



Echoes

by Pastor Chuck Swindoll

A YOUNG BOY LIVED WITH his grandfather on the top of a mountain in the Swiss Alps. Often, just to hear his voice echoing back to him, he would go outside, cup his hands around his mouth, and shout, "HELLO!" Up from the canyons it reverberated over and over, "HELLO . . . HELLO . . . hello . . . hello . . . hello . . ."

"I LOVE YOU," he then called out. Immediately, the reply, "I LOVE YOU . . . I LOVE YOU . . . I love you . . . love you . . . love you . . ." One day the boy misbehaved and his grandfather disciplined him severely. The child reacted violently by shaking his fist and screaming, "I HATE YOU!" To his surprise, the rocks and boulders across the mountainside responded in the same tone of voice, "I HATE YOU . . . I HATE YOU . . . I hate you . . . hate you . . . hate you . . ."

And so it is in life. We could call it one of the immutable laws of physical nature and especially of human nature. We get in return *exactly* what we give. It all comes back, sometimes in greater measure than we gave. These persistent echoes mirror our actions to an emphatic, and often *embarrassing*, degree.

What is it Jesus once said? Dr. Luke tells us:

Do to others as you would like them to do to you. . . . You must be compassionate. . . . Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. LUKE 6:31, 36–37

I call that the law of echoes. This law is beautifully portrayed in the eloquent expression of Alfred Lord Tennyson:

Our echoes roll from soul to soul and grow forever and forever.

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Moral

You are responsible for how you treat others. Be careful with your words and judgments. They will echo back to you from the canyon of your past someday!

Questions

- 1. If your actions in the past few weeks were to echo back to you, would that be a good thing or a bad thing?**
- 2. Do you treat others the way you would like to be treated?**
- 3. How would we be better as a team if we were less quick to condemn and quicker to forgive?**