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A Loud Protest

Have you ever heard the old saying, “Me thinks thou doth protest too loudly”?

It's from Hamlet...

I guess it kinda means this: If you protest too loudly about an issue, it indicates that there is something unseen inside you that you are covering up or perhaps haven't been truthful about.

I mused on that thought this morning. Last night I was having a discussion with my husband, Eddie, about a situation that is driving me nuts! The details of the situation are mundane, at best. Just not a big deal. Who cares anyway? But I knew that the reaction within me was saying, “There is a big deal within you. There is a reason this bothers you so much.” So I asked Eddie to give his opinion. He had told me this weekend that I was psychobabbling him so I used his terminology and said, “I give you permission to psychobabble me.” Well, perhaps I didn't totally agree with his assessment but it was a profitable dialogue.

I would love to share the details of the situation so that you could be amused at how insignificant it seems, but the details would identify the guilty – I can't even tell the story and change the names to protect the innocent as the old television show *Dragnet's* opening narration would say: “Ladies and gentlemen: the story you are about to hear is true. Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent.”

So, let it suffice to say I was really frustrated over something which looked very simple on the surface. Yet, as I “analyzed” the situation, I could quickly see that there were some major roots inside me that this simple situation was exposing – again. I'd been around this mountain before.

Could something as simple as mashed potatoes versus sweet potato casserole really be that important?

My loud inner protest said that this had landed on a tender spot in my heart. A place which spoke of some of the reasons I hate to be compared to someone else. This tender place said, “I am an important person. I have my own likes and dislikes. And if I want to have sweet potato casserole, you just better believe that I will!

It wasn't a matter of selfishness, really it wasn't. It was just a step in my becoming a whole person.

Maggie, played by Julia Roberts in *Runaway Bride*, found herself on a journey to become a “whole” person. Maggie kept running away on her wedding day from the man she was engaged to marry. Each time (4 or 5) she found she just couldn't do it. Maggie winds up in a relationship with Ike (Richard Gere) who has had his own style of running away. Having fallen in love with Maggie, Ike decides it is time for him to quit running.

His relationship with Maggie challenges her.

Eventually in the movie, Maggie ran away from the altar as Ike stood there as many others had before. Ike, who really was the love of her life. The scene of him chasing her wrenches my heart every time.

Maggie then spends six months “finding herself”. Accepting her own gifts. Wrestling with her own individuality. On one occasion, Maggie tasted all kinds of cooked eggs in an experiment to find out which one she really liked – boiled, poached, fried, scrambled, – and came to her own conclusion of what she liked. She realized that she had not really expressed her own individuality – she simply morphed into whatever kind of woman the man she was dating wanted. Although Maggie was attractive and spirited, she was not really comfortable in her own skin. If the man she was dating like fried eggs, she liked fried eggs. If he liked scrambled eggs, she liked scrambled eggs. And may I surmise that perhaps that is why she ran away from the altar of marriage every time she got there? Something within her heart was saying, “I am afraid that if I marry this guy, there will never be a real me.” The final commitment of her heart was terrifying to her because she had never really embraced it herself – how could she commit to giving it away? Her heart was only safe as it hid it behind her self-made facades.

Afterwards, she turned in her running shoes as a declaration that she would no longer run from who she was. She was able to enter in relationship with Ike as a more whole person and not just a reflection of someone else.

Something within Maggie was longing to become comfortable with herself. What a challenge that is for all of us and what a challenge that is for me! We all yearn to be accepted for who we really are, and yet we spend enormous amounts of energy trying to become (or appear to be) who everyone else wants us to be. Then we become frustrated, and we always will be if we choose to live that way.

Strange thing is that we try so desperately to “be” the person everyone else wants us to be, that the image becomes like sand slipping through our fingers. It is a goal which is never attainable. It is always changing. For if we live to please others, they will continually change the dance number on us. One day, they wish we were a square dancer, the next day it is hip hop, then it is the waltz that we should dance. Living to please others is like a self-induced form of torture. Most people are still trying to figure out what kind of eggs they like themselves and are surely not qualified to tell you what kind you like!

So, I today I wrestled through my frustration and anger, knowing that somehow my “loud” protest indicated a place I needed to look at – a place to go spend some time – a place to invite Jesus into.

This place of my resistance has the potential to become a place of my growth. As my inner self was screaming, “Stop! You are running over me!”, I had a growing understanding that it is because I am still eating poached when I really like fried (with grits and tomatoes – you’d have to be Southern to appreciate that – but you should try it!)

So, pass the mashed instant potatoes around the table. Take out as many as you like. Eat to your heart’s content. But I will refuse to eat them. Thanks, but no thanks. There is something better for me. Sweet potato casserole with all the rich butter and brown sugar and pecans. I’ll make my own and savor every bite. And I won’t lie and say I like the instant mashed potatoes because they are easy. I don’t care anymore if it is easy. I’ve had easy living with instant mashed potatoes for a long time, and I’ve always hated instant mashed potatoes. At other times I’ve had life with sweet potato casserole when I had to cook the potatoes, mash them, chop the pecans, mix it all up, bake it and wait for the results. The work was worth the results, and so it is in life. We can choose the easy way out, eating our poached eggs and instant mashed potatoes even if we hate them. Or we can take the time and effort and to become what God saw as He knit us together in our mother’s womb - an original work – not a reprint. We can know that the original is worth so much more than the reprint. It is the work of art that was in the room where the artist actually was present, touching the canvas. It is the real thing.

The world cries for someone, anyone, to see the real person inside them and give value and acceptance to that person. They are begging for the “church” to allow them to come in and be an original work of God’s glory – completely unlike anyone else. God validates this by insuring that each of us has our own DNA – it cannot be duplicated. God is the One who designed snowflakes so that there are never two just alike. God is the One who intended for every thumbprint to be unique. God loves originals because He is the ultimate Original. Being created in His image means that we, too, are designed to have our own original distinctness. Could we please throw away that blasted box of instant potatoes and commit to creating something that will require a lot of work but will result in a beautiful, tasteful masterpiece?

So if your “inner person” is screaming and saying that there is a violation of who God has made you to be, take the invitation to go deeper and ask Jesus into that place. One day, God will be able to unveil you and say, “Here is a masterpiece.” And everyone’s breath will be taken away and those who are comfortable in their own skin will be able to enjoy the beautiful work God has done in you. And the rest of the world can keep calling out another dance number and trying to find the one that seems right...

But for this moment, I want to close my eyes and listen. Listen so that I can hear the beauty of the music I was created to dance to. I want to smell the sweet potato casserole in the oven. I want to visualize the beautiful masterpiece that is being created.

And if it takes forever, well, that is how long I have.

You can also find this article published on [A Loud Protest](#), and on the tag pages [Dragnet](#), [finding oneself](#), [Hamlet](#), [identity](#), [Runaway Bride](#), [wholeness](#).