

## GLIMPSE

### Likeability

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We generally like to be around others whom we experience as liking us. We are forced by their friendship to discover and accept that in us which they accept and enjoy.

The opposite is true as well. We avoid those whom we find do not enjoy us. This also can force us to try to find out what is in us that's bugging them. We usually dismiss them by saying, "That's their problem! Deal with it!"

When I was in my teens I attended a Major League baseball game along with thirty-two thousand others. Sitting near us were people who shouted nasty things at the players on both teams. They threw peanut shells up in the air to see who would catch them better than the players were catching the balls on the field. I decided I didn't like them. This began my thinking a bit farther and deeper.

How many of the large crowd would I like? If I could get to know them all by questions and observations, I would want to remove my unlikeables. Well, given these yahoos behind us, I figured maybe five thousand would get the old heave-ho and that would still leave a large group of folks who would please me more than somewhat. Then I continued and figured that perhaps five thousand others would not meet my high standards for friendship, so out they'd go too.

Well eventually I realized that just maybe I would find out something dislikeable about every person there and I'd be the only one left in the old stadium. Yes! And then, knowing myself just a little bit, I would have to leave myself, because of all that I didn't like about me.

"If it weren't for that person, things would be better around here!" It is always that other person.

I recently was in a pleasant wooded area making my prayer retreat. It was just so beautiful until the mosquitoes arrived in force. One of the other Jesuits found himself asking God why the mosquitoes. Why can't there be perfection? One of the greatest imperfections is that anything perfect for a time will have the time run out. I know there are many places in this world which do not have mosquitoes, but they all have some things, or some ones they would like better if they were somewhere else.

The one perfection of God upon which we most rely and which is available to our grasp is compassion. One of the root meanings of this wonderful word is "reception". We can project onto God that this Divine Spectator of our game of life, would and does walk around our stadium/world kicking the unlikeables and peanut-shell-tossers out into the cold. What we do believe rather, is that this Unknowable is essentially, by nature, inclusive, embracing and compassionate or receptive. God is less interested in the mosquito/persons, than in the persons and helping them know the why of their constant buzzing and biting. It seems that compassion is easier for us humans when we seek to understand the "why" behind the "what" of their behavior.

So God is not sorry for our imperfect condition, nor sad, nor disappointed. God is receptive and more accepting of our condition than we are. My lack of compassion for all those other baseball fans stemmed from my lack of compassion for my peanut-shelled self.

That very same-self has been and probably, no, without doubt, is a mosquito in the lives of others and I am now grateful they did not remove me from their ballpark.

God's expectation of us is that we allow God to be compassionate with us and so then we live more easily with others. We spend our lives getting ready for the Big Game where all are included, mosquitoes and all who will no longer bug us.

It is only a glimpse. Enjoy those more who enjoy you. They are like God a bit.