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"If You Want to Gather Honey, Don't Kick Over the Beehive"

On May 7, 1931, the most sensational manhunt New York City had ever known had come to its climax. After weeks of search, "Two Gun" Crowley—the killer, the gunman who didn't smoke or drink—was at bay, trapped in his sweetheart's apartment on West End Avenue.

One hundred and fifty police officers and detectives laid siege to his top-floor hideaway. They chopped holes in the roof; they tried to smoke out Crowley, the "cop killer," with tear gas. Then they mounted their machine guns on surrounding buildings, and for more than an hour one of New York's fine residential areas reverberated with the crack of pistol fire and the *rat-tat-tat* of machine guns. Crowley, crouching behind an overstuffed chair, fired incessantly at the police. Ten thousand excited people watched the battle. Nothing like it had ever before been seen on the sidewalks of New York.

When Crowley was captured, Police Commissioner E. P.

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Mulrooney declared that the two-gun desperado was one of the most dangerous criminals ever encountered in the history of New York. "He will kill," said the Commissioner, "at the drop of a feather."

But how did "Two Gun" Crowley regard himself? We know, because while the police were firing into his apartment, he wrote a letter addressed "To whom it may concern." And as he wrote, the blood flowing from his wounds left a crimson trail on the paper. In his letter Crowley said: "Under my coat is a weary heart, but a kind one—one that would do nobody any harm."

A short time before this, Crowley and his girlfriend were parked in a car, necking on a country road out on Long Island. Suddenly a policeman walked up to the car and said: "Let me see your license."

Without saying a word, Crowley drew his gun and cut the policeman down with a shower of lead. As the dying officer fell, Crowley leaped out of the car, grabbed the officer's revolver, and fired another bullet into the prostrate body. And that was the killer who said: "Under my coat is a weary heart, but a kind one—one that would do nobody any harm."

Crowley was sentenced to the electric chair. When he arrived at the death house in Sing Sing, did he say, "This is what I get for killing people"? No, he said: "This is what I get for defending myself."

The point of the story is this: "Two Gun" Crowley did not blame himself for anything.

Is that an unusual attitude among criminals? If you think so, listen to this:

"I have spent the best years of my life giving people the lighter pleasures, helping them have a good time, and all I get is abuse, the existence of a hunted man."

That is Al Capone speaking. Yes, America's most notorious

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Public Enemy—the most sinister gang leader who ever shot up Chicago. Capone did not condemn himself. He actually regarded himself as a public benefactor—an unappreciated and misunderstood public benefactor.

And so did Dutch Schultz before he crumpled up under gangster bullets in Newark. Schultz, one of New York's most notorious criminals, said in a newspaper interview that he was a public benefactor. And he believed it.

I have had some interesting correspondence on this subject with Lewis Lawes, who was warden of New York's infamous Sing Sing prison for many years, and he declared that "few of the criminals in Sing Sing regard themselves as bad men. They are just as human as you and I. So they rationalize, they explain. They can tell you why they had to crack a safe or be quick on the trigger finger. Most of them attempt by a form of reasoning, fallacious or logical, to justify their antisocial acts even to themselves, consequently stoutly maintaining that they should never have been imprisoned at all."

If Al Capone, "Two Gun" Crowley, Dutch Schultz, and the desperate men and women behind prison walls don't blame themselves for anything—what about the people with whom you and I come in contact?

John Wanamaker, founder of the stores that bear his name, once confessed: "I learned thirty years ago that it is foolish to scold. I have enough trouble overcoming my own limitations without fretting over the fact that God has not seen fit to distribute evenly the gift of intelligence."

Wanamaker learned this lesson early, but I personally had to blunder through this old world for a third of a century before it even began to dawn upon me that ninety-nine times out of a hundred, people don't criticize themselves for anything, no matter how wrong it may be.

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Criticism is futile because it puts people on the defensive and usually makes them strive to justify themselves. Criticism is dangerous because it wounds a person's precious pride, hurts their sense of importance, and arouses resentment.

B. F. Skinner, the world-famous psychologist, proved through his experiments that an animal rewarded for good behavior will learn much more rapidly and retain what it learns far more effectively than an animal punished for bad behavior. Later studies showed that the same applies to humans. By criticizing, we do not make lasting changes, and often incur resentment.

