

Doing Better

By Silver Rose



“We did the best we could, and when we knew better, we did better.”

Maya Angelou

In the face of Bill’s illness, there is a good deal of reflection. He is looking back over his life wondering if he’s made a difference. I’m looking over mine wondering if I always did the best I could.

If I could name one character flaw I sincerely wish I could be rid of, it’s that I am incredibly judgmental. There is no question that I’ve hurt people with my sharp tongue and unkind observations.

(Side note: my funny friend Rick always says, “I hate those judgmental jerks.”)

I know the origin. Growing up, my family used humor to try and disguise the judgments we were showering down on each other and others. We were a funny group; still are today. Imagine my surprise when I entered the adult world and found that not everyone was amused. At the age of 21, my roommate Judith asked, “Why are you torturing me like this?” I replied, “In my family, this is how we show love,” to which she responded, “Well, could you love me a little less, please?”



In the 70s, feminist “consciousness raising” groups were very popular, the theory being how could we combat something like chauvinism or racism if it was so masked that it was difficult to recognize? Maybe I could use one of those today. A group of men and women who care about me but who can point out that I’m being unkind or a bit severe in my judgments.

I know I’ve improved but with progress, with “consciousness” comes the realization of how much damage you’ve done along the way. Perhaps that’s why I like Angelou’s quote so much.

“We did the best we could, and when we knew better, we did better.”

– Maya Angelou

She is being so kind—something to work toward.