



FAITH: A *FRESH TAKE*



February 9, 2017

Resisting the Urge to 'Fix It'

It's natural in my being, and every parent's being, to want to make life easier for our children. When they were little, they would come running to us with a scrape or a "boo boo" that only a kiss could heal. As they grew into pre-teens, we wiped their tears when a friend or crush stepped all over their feelings.



However, as my teenagers develop into adults, I'm finding it harder and harder to soothe their woes. I pray for my son to make strong choices, model and strive to be a man of compassion and think of others in a society and generation that is so focused on personal gain.

I pray for my daughter to rise above challenges she is facing in college and keep her dreams in focus even when life seems overwhelming and scary.

The reality is that I can't fix everything when it comes to my children. I can offer a helping hand by making my son's lunch, sending my daughter care packages of shampoo and deodorant or tackling mounds of laundry when they are consumed with homework.

However, when a boy breaks my daughter's heart or a tough day at football practice sends my son into a spiral of defeat, I can't go mend her heart or ease his physical and emotional pain.

I learned this firsthand this week when I received a panicked call from

my daughter at college who was experiencing some challenges that were affecting her physically and emotionally. My first instinct was to just "fix it" right away. I even jumped in the car at 2 a.m. and made the two-hour trip to her college, praying the entire way there.

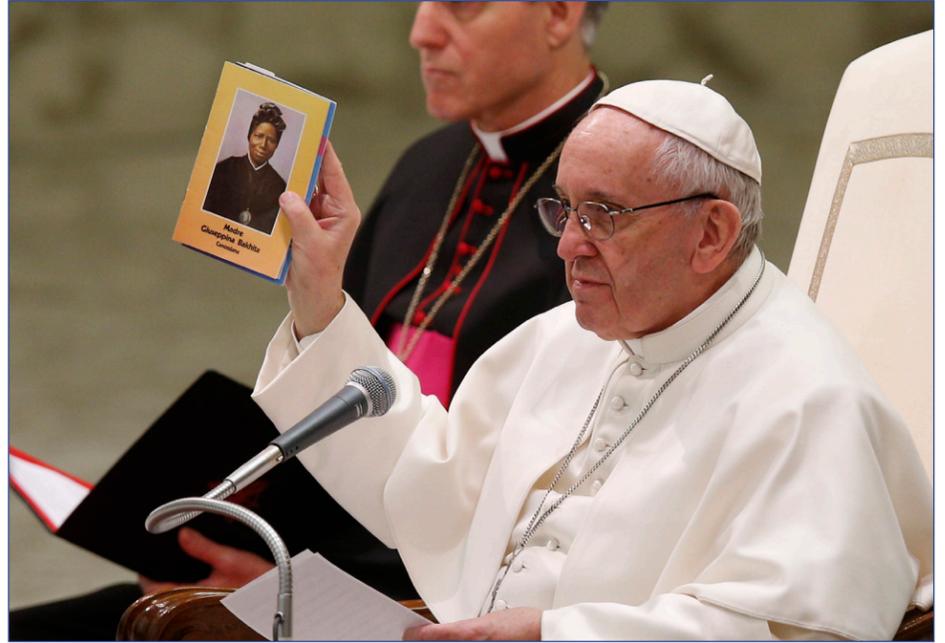
Although physically and mentally she is just fine, this impromptu trip showed me that I can no longer kiss those "boo boos" or wipe the tears expecting the world to turn into a place of peace for my children immediately.

What I can do, though, is just be there. After spending the entire day at her school, I realized that I didn't do anything concrete to fix her challenges. We talked; I offered some advice and she took action to find solutions. As a budding adult, she didn't need mom to make things better — she just found peace in knowing mom would just always be there.

As hard as it was to leave that day knowing that she would face more challenges in the next few days, months and years, it was comforting to know that my kids have the tools, support and resources they need to navigate their lives. They still need me, but more than anything, they need to know that I believe in them, trust them and will always pray for them.

— Shannon Philpott

Shannon Philpott is a freelance writer and college journalism instructor, but most of all a mother of two teens. You can see her work at www.shannonphilpott.com.



CNS/PAUL HARING

Pope Francis holds a booklet with an image of Sudanese St. Josephine Bakhita during his general audience Feb. 8 in Paul VI hall at the Vatican. Marking the feast of St. Bakhita, a former slave, the pope urged Christians to help victims of trafficking and migrants.

Accepting the Costs of Professional and Personal Responsibility

Everyone has dreams about what life has in store, personally and professionally.

It's one of the few experiences we all share. As young children, many of us dreamed of becoming police officers or firefighters. As we grew older, those dreams grew grander. Some continued to imagine a life of service. Others imagined a life of riches



or personal satisfaction.

Many paths of success exist for every dream. However, very few paths are truly self-sufficient. Most rely on the support and approval of other people.

When we start out, that means pleasing a boss. As we gain experience, we often become a boss, but there is always someone above us who needs to be pleased. In this situation, finding the balance between doing what's right personally and professionally is a lifelong battle.

The only true professional freedom is self-employment, but that increased freedom, like all freedom, comes with increased responsibility. If you can't work or people don't like the service you provide, you don't earn a living. Without income, you can't afford basics like food and shelter.

But, if you are successful, you are also responsible for any you employ. Stumbles that affect your livelihood affect them as well. If you falter, they also can't afford basics like food and shelter.

This responsibility for others is one of the largest that exists. That's why so few choose to professionally take it on. How few? Employment statistics in the United States show fewer than one in 10 people are self-employed.

That's why I was interested to read a recent blog post where top photographers, typically self-employed, shared the best professional advice they've ever received. I felt their insight was applicable to all lives and all professions.

The most universal truth shared was simple: "If I don't go out and get what I want, it likely won't be handed to me." That's not a sentiment specific to someone self-employed. It's a universal truth that can apply to all.

Every comment didn't have as obvious a connection, but upon reflection, I always found a link. For example, "Make it personal. That is my ultimate goal in my business, no matter what the job is."

Whether at my first job making fries and burgers in a mall food court or in my current position, I see the value in that statement. We all want to have a connection with the people we meet. If we don't feel it, something is wrong.

That's why the most important aspect of every connection is its quality. "Don't attempt to do everything just because you need the money," one photographer said. To put it another way, some jobs just aren't worth it.

I remember a summer job I almost took while in college. I would have earned money selling knives door to door. The more I learned about the responsibilities of the job, the more I questioned the integrity of the person who would be my boss and the honesty of the company that would employ both of us.

I didn't feel a connection and walked out the door. I returned home and learned of another job opportunity. The connection was there and I worked for that company until after my college graduation.

In the end, our dreams of professional freedom are no different from our dreams for personal freedom, and when it comes to personal freedom, we're all self-employed. We must feel comfortable with our actions and with the people around us.

One way to gain that comfort is to be open with those we know. It's our obligation to share our insights in an attempt to make their path a little easier to navigate. After all, we all rely on the support and approval of others.

— Erick Rommel

(This column is part of the CNS columns package.)



CNS/LAURA VALLEJO, Intermountain Catholic

Participants in Utah's March for Refugees are seen in Salt Lake City Feb. 4. The march began at the Wallace Bennett Federal Building with a chain of children, representing diverse cultures and upbringings, holding hands.

Fresh Take: a way to look at faith from a different perspective

This is an online-only page dedicated to young adult Catholics, their interests, their needs, their challenges and their faith.

We want to give young adults something to "chew on," to think about when they're looking for something more than an on-line horoscope or the

latest star news.

This page offers columns we believe will interest our young adults. Let us know.

Email us at cathnews@bellevillemessenger.org with questions, suggestions or for more information.

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