

Counselor's Corner: *I Don't Often Recommend Books, But...* by Leta Herrington, LPC, Westminster Counseling Center

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I don't often recommend books, but there is one I recommend often. In it, the author identifies at least two ways that we tend to bring significant harm to ourselves, and most of us do it unknowingly.

The first way has to do with all the times when others don't behave in the ways we think they should/the ways we'd like them to/the ways we would. In his book, Dr. Fred Luskin suggests that we are often actually bringing frustration on ourselves by trying to control something we have no control over or as he would put it "to enforce unenforceable rules". Luskin defines a "rule" as any expectation we have for how something should turn out or how we think someone should think or behave. An "unenforceable rule" is an expectation we have that we do not have the power to make happen. And when we try to enforce one of our unenforceable rules, when we find we cannot enforce it, we generally are left feeling angry, bitter, despondent, and helpless.

Luskin suggests that a second way that many of us often bring distress to ourselves is in the way that we choose to interpret things. In his book Luskin slows down the process of what actually happens when we receive and then respond or react to a message. He goes on to describe ways we can take charge of the communication process if we don't want to forever find ourselves victim to others' words, actions, and inactions and left hurting, angry or frustrated. An example:

A friend who doesn't return a call can be interpreted

to mean that this person doesn't really like you and she doesn't like you because you're not as good as she is and you're not as good as she is because you're not as good as anybody and because you're not as good as anybody no one really likes you and therefore you can't expect anyone to return your call ever.

That feels pretty bad. Mind you, this process generally happens in a split second so you go immediately from no call to feeling enraged and ready to end the relationship with this mean, inconsiderate person or feeling undeserving and desperately try to figure out the magic formula to win your friend over.

A friend who doesn't return a call can also be interpreted as a person who is too busy to participate in a friendship the way you'd like at the time and you're faced with a choice about whether to look elsewhere for someone that better reciprocates your energy/interest; or perhaps as someone who doesn't like making phone calls and it is your choice as to whether you're interested/willing to be the one to make them; or as someone who perhaps isn't reliable which may be disappointing to you but is not a reflection on you or who you are as a person.

Again, I don't often recommend books but if you're intrigued, I highly recommend this one, *Forgive for Good*, by Dr. Fred Luskin, or give me a call, 612.332.7743.



Leta Herrington

Adult Education Updates

By Katherine S. Michael, Associate Pastor

Being Christian in a Changing World means that we take responsibility for selecting political leadership for our nation. How does our faith come into play in such decisions? What are the criteria we can use to gauge the compatibility of those who seek office with our faith commitments? What does Scripture tell us about political leadership? How does Jesus' life inform us about the choices we must make? These and other questions will be addressed in the third unit of Education for Faith and Life—*Being Christian in a Changing Political Landscape*. Classes begin Wednesday, March 26 and Sunday, March 30. Join us as we explore faith and politics from a biblical and theological perspective.

Movie of the Month *Romero*, Sunday, March 30, 11:45AM, Meisel Room Education for Faith and Life begins its Spring unit, *Being Christian in a Changing Political Landscape*, with our Movie of the Month. With the approaching political conventions and the presidential election in November, we will look at the characteristics of a leader—and a person of deep faith—in the political arena. Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador started a revolution without guns, without an army, because one man's courage can be the most powerful weapon of all. Romero stood against all that oppressed the poor in his country and gave his life for that stance. We will ask the question: was Romeo political, or did he become political because of the way he lived his life? What are the marks of character that he brought to his struggle for his people and his nation? This powerful film will give us an opportunity for thoughtful conversation. A light lunch will be available for a small donation.

Traveling Seminar to Israel and Palestine, January 2009

Education for Faith and Life will sponsor a Traveling Seminar to the Holy Land, Israel and Palestine with trip leaders Tim Hart-Andersen and Kathy Michael. This trip will explore old and new, ancient and timely, the biblical story and current politics. Contact Kathy Michael, 612.332.3421 or kmichael@wpc-mpls.org to be added to the 'interested' list.