Hans Selye, another great psychologist, said, "As much as we thirst for approval, we dread condemnation."

The resentment that criticism engenders can demoralize employees, family members, and friends, and still not correct the situation that has been condemned.

Remember: It's honey you want—without the bee stings. George B. Johnston of Enid, Oklahoma, the safety coordinator for an engineering company, had to ensure, as one of his responsibilities, that employees wore their hard hats whenever they were on the job in the field. He reported that when he came across workers who were not wearing the hats, he would tell them, with the menace that comes with authority and the wagging finger of regulation, that they must comply. The result? He got a sullen acceptance, and heard that after he left, the workers would often remove the hats.

So he decided to try a different approach. The next time he found a small group of workers not wearing their hard hats, he asked if the hats were uncomfortable. Did they not fit properly? Then he reminded the men in a pleasant tone of voice that the hat was designed to protect them from injury and suggested that it always be worn on the job. The result was increased compliance with the regulation, and free of resentment or emotional upset.

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You will find examples of the futility of criticism bristling on a thousand pages of history. Take, for example, the famous quarrel between Theodore Roosevelt and President William Howard Taft—a quarrel that split the Republican Party, put Woodrow Wilson in the White House, and wrote bold, luminous lines across the First World War and altered the flow of history. Let's review the facts quickly. When Roosevelt stepped out of the White House in 1908, he supported Taft, who was elected President. Then Roosevelt went off to Africa. When he returned, he exploded. He denounced Taft for his conservatism, tried to secure the nomination himself for a third term, formed the Bull Moose Party, and all but demolished the G.O.P. In the election that followed, William Howard Taft and the Republican Party carried only two states—Vermont and Utah. It was the most disastrous defeat the party had ever known.

Roosevelt blamed Taft, but did President Taft blame himself? Of course not. With tears in his eyes, Taft said: "I don't see how I could have done any differently from what I have."

Who was to blame? Roosevelt or Taft? Frankly, I don't know, and I don't care. The point I am trying to make is that all of Roosevelt's criticism didn't persuade Taft that he was wrong. It merely made Taft strive to justify himself and to reiterate, with tears in his eyes: "I don't see how I could have done any differently from what I have."

Or take the Teapot Dome oil scandal. It kept the newspapers ringing with indignation in the early 1920s. It rocked the nation! Nothing like it had ever happened before in American public life. Here are the bare facts of the scandal: Albert B. Fall, Secretary of the Interior in President Warren G. Harding's cabinet, was entrusted with the leasing of government oil reserves at Elk Hills, in California, and Teapot Dome, in Wyoming—oil reserves that had been set aside for the future use by the Navy.

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Did Secretary Fall permit competitive bidding? No, sir. He handed the fat, juicy contract outright to his friend Edward L. Doheny. And what did Doheny do? He gave Secretary Fall what he was pleased to call a "loan" of one hundred thousand dollars. Then, in a high-handed manner, Secretary Fall ordered United States Marines into the district to drive off competitors whose adjacent wells were sapping oil out of the Elk Hill reserves. These competitors, driven off their ground at the ends of guns and bayonets, rushed into court—and blew the lid off of the Teapot Dome scandal. A stench arose so vile that it ruined the Harding administration, nauseated an entire nation, threatened to wreck the Republican Party (again), and put Albert B. Fall behind prison bars.

Fall was condemned viciously—condemned as few in public life have ever been. Did he repent? Never! Years later Herbert Hoover intimated in a public speech that President Harding's death had been due to mental anxiety and worry because a friend had betrayed him. When Mrs. Fall heard that, she sprang from her chair, she wept, she shook her fists at fate and screamed: "What! Harding betrayed by Fall? No! My husband never betrayed anyone. A whole house full of gold would not tempt my husband to do wrong. He is the one who has been betrayed and led to the slaughter and crucified." Mrs. Fall may have been deluded in believing her husband's innocence but one thing is clear: She would have defended him to the death!

