

FORGIVENESS

By RC Capell

I recently had the pleasure of playing this character name Bassanio, in a play called "MERCHANT OF VENICE," a great play with lots of rich and colorful characters with intriguing & intricate lives. And it's a trip when you finally realize that their lives, although years apart, are no different than our lives today ahh except for dates, names, locations and perhaps the way they may have dressed. Something else that also rang so true for me was how Bassanio hadn't even been with his woman for more than a few days and he was already asking her forgiveness for wronging her. So having that so very much in common with him I would like to share with all of you how important forgiveness has been in my life. And I know that's something that we all can relate to.

We've all been on the giving and receiving ends of forgiveness. Forgiveness! What exactly does that word mean? Well according to Webster, it means to pardon or absolve; to stop being angry about or resentful against. Forgiveness is multifaceted. First and foremost is forgiveness of oneself: only possible if it includes first having made amends with God. I've come to realize and very much want the forgiveness of any and everyone from my past that I've wronged. However, this is especially directed to each and every woman that I've ever wronged, lied to, disrespected, used, abused verbally, mentally emotionally, spiritually and physically.

(PHONE RINGS AND MY SISTER, NINA, ANSWERS)

NINA - "Rodney it's for you!"

ROD - "Who is it?"

NINA - "I don't know, it's some girl!? Who is this? It's that girl Trisha."

ROD - "Tell her I'm not here." (I WHISPER)

NINA - "He said he's not here."

ROD - "Stupid!"

That was the first of my many, many, many, many wrongs. It wasn't too much longer after that before I fall in love for the very first time. That was an extremely powerful, intense and beautiful reality. And before I could pull myself together I had poisoned our relationship with abuse on every level. What was I thinking? I wasn't!

(PHONE RINGS)

NINA - "Hello"

TONYA- "Hello is Rodney there?"

NINA - "Who is this?"

TONY A- "It's Tonya."

NINA - "No, why you calling here for him?"

TONY A- "He told me he was gonna stop by your Dad's."

NINA - "Okaaaaay, yeah he was here but he left with Susie a long time ago."

TONYA- "He left with who?" NINA - "Who is this again?"

(TONYA HANGS UP WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING ELSE AND RODNEY ENTERS)

ROD - "Hey baby what's up? How was your day?"

TONYA- "Where have you been? DON'T TOUCH ME!! You've been gone over 4 hours!!" ROD - "What are you talking about I told you I was going to the gym!"

TONYA- "The gym huh? Who were you with at the gym? You had to be working out with someone, you've been gone for hours!!"

ROD - "What are you trippin' on? And what do you mean don't touch me?? What's going on with you?"

TONYA- "You're such a filthy liar, your sister told me about Susie!"

ROD - "Susie!! Who's Susie?"

TONYA- "I'm sick and tired of you always lying and cheatin' on me, YOU DISGUST ME!"

ROD - "You better watch your mouth!!!"

TONYA- "All you ever do is lie and cheat and you ain't even good at it cause you keep getting caught!! Why Rodney, WHY!?? What were you thinking?"

(TONYA EXITS)

I wasn't. Looking back now I know I wasn't thinking or behaving right, so Tonya and every other woman wasn't treated right. You know I really thought I had it going on. But what I was doing wasn't even right so there was no way it was going to last. I didn't even communicate properly whenever I felt like I was losing control of my relationships. LOSING CONTROL OF MY RELATIONSHIPS! You know that's really code for she's tired of puttin' up with my crap. It took too long for me to accept the fact that my reality was a horrible mess and I had tainted the reality of so many beautiful women, but I had to because it was such a necessary part of me forgiving myself. I mean, how could I possibly ask or expect someone to forgive me until I had first stopped doing all of those terrible things and forgiven myself? I couldn't!"

(PHONE RINGS)

NINA - "Hello"

BECKY- "Hello Nina?"

NINA - "Yeah, who is this?"

BECKY- "This is Becky, have you seen your brother Rodney? Is he there?"

NINA - "Becky, ahhh Rodney don't live here."

(BECKY HEARS THE DOOR CLOSE AS RODNEY ENTERS)

BECKY- "I know. Okay thanks Nina he's here now."

ROD - "Hey baby what's going on with you?"

BECKY- "What did you do today?"

ROD- - "Uh, not what I wanted to...what did you do?"

(HE SAYS LUSTFULLY AS HE WALKS TOWARDS HER WITH HIS ARMS OUTSTRETCHED)

BECKY- "STOP! Where were you Rodney?"

ROD - "You know where I was! I was at the gym! I already told you where I was going!"

BECKY - "The one in Pacific Beach?"

ROD - "That's the one I always go to and you know that!"

BECKY - "It's after 10:00, so where have you been all of this time?"

