

The Kurpe and Sickle and the Silver Cup



THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES WE HAVE RELATIONSHIPS AND EXPERIENCES WHICH GET TARNISHED BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT TAKEN PROPER CARE OF THEM.

'Use What You Have at Hand'

On my meditation garden wall there hangs a set of garden tools from ancient India. This set was used by village women in India as they cultivated their small fields and gardens. I remember as a small child, watching them work with the kurpe, or spade, as they dug and planted their crops. I would sit hunkered down on my haunches just like them but could never quite get the same results. Then when they used their handheld sickle to harvest the crop, they were so quick and skilled, yet I wondered how they managed to avoid cutting themselves.

These tools are not pretty; they are timeworn and crude. They do not remind me of happy carefree times, but of hard times. Of times when women worked in the hot sun to scrape out of the earth the food they fed their families. Their saris were often ragged but they were always colorful. Their work was hard but they learned to use these tools with skill and did what they needed to do.

These tools remind me of what my mother called "make do" or "use what you have on hand." I wonder how many opportunities we have missed because we thought we had to have better tools, not realizing that if we used what we had on hand we could do the work we needed to do until the better tools came along. This does not mean we settle for less. It means that when we use what we have on hand to the best of our ability, we do not need to be stuck. We can still be colorful and productive while

me that she felt she needed to tell me that the company from which I had purchased the cup should be notified that their product was defective. When I asked why, she said it had turned black so she had thrown it away.

The problem was that she did not understand or appreciate the beauty and the process of aging of silver. Nor did she understand the care required to keep silver shiny. I wonder how many times in our lives we have thrown away precious gifts because we had never known how to care for them. How easy it would have been for my friend to just polish the cup if she had only asked someone about the care of silver.

Throughout our lives we have relationships and experiences which get tarnished because we have not taken proper care of them. Usually it is because we do not know any better and we don't ask for help. Often the solution is very simple like the polish, but sometimes it requires deep cleaning. In any case, the gift we discover can be an heirloom.

If we look constantly for what's wrong with each other, we miss the evolving beauty which comes with age.

The Cayce reading, "Magnify the virtues, minimize the faults," helps us to understand that the things of value in our lives and the lives of others are what last. They will age and take on character but become more precious and more valuable. The "faults" become less important.

If we look for beauty in our lives, then even the old dark places bring into focus the bright places and add to the overall