There you are; human nature in action, wrongdoers blaming everybody but themselves. We are all like that. So when you and I are tempted to criticize someone tomorrow, let's remember Al Capone, "Two Gun" Crowley, and Albert Fall. Let's realize that criticisms are like homing pigeons. They always return home. Let's realize that the person we are going to correct and condemn will probably justify themselves, and condemn us in return; or,

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like the gentle Taft, will say: "I don't see how I could have done any differently from what I have."

On the morning of April 15, 1865, Abraham Lincoln lay dying in a hall bedroom of a cheap lodging house directly across the street from Ford's Theater, where John Wilkes Booth had shot him. Lincoln's long body lay stretched diagonally across a sagging bed that was too short for him. A cheap reproduction of Rosa Bonheur's famous painting *The Horse Fair* hung above the bed, and a dismal gas jet flickered yellow light.

As Lincoln lay dying, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton said, "There lies the most perfect ruler of men that the world has ever seen."

What was the secret of Lincoln's success in dealing with people? I studied the life of Abraham Lincoln for ten years and devoted all of three years to writing and rewriting a book entitled *Lincoln the Unknown*. I believe I have made as detailed and exhaustive a study of Lincoln's personality and home life as it is possible for any being to make. I made a special study of Lincoln's method of dealing with people. Did he indulge in criticism? Oh, yes. As a young man in the Pigeon Creek Valley of Indiana, he not only criticized but he wrote letters and poems ridiculing people and dropped these letters on the country roads where they were sure to be found.

Even after Lincoln had become a practicing lawyer in Springfield, Illinois, he attacked his opponents openly in letters published in the newspapers. But he did this just once too often.

In the autumn of 1842 he ridiculed a vain, pugnacious politician by the name of James Shields. Lincoln lampooned him through an anonymous letter published in the Springfield *Journal*. The town roared with laughter. Shields, sensitive and proud, boiled with indignation. He found out who wrote the letter, leaped on his horse, started after Lincoln, and challenged him

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to fight a duel. Lincoln did not want to fight. He was opposed to dueling, but he couldn't get out of it and save his honor. He was given the choice of weapons. Since he had very long arms, he chose cavalry broadswords and took lessons in sword fighting from a West Point graduate. On the appointed day, he and Shields met on a sandbar in the Mississippi River, prepared to fight to the death, but at the last minute their seconds interrupted and stopped the duel.

That was the most lurid personal incident in Lincoln's life. It taught him an invaluable lesson in the art of dealing with people. Never again did he write an insulting letter. Never again did he ridicule anyone. And from that time on, he almost never criticized anybody for anything.

Time after time, during the Civil War, Lincoln put a new general at the head of the Army of the Potomac, and each one in turn—McClellan, Pope, Burnside, Hooker, Meade—blundered tragically and drove Lincoln to pacing the floor in despair. Half the nation savagely condemned these incompetent generals, but Lincoln, "with malice toward none, with charity for all," held his peace. One of his favorite quotations was "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

And when Mrs. Lincoln and others spoke harshly of the Southern people, Lincoln replied: "Don't criticize them; they are just what we would be under similar circumstances."

Yet if any man ever had occasion to criticize, surely it was Lincoln. Let's take just one illustration:

The Battle of Gettysburg was fought during the first three days of July 1863. During the night of July 4, American Confederate General Robert E. Lee began to retreat southward while storm clouds deluged the country with rain. When Lee reached the Potomac with his defeated army, he found a swollen, impassable river in front of him, and a victorious Union Army behind

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him. Lee was in a trap. He couldn't escape. Lincoln saw that. Here was a golden, heaven-sent opportunity—the opportunity to capture Lee's army and end the war immediately. So, with a surge of high hope, Lincoln ordered Meade not to call a council of war but to attack Lee immediately. Lincoln telegraphed his orders and then sent a special messenger to Meade demanding immediate action.

And what did General Meade do? He did the very opposite of what he was told. He called a council of war in direct violation of Lincoln's orders. He hesitated. He procrastinated. He telegraphed all manner of excuses. He refused point-blank to attack Lee. Finally the waters receded and Lee escaped across the Potomac with his forces.

