor in the Kentucky Louisville Mission." My reading stopped there, and anxiety overcame me.

I automatically went to seek for answers from mother. When I told her that I had received a letter from the church, she screamed with joy, as though she had won the lottery. She had been waiting and praying for this letter. Evidently, while I was hospitalized, mother had the doctor do a physical on me, and she signed my mission papers and sent them to Utah. After all the ceremonies of a missionary and after all was said and done, it was truly the greatest experience of my life, the best two years, which changed me. I can go on and on about my conversion and the many experiences I had, but we'll leave at that.

Well, you recall (Remember) my brother in New Zealand? Mother had told him to come back home, because I had received a mission call. He was really surprised I was even going, and wondered how did that happen(ed)? Well, what added more to his surprise, was

when he got here, he had received a letter from Salt Lake City, Utah from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, stating he had been called to labor in the Lansing, Michigan Mission. Needless to say, George Strait said it best, “Mommamas don’t just love their children every now and then, it’s a love without end, amen.”



The Value of  
*Forgiveness*

By Jared Gaetz

The ability to forgive doesn't come easy for most people. It certainly doesn't come easy for me. I am one of the most stubborn human beings on the planet. Despite having stubbornness as one of my shortcomings, I feel I have learned how to let go of hard feelings against someone who has been unfair and unkind and instead, try to unconditionally forgive them.

Forgiveness is an interesting virtue because very often the offending person either is clueless that they have been the cause of negative feelings, or they just plain lack the sensitivity to care that they have been the cause of someone's frustration or sadness. I have found in my life that the people who have caused me the most grief have been people who fit into the category of lacking sensitivity. It seems that the ones who have offended me the most are the ones who care the least. Although I will probably never hear them say, "I'm sorry," a heavy burden has been lifted off my shoulders by not allowing the wrongs that another person has inflicted on my life to define me as a person. I choose to take the negative experiences of my life and use them for positive energy.

My first major experience with forgiveness was when I was a young boy. Some little girls at my elementary school gave me what appeared to be a love letter, but instead it turned out to be hate mail. I was devastated, and my mom was furious. A few days after receiving the letter, one of the girls called to apologize; personally, I think she was just trying to keep herself out of trouble. Despite my desire to hate these girls, and get them in a lot of trouble, I

forgave them. My mother was extremely proud of me, and I consider a few of those girls some of my good friends today.

My second experience with forgiveness occurred over my entire young life. Growing up, I never really had much of a father. He never made any connections or close ties with any of my siblings or myself. Our relationship has been two strangers sharing a space. He has never supported my family emotionally, physically, spiritually, lovingly, or financially. He has been a drain in our lives and hasn't contributed to our family's well being or cherished memories. Despite my lack of respect for my father, I don't hate him.

That hasn't always been the case though. There was a long period in my life where I was full of resentment, anger, and hostility toward my father, and I never thought I would be able to forgive him, and move on with my life. My mother always knew that the responsibility of raising my two sisters and I would lie solely on her, so she took every opportunity she could to instill values and character in us. When my father used to make me angry or upset, my mother would use these moments as teaching opportunities. She would say to me, "Jared, remember the way you feel right now! Make the decision right now that you will be a loving and supportive husband and father!" I heard this countless times, throughout the years, but I will forever be grateful for it. I learned from my mother that it is wrong to hate my father but it isn't wrong to hate some of his attributes. She taught me how to forgive him and helped give me the motivation to become a loving and supportive husband and hopefully someday, father as well.

Since being married, like any newlywed couple, my wife and I will have an occasional disagreement. Sometimes the argument will get heated and I will want to say some hurtful things, but I pause and think instead. I think to myself, what will holding a grudge and being mean accomplish? The answer is nothing! I then decide that I am going to forgive, forget, and move on. I have used this tactic my whole marriage and I can honestly say I never regret it.

In my opinion, forgiveness is as powerful as love. Sooner or later, we will need to forgive the ones we love. We all experience trials in our lives and those trials can be

our friends if we learn how to turn our negative experiences into positive energy. And who knows what good will come out of my forgiveness for someone who has offended me... Maybe someday if I do or say something that hurts or offends them, they will extend the same act of unconditional forgiveness to me that I once extended to them.

