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Sore

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Sore

"I am really sore" can carry at least two meanings in common informal use: a condition of pain or a state of anger. The two are closely connected in experience. When we are hurt, especially when the injury is surprising and unexpected, many of us respond first with anger, and only later with recognition of the pain.

If we injure ourselves through some accident such as stubbing a toe, or bumping into a hard surface, we might become angry with ourselves, as if we had been at fault. Once we decide to set blaming aside and pay attention to the pain, we can move forward with healing. The more energy we put into anger, the slower the healing process. In order to be healed, we have to first acknowledge how badly we are hurt, and then take the means to get through it.

When we suffer an injustice, our anger is directed at the cause, with the likelihood that we will focus our attention on whoever has caused us injury. However understandable our first response of anger might be, healing cannot take place until we give proper consideration to where we hurt, and how badly. Then we can begin the process of healing, even if we find ourselves moving back and forth between anger and acceptance for a time.

Anger is a feeling, and can seem satisfying as an alternative to pain, but rather than making the hurt go away it only covers it for a time, and allows the pain to metastasize like cancer, growing and becoming diffused through both body and spirit. The result is that healing and recovery require greater conscious and lengthy efforts to bring to light the pain that was hidden away while we were occupied with angrily going over in our minds the grievous injustice that we had suffered.

When we have been deeply offended or distressed at the behavior of others, we suffer in our bodies as well as in our minds and hearts. Some of the thoughts that run through our minds range from anger and hurt to indignation and disappointment in a confused jumble that evoke tightness of our heads, stomachs or muscles. The expression "sick at heart" might describe our experience.

Healing of minor physical cuts and bruises takes place naturally, if we keep the injured areas free from infection. But healing for hurts of the soul, that are often also carried in our bodies, requires appropriate spiritual medicine, and physical remedies as well. Some of us initiate the process of healing by first dealing with our physical symptoms, such as doing some deep breathing, consciously relaxing tense muscles, going for a walk, deliberately

visiting or calling to mind a place or scene that is beautiful and peaceful, or perhaps we listen to some favorite music. Others of us begin with prayer, opening to God all our thoughts and feelings, without censoring any of them. However we proceed, if our decision is to seek healing, we will progress in that direction until we once again regain our balance. We might have some ongoing bouts of grief and sorrow at what has happened, since our life and that of others has changed irrevocably due to the painful experience. But if we take seriously our responsibility for ourselves and others, we will keep returning as often as necessary to whatever promotes healing, which means continually turning away from anger, no matter how just or attractive it might seem.

“God’s saving justice is never served by human anger” (James 1:19), which might be understood as “I am still sore – hurting – but I choose not to remain sore at anyone.”