Lincoln was furious. "What does this mean?" Lincoln cried to his son Robert. "Great God! What does this mean? We had them within our grasp, and had only to stretch forth our hands and they were ours; yet nothing that I could say or do could make the army move. Under the circumstances, almost any general could have defeated Lee. If I had gone up there, I could have whipped him myself."

In bitter disappointment, Lincoln sat down and wrote Meade this letter. And remember, at this period of his life Lincoln was extremely conservative and restrained in his phraseology. So this letter coming from Lincoln in 1863 was tantamount to the severest rebuke.

My dear General,

I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape. He was within our easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our other late successes, have ended the war. As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely. If you could not safely attack

Lee last Monday, how can you possibly do so south of the river, when you can take with you very few—no more than two-thirds of the force you then had in hand? It would be unreasonable to expect and I do not expect that you can now effect much. Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it.

What do you suppose Meade did when he read the letter?

Meade never saw that letter. Lincoln never mailed it. It was found among his papers after his death.

My guess is—and this is only a guess—that after writing that letter, Lincoln looked out of the window and said to himself, "Just a minute. Maybe I should not be so hasty. It is easy enough for me to sit here in the quiet of the White House and order Meade to attack; but if I had been up at Gettysburg, and if I had seen as much blood as Meade has seen during the last week, and if my ears had been pierced with the screams and shrieks of the wounded and dying, maybe I wouldn't be so anxious to attack either. If I had Meade's timid temperament, perhaps I would have done just what he had done. Anyhow, it is water under the bridge. If I send this letter, it will relieve my feelings, but it will make Meade try to justify himself. It will make him condemn me. It will arouse hard feelings, impair all his further usefulness as a commander, and perhaps force him to resign from the army."

So Lincoln put the letter aside. He had learned by bitter experience that sharp criticisms and rebukes almost invariably end in futility.

Theodore Roosevelt said that when he, as president, was confronted with a perplexing problem, he would lean back and look up at a large painting of Lincoln that hung above his desk in the White House and ask himself, "What would Lincoln do if he were in my shoes? How would he solve this problem?"

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The next time we are tempted to admonish somebody, let's pull a five-dollar bill out of our pocket, look at Lincoln's picture on the bill, and ask, "How would Lincoln handle this problem if he had it?"

Mark Twain lost his temper occasionally and wrote letters that turned the paper brown. For example, to a man who once aroused his ire, he wrote: "The thing for you is a burial permit. You have only to speak and I will see that you get it." On another occasion he wrote to an editor about a proofreader's attempts to "improve my spelling and punctuation." He ordered: "Set the matter according to my copy hereafter and see that the proofreader retains his suggestions in the mush of his decayed brain."

The writing of these stinging letters made Mark Twain feel better. They allowed him to blow off steam, and the letters didn't do any real harm, because Mark Twain's wife secretly lifted them out of the mail. They were never sent.

Do you know someone you would like to change and regulate and improve? Good! That is fine. I am all in favor of it. But why not begin on yourself? From a purely selfish standpoint, that is a lot more profitable than trying to improve others—yes, and a lot less dangerous. "Don't complain about the snow on your neighbor's roof," said Confucius, "when your own doorstep is unclean."

When I was still young and trying hard to impress people, I wrote a foolish letter to Richard Harding Davis, an author who once loomed large on the literary horizon of America. I was preparing a magazine article about authors, and I asked Davis to tell me about how he worked. A few weeks earlier, I had received a letter from someone with this notation at the bottom: "Dictated but not read." I was quite impressed. I felt that the writer must be very big and busy and important. I wasn't the slightest bit busy, but I was eager to make an impression on Richard Harding

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Davis, so I ended my short note with the words: "Dictated but not read."

He never troubled to answer the letter. He simply returned it to me with this scribbled across the bottom: "Your bad manners are exceeded only by your bad manners." True, I had blundered, and perhaps I deserved this rebuke. But, being human, I resented it. I resented it so sharply that when I read of the death of Richard Harding Davis ten years later, the one thought that still persisted in my mind—I am ashamed to admit—was the hurt he had given me.

If you and I want to stir up a resentment tomorrow that may rankle across the decades and endure until death, just let us indulge in a little stinging criticism—no matter how certain we are that it is justified.

When dealing with people, let us remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity.

