

## Fault lines

*Our faults never annoy us as much as when we see them exhibited in other people*

-- Anonymous

Some years ago, I was studying the landscape of a hill, when I noticed a place where the hill seemed to have sheared – part of the hill seemed to have dropped.

It was my first introduction to a “fault line” – an area where the earth is prone to slip – like the famous San Andreas Fault in California.

Since then, I’ve realized that all of us have fault lines in ourselves – areas where we are likely to slip – (and I’ve learned that one of the easiest way to see those fault lines in our own personalities is, as the quote suggests, to look at what annoys us most about other people).

Unlike the fault lines that are associated with earthquakes, however, people – you and me – can fix the fault lines in our own personalities. We can mend them so they are stronger in the mended spots than they were in the original.

As a child, I was the proud owner of a bicycle. I thought it was a great bike – and it was – but after a while of riding it, the bike developed a crack in the frame. As a kid, I figured that was the key to a new bike – but my father, who grew up in the Great Depression, and as a business owner knew the value of his money, figured it would need to be mended, not junked.

Down I took the bike to the welding shop, a remodeled blacksmith shop that mostly welded farm equipment. For five bucks – a fortune to a kid my age – the welder fixed the brake. I was dubious, but my father took one look at it, and said if the bike broke again, it wouldn’t be at the weld. And it wasn’t. The bike subsequently developed another break, and was welded again – but it never broke at the welds.

I learned from that experience that the mended places were stronger than the original construction – the faults had become faultless, so to speak.

And in the same manner, we can fix the fault lines in our personality, and make those areas our strengths.

The story is told of a religious leader who had terrible penmanship. After being castigated by his associates, the leader decided to fix the fault. He worked on

that penmanship, spent hours and hours and hours – and when he was done, his penmanship was elegant, sophisticated calligraphy. He had mended the broken spots – he had made his fault faultless.

As we review our lives, we can easily find areas where we might have a weakness – we can easily see the faults in our own lives. But seeing those faults is good – it gives us a chance to mend the faults and make our lives stronger as a result.

How do we do it? Like the religious leader in our story, we must attack the fault, taking action to turn it into an area of strength. We must build it up – like the welder built up the broken area in my bike frame with his torch and welding rod.

Most of us ignore our faults – but if we want to fix them – if we wish to become faultless -- we must directly attack those faults, recognize them for what they are, and then “weld” our faults to make it so the faults in our lives become the strongest parts of our beings.

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