

THREE POWERFUL WORDS

Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement against British rule who employed nonviolent civil disobedience, once said, “Freedom is not worth anything if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.”

Are you free to make mistakes, or do you deny yourself that liberty?

Not everyone feels free to make mistakes.

Steve Goodier, founder and publisher of *Your Life Support System*, a widely read newsletter since 1999, tells a funny story about Gen. George Patton from his World War II days.



Patton once accepted an invitation to dine at a press camp in Africa. Wine was served in canteen cups, but Patton thought he was being served coffee. The general poured cream into his cup. As he stirred in sugar, Patton was warned that his cup contained red wine, and not coffee.

Gen. Patton – whatever his obvious strengths – could never be wrong. Without hesitating, he replied, “I know. I like my wine this way.” And he drank it.

Of course, none of us ever likes goofing up, and it isn’t easy to admit when we do happen to blunder.

Goodier observes:

I believe that three of life’s most difficult words to say are “I was wrong.” And particularly in families and among good friends, these are three of the most powerful words we can utter. “I was wrong” breaks down barriers between people. It brings estranged people together. And it creates a climate where intimacy and love may flourish. You may be surprised at how positively many people respond to those simple words. They are words we need to use more often.

Goodier admits that using these three words is a risk. “But to admit when you are wrong is not to imply that you are a ‘bad’ person. Simply an honest one. And true friends will appreciate you all the more for it.”

In the work of Life Care and Century Park, truth and accuracy are goals to which we must be committed. The well-being of our residents demands it.

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But we are human beings, and we are not perfect. When we slip up, we need to own up.

The Bible offers this advice:

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy (Proverbs 28:13 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter