

# Reflections

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## Understanding Love

We all have the desire and the need to be understood. And we all have to make an effort to understand the persons around us, to put ourselves in their place, in their thinking and feeling, of grasping the motive for their attitudes and reactions.

Understanding love makes us see – in the first place – the positive in our brother and not so much so the negative. Because if not, he will feel – and with good reason – oppressed, crushed, caricatured.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to find persons disposed to discovering and accepting the values of others. It is common to observe how a great number of men feel envious when the values of others are extolled. They have the tendency to make comparisons and feel inferior.

### **And how should that understanding be?**

a) In the first place, it is a **kind and benevolent understanding**. It means not to judge or criticize at first glance, but rather to try to understand the other person. It also means to forgive, if necessary.

To understand someone means to forgive. And it means to be patient, to understand the organic development of the other person.

The love for one's neighbor here has a heart filled with kindness, eyes filled with kindness, lips filled with kindness, hands filled with kindness.

b) In the second place, it is an **extolling understanding**.

Father Kentenich, founder of the Apostolic Schoenstatt Movement, would often say that each one of us has the right to have 20 oddities or abnormalities.

### **What then does an extolling understanding mean?**

When I, in spite of all those oddities, believe in the good of the other person.

When I see the light through the confusion and darkness of the other person. When in spite of the failings, I believe in the nobility and mission of each one of my own.

The tendency to remain in the negative, to discover and highlight the bad in the other person, comes to us from original sin and we must overcome it. When one is able to overcome that frustrating point, one will remain admiring how much good and beauty there is in each brother and sister. Through this struggle, one not only learns to accept oneself, but learns also to accept others as they are.

Exultant or extolling understanding, the way to see others, has to become concrete afterward in the way one treats each other. But the basis is "*an unbreakable confidence in the good of the other,*" even when the good is hidden under a lot of scum.

### **c) Finally, the understanding must be respectful.**

In true love, two intrinsic movements exist: one of nearness and union, and another of recoiling and reserve. The latter is respect before the other or holding back and being marveled before the greatness of the other. Love contains in itself not only a giving of oneself, but also a reserving of oneself. And that reserve, that respect is even more important than the giving of oneself. And the same with the children, in the education: respect with each destiny, with each originality, with each life... because in the most profound, it is respect before God and his presence in my own.

### **Questions for discussion**

1. Is it easy for me to see the good in others?
2. Am I aware of my own defects?
3. How many oddities do I have, 15, 20... or more?

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