ROD - "On my way home baby. What's up with you? What's this all about anyway?"

BECKY - "The same thing it's ALWAYS about Rodney YOU!" I

ROD - "What about me?"

BECKY - "You're a no good worthless liar!!"

ROD - "I'm worthless huh, and what did I lie about?"

BECKY - "Don't forget NO GOOD! I went to the gym and guess what? They remember me and they said they haven't seen you in a couple of days."

ROD - "Is that right? What are you some kinda detective or something?"

BECKY- "Yeah, ~ou're busted what were you thinking?"

(SHE EXITS HURT, UPSET, CONFUSED AND SAD SAYING)

I wasn't. Well, it wasn't simply that I wasn't thinking because I was. The truth of the matter is that I was mainly thinking about ME! just ME! Oh yeah, on the surface I made sure that I always did everything I could to make it appear as though I really had it going on or so I thought!?! Eventually Pam, Becky, Tonya and pretty much every other woman I was with saw right through all of the deception and destruction and took the right action by getting me out of their lives. Good for you ladies good for all of you!

(MY PHONE RINGS AND I JUST LOOK AT IT WITHOUT ANSWERING)

PAM - "Who was that?"

ROD - "Oh it wasn't nobody. Whatcha wanna do tonight? Whatcha feel

(I SET THE PHONE DOWN AND AS SOON AS I GET A FEW FEET AWAY PAM PICKS IT UP.)

ROD - "What are you doing? Why are you looking at my phone?"

PAM - "You got something to hide? Why is it locked anyway?"

ROD - "I always keep it locked you know that!"

PAM - "Yeah, when you're not home, but you're home now so why is it locked?"

ROD - "You really need to pull yourself together woman, you're tripping!! It's

MY phone, so what if it's locked!!"

PAM - "You're hiding something again, you're such a sneaky liar!!"

ROD - "I'm sick and tired of you talking crazy to me, gimme my phone!!!"

(I GRAB HER WRIST AND SHE PULLS AWAY FROM ME.)

PAM - "LET GO OF ME!!"

(SHE HOLDS THE PHONE IN THE AIR LIKE SHE'S GOING TO THROW IT).

ROD - "YOU BETTER NOT! ! GIRL IF YOU MESS AROUND AND BREAK MY PHONE ... !!"

(SHE SLAMS THE PHONE ON THE FLOOR AND AS I BEND DOWN TO PICK IT UP SHE KICKS IT AWAY)

ROD - "HEY!!! YOU DONE LOST YOUR MIND?? WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?"

(SHE GETS IN HIS FACE)

PAM - "I'm sick of you and your lies and cheating!! You're such a liar and you're so far past stupid you make stupid look smart!!"

(HE SLAPS HER ACROSS THE FACE AND SHE SCREAMS AND FALLS TO THE FLOOR).

PAM - "Why did you hit me?? What are you doing??"

(WITH A LOUD SHRILL SHE YELLS AGAIN).

PAM - "Why are you hitting me!!! Stop Rodney, please stop.

(SHE RESPONDS WITH DEEP HURT AND RESIGNATION).

(SHE STARTS TO GET UP AND RODNEY REACHES DOWN TO HELP HER. SHE DRAWS BACK)

PAM - "NO! I, what are you doing? (SHE FRIGHTFULLY ASKS AS SHE CRINGES AWAY FROM HIM) DON'T TOUCH ME!!! DON'T YOU EVER TOUCH ME AGAIN!!" (SHE HISSES).

ROD - "Baby, baby I'm so sorry please baby I'm so sorry!!"

(HE PLEADS AS HE FOLLOWS HER TO THE BEDROOM WHERE SHE SLAMS THE DOOR IN HIS FACE)

ROD - "BABY I SAID I'M SORRY!! OPEN THE DOOR BABY I'M SORRY!!

(HE LISTENS AND SHE DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING SO HE EXITS THE ROOM SHOUTING)

ROD - "WHAT WAS I THINKING?"

Once again, I wasn't! Yes, unfortunately I've hit a woman before. What was I thinking? I wasn't! No woman should ever be touched unless it's in a way that's pleasing to her and of course with her permission. Regardless of my perception during those times of what they did or didn't do, with, to or for me, none of this, and I do mean absolutely NONE of this, justifies or excuses any of my behavior in the least. Who are these women you may ask? -They are Mothers, Daughters, Aunties, cousins, friends and by far one of God's greatest gifts to man. I pray you accept my humble apology and I sincerely ask your forgiveness - all of YOU. As for Bassanio, for those of you who haven't had the pleasure of experiencing the play *MERCHANT OF VENICE* the short of it is he took off his wedding ring off after vowing to his wife, Portia, that he never would. And as only a woman can do she forgave him.