

GLIMPSE

Entitlements

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It is raining outside as I sit down to write this morning. The grass, flowers, fields and trees depend on water for life. They don't know their dependencies. They are somehow entitled to all they get. The animals, even the little mice who are dependent on the crumbs in our kitchen, rely on what's around to be around.

We humans, however, do know, and are reminded often, that we are dependent, whether we like that or not. Entitlement is the attitude that defies dependency. We deserve to live in the illusions that we are self-contained and have the right to everything which promotes ourselves. I was on a flight recently where a middle-aged fellow was arguing with the Flight Attendant about his being seated in the second row. He always has had the first seat, on the aisle in First-Class every Friday for his return home. "That is my seat!" He was entitled and, in my humble judgment, he lived that way at the home to which he was returning. I had such a self-righteous urge to try to move up to First-Class myself and engage him in a first-class instruction. Unfortunately it was a short flight and this man needed a long flight-course in receptivity, humility, all the other virtues, and especially gratitude. Ah well, I was restrained by my seatbelt and the awareness that he was not entitled to my best shot anyway. Oh, he eventually calmed down when he was informed by the captain that the person in "his" seat was physically disabled and entitled to this special consideration.

Our human lives give us many opportunities to experience the truth of our dependencies and we can argue or enjoy them. We know we can avoid facing them and entitlement is the way out. The truth is that we are "titled" not "entitled". Our title, our name is Available, Open, Receptive, Hungry, Lacking, and Worried. There are many other names which title us and they come to mind at different times. Any situation will highlight any variety of names and we have the chance then to accept or reject the seat we are assigned or argue with the Divine Captain about our independencies. The Captain usually smiles and tells me just to sit down, stifle my complaint and get set for the flight taking me home. As with the fellow

up in First-Class, I usually grump and assume my proper title, but only for the moment.

We all may want a more dignified name, a title which gives us satisfaction, power, esteem and control. Those desires are so time-bound and the entitlement so fleeting. We are entitled to receive the name the Captain gives us and we are entitled to struggle with the seatbelts that keep us secure and in our place. It is not an easy flight, having bumps, dips and often a smooth ride and all these are what we are entitled to if we accept our names. It is only a glimpse, so shape up and fly right!