

Self-love letter

Self-esteem, the ability to love the whole self unconditionally, is vital to an individual's success. Having self-esteem isn't egotism, which comes from insecurity.

Self-esteem means taking care of the body and appreciating its uniqueness: eating good foods, avoiding running on junk foods for long periods, drinking lots of H₂O, getting plenty of sleep (not always easy on a 104-hour-a-week work schedule, but a worthy goal), exercising in a fun way, and especially avoiding drugs. Basically, it means listening to the body's messages.

Self-esteem means taking care of the mind: learning, growing, taking risks, and following dreams without self-criticism. A person can always learn from so-called "failures." When things don't work out as planned, they usually work out even better in the long run.

Self-esteem means taking care of the spirit inside of you — that creative spark of light. It's important to recognize that there is no one else like you on Earth. You're special, creative and wonderful just by being who you really are! And we — each of us — have something to contribute to our world. The gift is inside you.

K.C. Primbs
Journalism

Spending kills

The Oklahoma City bomb devastated a city. It was an evil, vicious and unforgivable act of the highest magnitude. In the aftermath of the crime, Americans probably wondered how the Oklahoma City bomb compared to the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima.

Because Hiroshima's bomb

killed 80,000 people and Oklahoma City's killed almost 200 people, the former was more than 400 times as powerful as the latter. The 1945 Hiroshima bomb had the force of about 15 kilotons, or 15,000 tons of TNT. Many 1995 bombs have a force of 15 megatons — 1,000 times the force of a kiloton.

Prior to the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, the United States had far more than the equivalent of a half-million Hiroshima bombs, or 200 million radioactive Oklahoma City bombs.

More than \$3 trillion has been spent for U.S. military "needs" since 1980. During the time George Bush was vice president and president, the U.S. added the equivalent of more than 100,000 Hiroshima bombs, or more than 400 million Oklahoma City bombs.

In the past six years, more than 100 million people (the population of 30 states the size of Oklahoma) and every country in Eastern Europe have achieved independence from Soviet rule. Additionally, 14 of the 15 former Russian republics have severed ties with Moscow.

Despite these events and the equivalent of one Oklahoma City bomb for every man, woman and child in Russia, some far-right fanatics are trying to increase U.S. military spending.

If virtue can spring from vice, the real value of the Oklahoma bombing lies not in the authentic heroism of the rescuers, but in the realization that the equivalent of hundreds of lives for every death in that act of violence can easily be saved by less U.S. military spending.

Thomas Olsen
Barstow, Calif.

Secular world, religion different

By Stephen Crawford
Guest Columnist

In the editorial "Pope 'supports' women's rights" (ODE, June 11), the author castigates the Catholic Church, and more specifically Pope John Paul II, for their stances on the roles of religious men and women in the Church and the Church's politically unpopular stand against abortion.

As I have argued so many times with the *Emerald*, I really have no problem with people who put forth their educated opinions and are willing to constructively argue their beliefs. The editorialist's views, however, are borne out of ignorance. I do not say this in any way to be mean or insulting; in this case, it is just a fact.

Now, who am I to make such a provocative statement? What is it that lends any more credence to my position above and beyond this editorialist's? Well, for starters, I will be entering a seminary in the fall to begin my religious training for the priesthood, which of course means that I have spent several years already studying my church's particular traditions and dogmas. Also, I have a newly acquired degree in philosophy, and my main interests lie in moral and ethical questions of this sort, because it is just these very sorts of questions that shape our culture and our religion — not just in the present, but in the future as well.

The problem, in a nutshell, is that this editorialist (and pretty much everyone else who makes the same mistake) is looking at the role of men and women in religious life from a secular, humanistic point of view that emphasizes

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status and power, being esteemed in the eyes of others and the world's concept of "equality." For some people, success is a well-paying job, a family, a nice house, financial security and all of the other trappings that are acquired with such a life. For others, success is gauged as being held in high regard by others. Still others define success by being able to chase goals and dreams and finding satisfaction in their attainment.

As outrageous, and perhaps even disingenuous, as this might sound, this is not the view of the millions of religious people around the world. Our goal is doing the will of God, which means that you had better check your ego, your secular goals and desires, and your sense of total individuality at the door.

This is not an easy message to hear today, nor is it very welcome. But I can tell you that I have a feeling of "equality" with my religious brothers and sisters, regardless of their age, sex and nationality, that runs deeper and more passionately than most people can comprehend.

Of course, it can be argued that because I am a man, it is easy for me to pontificate on the equality of my religious sisters when I get all the benefits of being a priest (whatever those might be, I would like to know). This, I admit, is a somewhat valid point, but I have to reiterate that if you approach this situation from a secular point of view, bringing in normal human views of success and equality, you will never understand the humble awe and reverence we have for our chosen vocation.

As for the issue of abortion, I have had to come to the decision that there will be no middle ground for people who are for abortion and for those who are against it, because we are not even able to agree upon the simple premises of the debate.

The fact is that, for the most part, people who are pro-abortion truly believe that the Catholic Church and, I suppose, anti-abortion groups as a whole, are against abortion because they want to limit the options of women, and thereby exercise a certain degree of control over their lives. This, of course, is a false assumption.

The Catholic Church has always believed that a human life, unique, viable and special, begins at conception, and to terminate that life constitutes murder, which, of course, we find unacceptable. I do not understand why this is so hard to understand, but it seems to be.

So, in the end, you can keep rhetoric of "overpopulation" and "reproductive choice," and you can also have your "glass ceilings" and your "equal opportunity." Keep them in the secular world where they belong.

And before you embark on your crusade to emancipate the religious women of the world, I suggest that you talk with some of them, even in the Eugene area, about equal opportunity and abortion. I would be willing to bet that the response that you would get would not be the one you would expect, or perhaps more to the point, the one that you would want to hear.

Stephen Crawford is a graduate student in theology.

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