

GLIMPSE

Who's In?

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Do kids, now-a-days choose up baseball sides as we did, long ago? The boys in my neighborhood would circle around and one would take a bat, hold it vertically and toss it that way to the fellow representing the other side and he would catch the bat near the bottom. Then each of the two would wrap his hand on the bat above the other's hand and then alternate until the person who had the last possible grasp below the knob of the bat, would, after all that, get the first choice of the available players. The second choice went to the second-lower hand-person. The choices then alternated accordingly until I was chosen at the bottom of the barrel. I played right field where the ball was never hit, no kidding.

I have heard that one of the chief causes of addiction is rejection or fear of being rejected and the resulting shame. For most of us, the first experience of life was being pushed forth or expelled in the process of being born. Early in life little persons play with dolls, trucks, building blocks, but eventually play with others, teams, tea-parties, playing house. The question arises early enough, to whom do I belong, who wants me, and whom do I want?

Social anxieties increase as we grow in the awareness that we doubt our goodness, our acceptableness. For most of us, our families had to love us or at least like us. We needed to test the free-market, would we be chosen, invited, accompanied, and included? The big question then becomes about what we would have to do to be "in". What image of self would have to change? What is "in" so we can be "in" as well? I regret deeply now that I disassociated myself from my first high school friend to be closer friends with "cooler" guys. That is embarrassing now, but absolutely necessary then. I unchose so to be chosen and that was my drug of choice.

What a great and human experience it is to be wanted and loved freely and without the need for pretenses or shame-masks. We have the word, "shameless" which has the connotation of acting without regard for self-respect. Being loved results

slowly in being shameless about who we are. Shame depends on what you think of me. Shameless depends on what I think of me, how I accept and choose to be real. When we are addicted to being accepted by others it indicates I haven't chosen myself as loveable and chooseable. When Jesus told His disciples shortly before His death, that they did not choose Him, but He had chosen them, Jesus was not just referring to them, but to all, the human family, us.

I attended an all-male high school and at Christmastime of my senior year, three different young women from three different all-female schools invited me to their individual school's Winter Dances. Wow! Three nights in a row, three very nice girls wanting me, the right-fielder! Though I had to spend lots of money buying corsages, my self-esteem increased in value. Growing up for a while is all about "me" and getting unaddicted begins with a grateful "yes" about "me" so it can be more and more about "you". I would want to spend my days choosing, including, being with, and inviting others to my dances and games. It is just a glimpse, but not from right field anymore.