

The empty cup, a Valentine's Day story

Written by By Greg McNeil For the Sun
Friday, 16 February 2018 09:33



They heard the voice say, *"It's hard to fill a cup that's already full."*

The couple could no longer hear each other. Their relationship had become one responsibility after another. A mortgage must be paid, there were meetings to attend, children must be looked after and aging parents cared for.

When was the last time they really looked at each other? He notices that she no longer has the figure she used to and the temperature of their home is now slightly above freezing inside. Do they really make love anymore, or should they call it something else like duty or obligation?

She is sad, frustrated and depressed. She has carried these feelings for so long it feels like she's given birth to a child she never conceived. She puts her makeup on without ever seeing what she looks like in the mirror. How can he not know how she feels or the things she has given up to bind her life to his? *That bastard!*

Without realizing it they begin yelling and screaming at one another. The names they used, the intense criticism and the threats. Sometimes it was worse...

They loved each other once, or at least they thought they did. Now their relationship feels like two mules pulling a plow, both with blinders continuously plowing the fields of duty and responsibility with love somewhere in the distance.

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The children...oh, let's not forget about the children - selfish, entitled and disrespectful. It's hard to believe that couplehood and family life can be reduced to this. No one was happy and their hearts ached but they lacked the ability to change the course they unknowingly chose for themselves. Family and couples therapy was an option floating in their heads but someone had to admit wrong-doing or neglect, right? Who would that be? With so much frustration mounting neither one could bear the thought that they had made mistakes or neglected the other. It was too much to take on so the idea of therapy of any type would just have to wait. Besides, all couples deal with stuff like this, it's called marriage.

With the holiday season upon them they could muster up enough energy to travel and see relatives, get through the holidays without revealing to the unsuspecting the turbulence that has become their relationship. So they set off on a crisp winter day with light snow fall, but rapidly dropping temperatures. The husband and wife were silent while the sound of children's iPhones played in the background. It was hard to make small talk for fear of starting an argument. *We have to get through the holidays*

. Looking out the window, down the road and counting the hours until family distraction would provide relief.

Then it happened. Before they knew it their SUV had hit a patch of black ice and the vehicle skidded out of control and began to roll over, off the highway and down the gorge. The couple was in shock, the children were crying but miraculously no one was hurt, barely even a scratch on any of them.

As they sat frozen from the experience, one by one they began to realize their lives had been spared. They collectively recognized there was nothing more important than this. The couple looked at each other and started to cry.

Through their tears everyone in that horribly wrecked vehicle heard the voice say, *"It's hard to fill a cup that's already full."*

The couple looked at each other in amazement, wondering if they both heard the voice or if they were imagining this due to shock. Then they heard it again

. *"It's hard to fill a cup that's already full."*

This time the children spoke.

"Mom, dad we heard the voice too."

They were still in shock from the rollover accident but the voice they all heard frightened them

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more. *"Your lives have been a construction of your own making. You set it up based on things that were never required of you and in so doing you have continued to fill your life with things that have choked the love from your relationship, your family and now your lives."*

The husband was broken and began to sob uncontrollably. Before he knew it he answered the voice out loud. *What can I do*, he asked. *"Remember what is important to you both. You did not start your relationship with thoughts of meetings, bills and obligations that have nothing to do with the formation of your relationship. Your cup was empty so you could always hear the dreams and the love of each other. Now your children have become a reflection of your distractions. You will always work and you will always have obligations to fulfill, but you will not always have love."*

When the voice stopped they suddenly realized that rescue personnel were banging on the window attempting to get their attention.

The family knew what they had to do. They had just received the gift of a lifetime.

Happy Valentine's Day.

Coach G

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