Bitter criticism caused the sensitive Thomas Hardy, one of the finest novelists ever to enrich English literature, to give up forever the writing of fiction. Criticism drove Thomas Chatterton, the English poet, to suicide.

Benjamin Franklin, tactless in his youth, became so diplomatic, so adroit at handling people, that he was made American ambassador to France. The secret of his success? "I will speak ill of no man," he said, ". . . and speak all the good I know of everybody."

Any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain—and most fools do.

But it takes character and self-control to understand and forgive.

"A great man shows his greatness," said Carlyle, "by the way he treats little men."

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Bob Hoover, a famous test pilot and frequent performer at air shows, was returning to his home in Los Angeles from a show in San Diego. As described in the magazine *Flight Operations*, at three hundred feet in the air, both engines suddenly stopped. By deft maneuvering he managed to land the plane. It was badly damaged, but fortunately neither he nor his two passengers were hurt.

Hoover's first act after the emergency landing was to inspect the airplane's fuel. Just as he suspected, the World War II propeller plane he had been flying had been loaded with jet fuel rather than gasoline.

Upon returning to the airport, Hoover asked to see the mechanic who had serviced his airplane. The young man was sick with the agony of his mistake. Tears streamed down his face as Hoover approached. He had just caused the loss of a very expensive plane and could have caused the loss of three lives, as well.

You can imagine Hoover's anger. One could anticipate the tongue-lashing that this proud and precise pilot was about to unleash for that carelessness. But Hoover didn't scold the mechanic; he didn't even criticize him. Instead, he put his big arm around the man's shoulder and said, "To show you I'm sure that you'll never do this again, I want you to service my F51 tomorrow."

One of the most wonderful people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing is Evangeline Booth, the first woman elected to head the Salvation Army. During her time as director there, she addressed the hunger and poverty among the immigrants of New York by establishing breadlines and programs to feed schoolchildren and help the elderly. When gold was discovered in the Yukon, Evangeline knew that the Salvation Army would be needed there, so she headed for Skagway. She later said it was one of the most difficult jobs in her career.

Skagway was a tough place back then. On the day she arrived,

five men were killed. Everyone carried a gun, and wherever she went she heard talk of "Soapy" Smith, the notorious "Killer of the Klondike," a desperado who was known for ambushing and murdering miners. He and his gang would shoot them down without warning to steal their gold, and no one was able to stop him.

The night Evangeline arrived in Skagway she held a meeting on the banks of the Yukon River, but the hardened miners were in no mood for a sermon. So Evangeline and her small group began to sing, and soon a crowd gathered and began to join in, slowly growing in size. The crowd continued to swell until finally thousands of people were singing along to the songs and hymns they had grown up with. At one point, someone came up and wrapped a blanket around Evangeline's shoulders to shield her from the bone-crushing cold, but the crowd continued to sing until one in the morning.

Afterward, an exhausted Evangeline and her helpers prepared camp in the forest. As they were starting the fire, they saw five armed men coming out of the darkness. When the men got within speaking distance, the leader took off his hat and said, "I'm Soapy Smith and I've come to tell you how much I enjoyed your singing. I was the man that sent you the blanket. You can keep it if you want." It was a royal gift in a place where men were dying from the chill and the damp.

So began a conversation that went until dawn. Smith told Evangeline about his childhood and his mother and poured out his memories of attending Salvation Army meetings with his grandmother, singing and clapping his hands to rousing hymns.

Evangeline just listened. She knew that this man was desperate to be heard, to be valued and respected by someone he wasn't pointing a gun at. Did this devout and principled woman condemn him for his terrible crimes? Criticize him for the way he

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had wasted his life and caused others so much pain? How do you think he would have responded to that? No, she simply listened to him with compassion and it touched his heart.

Evangeline also believed in forgiveness and the power we all have to change, so with forthright honesty she told him, "You're taking life and that's not right. You can't win. They'll kill you sooner or later." Then she asked him to kneel with her.

Together they prayed, and with tears streaming down his face, Smith promised to give up his lawlessness and turn himself in. He never got the chance, for two days later he was shot and killed. While Skagway celebrated the demise of a vicious criminal, Evangeline thought of a man who had wanted a chance to lead a better life.

