

# Transparency



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By Ken Hekman

***Are we better prepared to bare our souls than previous generations?***

*Once two people show a willing heart to relate to each other, there is no limit to where their transparency can take them.*

*Perhaps hope is transparency defined.*

Take it in stride, they said. Roll with the punches. Keep a stiff upper lip. Real men don't cry. Whatever you do, avoid pain – no matter what the cost.

Boy, were they wrong!

And yet, for generations, this was the mantra. It seems pitiful now to think that our parents couldn't learn to be comfortable with affection. Portraiture was a somber affair, leaving us with a legacy of disaffection.

Then came the sixties, a reawakening of love, disregard for tradition and a season of questioning everything. It may have seemed painful at the time, but looking back, the revolution was overdue. We were more than ready for liberation from stifled emotion and blind adherence to the way things were.

But have we really learned anything? Are we any better prepared to bare our souls than previous generations? Is it any less risky?

Transparency may be the most wonderful dimension in human relationships. It is an essential ingredient for trust, the predecessor for peace in all its forms. Once the thin veil of autonomy is broken, the potential is unlimited - commerce, loyalty, friendship, even love. It is the cornerstone of human growth and development. Once two people show a willing heart to relate to each other, there is no limit to where their transparency can take them.

But transparency comes at a price, sometimes a very high price. Vulnerability looks like weakness to those who are prone toward exploitation. Strong ties that are broken, for whatever reason, can give way to devastating grief. The risk is at least as great as the potential.

Is it worth the risk?

Shakespeare had his opinion, of course, and I find agreement, though not comfort, in his valuation of lost love. Relationships may be life's greatest conundrum. Ecstasy and agony face off time and time again, with no guarantees of the outcome. Heaven holds its breath with each battle, not wanting to look at the scoreboard. But still we come back for more. Hope wins every time, simply by bringing us back into the game.

Perhaps hope is transparency defined. It compels us to look beyond the flaws inherent in each of us, grasping for a glimpse of that which we imagine more than know. As a picture window to faith, transparency showcases the best – and the worst – of the human condition, and still somehow encourages us to cling to the chance for the best to win out.

***When hope is cut in  
half... Does it ever  
end?***

## **Hope's Half-life**

*By Ken Hekman*

When disappointments overwhelm,  
When safety disappears,  
Despair can plant its heartless seeds,  
Confirm our darkest fears.

When hope is suddenly cut in half  
And then in half again,  
You may be shocked to find that Hope's  
Half-life can never end.