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Monthly Features

Coach's Corner: worth eight cows?

By: Sharon Pahlka, Journal Newspapers02/05/2008

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What if you viewed your loved one, mate or caregiver as a priceless gift? It could change both of your lives for the better.

I read a fun story of the power of treating someone as a priceless treasure in the story called *Johnny Lingo's Eight-Cow Wife*, written by Patricia McGerr. A young islander named Johnny Lingo paid the unheard-of price of eight cows for a wife. Most wives cost two or three cows; four or five buys a highly satisfactory wife. This was most unusual because Sarita was unattractive, plain, skinny, and very shy.

When the teller of the story met Johnny and Sarita, she was amazed, for Sarita had become a truly beautiful woman. Because Johnny Lingo had considered Sarita to be worth eight cows, she began to feel and present herself as an eight-cow woman. Before Johnny entered her life, Sarita was a plain island girl. After he placed incredible value upon her, she was transformed into a confident, attractive woman with a lift to her shoulders, a tilt to her chin and a sparkle in her eyes that no one could take away.

How many cows do your loved ones feel they are worth? The answer will give us an idea of how much we honor them.

I talked to a friend recently who was very discouraged with his beloved wife's many problems. I didn't know the whole situation, but I wondered: If his wife could leave her own difficulties long enough to focus on honoring her husband, if she focused on acknowledging, recognizing, and appreciating the many things he did for her, would he feel less discouraged and would his load feel lighter? How would it change her life?

How do you feel when someone values, esteems, and honors you - treats you as a priceless gift? We can give this gift whether or not others like it, want it, or deserve it. Why is it so important to look at our loved ones as special treasures? When we do not see our loved ones as priceless treasures, we tend to focus on their negative aspects. On the other hand, if we see them as treasures, then we will focus more on their positive aspects, building the intimacy and closeness we both want. And perhaps, like Sarita, it will strengthen them, so they feel like they are worth eight cows.

Coaching Question: Who do you want to learn to treasure?

Coaching Tip: Pledge to honor your caregiver, mate and loved ones through your words, actions and deeds.

Homework: List all the things you admire about your eight-cow person. Post it where they can see it every day. To increase the list, consider their personality, appearance, thinking patterns, shared values, parenting skills, concerns, opinions and life goals. What's their best joke or story? When do you most enjoy being with them?

Quotes: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" -Matthew 6:21

Sharon Pahlka is a life coach and speaker. In her coaching, she helps her clients live well and meaningfully, especially those with chronic health challenges. Sharon's column, Coach's Corner, offers helpful tips from her work.

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