If listening without judgment could have that effect on a hardened murderer, what do you believe having the compassion to suspend our criticism could do for you or me in our daily interactions with our spouses, our families, and our coworkers?

Often parents are tempted to criticize their children. You would expect me to say "don't." But I will not. I am merely going to say, "*Before* you criticize them, read one of the classics of American journalism, 'Father Forgets.'" It originally appeared as an editorial in the *People's Home Journal*. We are reprinting it here with the author's permission, as condensed in the *Reader's Digest*.

"Father Forgets" is one of those little pieces that—dashed off in a moment of sincere feeling—strikes an echoing chord in so many readers as to become a perennial reprint favorite. Since its first appearance, "Father Forgets" has been reproduced, writes the author, W. Livingston Larned, "in hundreds of magazines and house organs, and in newspapers the country over. It has been reprinted almost as extensively in many foreign languages. I have given personal permission to thousands who wished to read

it from school, church, and lecture platforms. It has been 'on the air' on countless occasions and programs. Oddly enough, college periodicals have used it, and high-school magazines. Sometimes a little piece seems mysteriously to 'click.' This one certainly did."

FATHER FORGETS

W. Livingston Larned

Listen, son: I am saying this as you lie asleep, one little paw crumpled under your cheek and the blond curls stickily wet on your damp forehead. I have stolen into your room alone. Just a few minutes ago, as I sat reading my paper in the library, a stifling wave of remorse swept over me. Guiltily I came to your bedside.

These are the things I was thinking, son: I had been cross to you. I scolded you as you were dressing for school because you gave your face merely a dab with a towel. I took you to task for not cleaning your shoes. I called out angrily when you threw some of your things on the floor.

At breakfast I found fault, too. You spilled things. You gulped down your food. You put your elbows on the table. You spread butter too thick on your bread. And as you started off to play and I made for my train, you turned and waved a hand and called, "Goodbye, Daddy!" and I frowned, and said in reply, "Hold your shoulders back!"

Then it began all over again in the late afternoon. As I came up the road I spied you, down on your knees, playing marbles. There were holes in your socks. I humiliated you before your friends by marching you ahead of me to the house. Socks are expensive—and if you had to buy them you would be more careful! Imagine that, son, from a father!

Do you remember, later, when I was reading in the li-

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brary, how you came in timidly, with a sort of hurt look in your eyes? When I glanced up over my paper, impatient at the interruption, you hesitated at the door. "What is it you want?" I snapped.

You said nothing, but ran across in one tempestuous plunge, and threw your arms around my neck and kissed me, and your small arms tightened with an affection that God had set blooming in your heart and which even neglect could not wither. And then you were gone, pattering up the stairs.

Well, son, it was shortly afterwards that my paper slipped from my hands and a terrible sickening fear came over me. What has habit been doing to me? The habit of finding fault, of reprimanding—this was my reward to you for being a boy. It was not that I did not love you; it was that I expected too much of youth. I was measuring you by the yardstick of my own years.

And there was so much that was good and fine and true in your character. The little heart of you was as big as the dawn itself over the wide hills. This was shown by your spontaneous impulse to rush in and kiss me good night. Nothing else matters tonight, son. I have come to your bedside in the darkness, and I have knelt here, ashamed!

It is a feeble atonement; I know you would not understand these things if I told them to you during your waking hours. But tomorrow I will be a real daddy! I will chum with you, and suffer when you suffer, and laugh when you laugh. I will bite my tongue when impatient words come. I will keep saying as if it were a ritual: "He is nothing but a boy—a little boy!"

I am afraid I have visualized you as a man. Yet as I see you now, son, crumpled and weary in your cot, I see that

you are still a baby. Yesterday you were in your mother's arms, your head on her shoulder. I have asked too much, too much.

Instead of condemning people, let's try to understand them. Let's try to figure out why they do what they do. That's a lot more profitable and intriguing than criticism; and it breeds sympathy, tolerance, and kindness. "To know all is to forgive all."

As Dr. Johnson said: "God himself, sir, does not propose to judge man until the end of his days."

Why should you and I?

PRINCIPLE 1

Don't criticize, condemn, or complain.