

## "GAMES PEOPLE PLAY"

On my way in to the studio this morning I was listening to my i-pod. (Yes, I still have an i-pod! Please don't laugh--I'm just a "little" behind the times!) Traffic was horrible and I wound up having to take an alternate route because it was backed up for some kind of construction on my normal way. I was listening to music, songs I know and love, so it wasn't a bad thing.

As I meandered my way the song "Games People Play" happened to come on. It was written and performed by an artist named Joe South way back in 1968. I remember hearing it on the radio, many times when my band and I were on our way to or home from one of our Wednesday, Friday and/or Saturday night gigs. At the time it seemed to be just another one of those songs about "love one another" that went in one ear and out the other!

I had the good fortune of meeting Joe South, briefly as it was, around 1975 or 1976. I was on 18th Avenue South either going to see or coming from a meeting with a publisher I was working with at the time. Joe was just standing there out in front of Pete Drake's studio--dressed in a black shirt and black jeans. I've never been good at recognizing people who I should know who they are so it wasn't until we introduced ourselves that I knew I was speaking with Joe South! Once he began to speak though I knew it was him. He had the little characteristic lisp that is prominent in his vocals. There was no doubt I had really met, someone who was a legend to me, the real Joe South!

That was one of those moments I will forever remember from all my music business days. We only talked for a couple of minutes before we said our goodbyes and headed off in our separate directions. I still remember the feeling I had with me the rest of the day after meeting him--as I said, he was someone bigger than life to me!

BUT--this article isn't about Joe. As I listened, several times this morning, to "Games People Play" I was taken by the message he was trying to get across. For those of you familiar with the song, you know it's about people being stubborn and hurting each other. It struck me that

many of the issues we face in our lives are caused by our egos. Our egos telling us, "I'm right--and you're wrong!". We manage to hurt others as well as ourselves when we allow our egos to take the place of what we know is "the right thing to do".

I've written about egos before. I even quoted the old adage of the word "ego" meaning--"Edging God Out". At times we seem to let our God sense be overridden by our egos. Nobody ever wins when ego is victorious! Situations in our lives, most often relationships with others, can go from bad to worse when we allow ourselves to be driven by our egos. We hurt others--and we hurt ourselves in an attempt to not give in or to pay others back for "what they have done to us".

Egos are not totally a "bad thing". For us to be able to love, appreciate and help others we must first have a good impression of ourselves. We must "love" ourselves for who we are--warts and all! Our egos are the parts of us that create a healthy love for ourselves which gives us the ability to love others. It's our egos though that cause us to hold grudges and keep the fires of anger and resentment burning down deep within our minds and Souls. It's that faction of ego that causes us and others harm!

As I've written before, for our lives to be what we desire them to be, we must learn how to forgive. And, as I've written before, forgiveness is not the same as forgetting. Forgiveness, though, is what takes the emotional sting out of negative situations we have faced in our lives. Not until we take the negative emotions out of our consciousnesses can we begin to heal and expect our lives to be filled with the wonderful gifts God has planned for us!

Forgiveness "work" is continual. It's not something we can do once and be "cleansed". Little things happen in our lives every day that, if left alone to simmer, can grow into bigger things--things that can, and will, negate us from receiving our GOOD. Forgiving ourselves and others is an integral part of creating the lives we desire. It is the underpinning of all the great Spiritual teachers. Forgiveness is NOT something we do for others--it's something we must do for ourselves!

If you get a minute, I would suggest listening to Joe's song--"Games

People Play" and listening close for his message. It certainly hit home with me this morning!

All my best--

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