Forgiveness Is for the Forgiver

"I will never forgive him," Patty told me. (All characters are fictitious.) "He hurt me so badly that he messed up the rest of my life.

He has never said that he was sorry, so he does not deserve forgiveness. No way am I going to let him off the hook for what he did."

Patty first came to counseling for help with her marriage. Her spouse was verbally abusive to her, especially when he was using drugs. Since he would not come for counseling, Patty and I worked on the relationship without him.

She learned that she did not have to put up with being treated abusively. She began to stand up for herself, and her husband began to treat her a little better. "It will never be a good marriage, but at least it is bearable," she told me.

As with many of my clients, after she dealt with her present situation, Patty began to explore her past and how that was affecting her. Her story was a difficult one to listen to, because it was so painful.

Her father had been an alcoholic for as long as she could remember. He physically and verbally abused her mother. "I can remember when he would come home drunk," Patty told me, "all of us kids would hide. He would start in on Momma, and we could hear her screaming as he beat her. I would hide under the covers with my little sister, and we would cover our ears and sing songs to try to drown out the screams. After he left, we would get up and help Mom clean herself up. Sometimes we would have to go to the neighbors to get help."

This part of her story would have been more than enough pain for any child to bear, but there was more. "Daddy would come into my bedroom at night and lie down between me and my sister," she tearfully remembered. "He would touch me and do things to me that I knew weren't right, but I let him. I hoped that if he did it to me, then he wouldn't bother my sister. As I got older, he did more and more, until he began having sex with me regularly when I was eight."

Patty cried and cried as she told her story for the first time. The hurt and anger that she felt as a little girl began to tumble out with her words.

"He made my life miserable for ten years," she said bitterly, "and what he did to me still affects me. Do you know that I am forty years old and still have not had a normal relationship with a man? Every man I find abuses me in some way, and I know that is because of what my father did to me."

Patty and I worked on her feelings for many months. She was doing much better, except that she could not let go of her anger at her father. This anger was coming out at others in her life and causing problems in her relationships.

I began to talk with Patty about forgiveness, but she did not want to hear it. "Forgiveness is not for him," I explained. "Forgiveness is for you. Forgiveness is a way for you to turn loose of the anger and get on with your life."

"But he doesn't deserve to be forgiven," Patty argued. "He's never even said he was sorry."

"The question is not whether he deserves forgiveness," I explained. "The question is whether you deserve it. Forgiving him can set you free from the anger that is making you miserable. To forgive him does not mean that you condone or approve of what he did. To forgive him does not take away his responsibility for what he did. Forgiveness means that you make a conscious decision to go on with your life and to stop letting him control you."

(Some of these thoughts are in the book From Anger to Forgiveness by Earnie Larsen.)

Agricultural News

Meeting Scheduled

The Rockcastle Co. FSA Office has scheduled a meeting for 6:00 p.m. Monday, May 14th in the community room of The Community Trust Bank on Hwy. 461, Mt. Vernon. The meeting will review the recent changes to the tobacco program. The Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 (ARPA) enacted on June 20, 2000, and the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (the 2001 Act) enacted on October 28, 2000. A short question and answer period will follow. We encourage all burley tobacco producers to attend. Please call our office at 256-2525 by May 4th to inform our office of those planning to attend. If a large number of producers are attending we will meet at the Rockcastle County High School.

Watch the *Signal* for the final meeting place.

Burley Tobacco Lease Date

April 2nd is the first date producers shall execute a lease for the 2001 quotas. Leasing will end on July 1, 2001. Any producer wishing to post their name to the Tobacco Lease In or Lease Out Listing may do so now. You do not need to wait until April 2nd. If you are unable to come to the office you may notify the office staff to post the listing by calling 606-256-2525.

Burley Tobacco Acreage Reports

New legislation requires all farms with an effective quota greater than zero to report acreage planted to burley, including zero acres.

Farms with an effective burley quota that will not plant burley or lease quotas from the farm MUST report a zero acreage for burley tobacco, or the farm will be subject to quotas forfeiture for the applicable burley marketing quotas next established for the farm, unless the Sate Committee and the County Committee determine that the reduction is not applicable.

Burley Tobacco Designation Announced

Jeffery S. Hall, State Executive Director of the Kentucky Farm Service Agency, has announced that Burley tobacco farmers will be required to report to FSA the pounds and specific warehouse, receiving station or dealer where they intend to market their tobacco this season. The initial designation period will begin June 1, 2001 and end on August 1, 2001. Farmers will be allowed to re-designate pounds and sale locations at various times throughout the marketing season.

The Burley Tobacco Advisory Committee, established by the Secretary of Agriculture, recommended on June 14, 2000, that a method be developed that would enable a better allocation of tobacco graders and warehouses sales opportunity. Warehouse designation has been in place for Flue-Cured tobacco for several years.

"FSA is making this change in the tobacco program in response to a request from Burley tobacco growers and the industry," Hall said. Beginning with the 2001 marketing year all Burley tobacco marketing cards will be issued for the specific pounds and selling location designated by the farmer. "Only those pounds designated on the marketing card to a specific buying location may be presented for sale at that location," Hall said.

Farmers selling at traditional auction warehouses will receive a marketing card similar to cards they have used in recent years. These cards will indicate the producer's designated warehouse. Marketing cards for producers selling at non-auction sites will be issued by thermal bar coded card. These cards will indicate the designated buyer.

For additional information contact your local FSA County Office.

Grazed 2001 Wheat, Barley, Oats (Graze-Out)

The Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 (ARPA) enacted on June 20, 2000 and the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act 2001 (the 2001 Act) enacted on October 28, 2000 provides for Graze-OUT payments instead of Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP's), for the 2001 crop year only, to eligible producers who elect to use acreage planted to wheat, barley, or oats, for the grazing by livestock and agree to forgo any other harvesting of the commodity on such acreage during the 2001 year.

Graze-Out is available to producers who: are otherwise eligible for marketing assistance loans and LDP's according to regulations at 8-LP, graze 2001 crop acreage planted to wheat, barley or oats, do not harvest the same crop on the same acreage.

Applications for GRAZE-OUT begins on the first day of mechanical harvest, May 14th, as determined by COC and ends on August 31, 2001. Producers may file an application for GRAZE-OUT anytime during this application period.

Regulations for GRAZE-OUT are available on the PSD home page at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/psd.

USDA Announces Programs and Deadlines

USDA can now begin payments to eligible producers who elect to use acreage planted to wheat, barley, or oats to graze livestock and give up any other harvesting. The payment will be determined using the loan deficiency payment rate in effect as of the date of the agreement.

The new deadline date for filing WAMLAP II applications is extended to May 4, 2001. THE WAMLAP II signup period provides extended time for producers who produced and sheared wool and mohair during the 2000 market year to sign applications for payment.

USDA announced that payments of more than $1.1 billion is now available under USDA's Crop Disaster Program (CDP).

To be eligible, farmers must have suffered at least 35 percent loss to one or more of their 2000 year crops due to natural disasters. Eligible farmers will receive payment soon after approval of their application.

Signup for the CDP began on January 18, 2001 and the deadline to file an application will be announced later.

For more details on these and other USDA programs, contact the USDA Service Center or local Farm Service Agency.