

“You Owe Me One” + The Reciprocity Factor

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By Fr. George Morelli

Have you noticed that someone you have once done a favor for sometime in the past now, seemingly out of the middle of nowhere the person now expects a favor back in return. It is not that they are asking you, rather their tone of voice and words indicate it is not a request rather it is an expectation. Where does this demanding expectation come from?

It actually comes from the faulty mindset of the individual who originally did the favor for you. The favor doer was saying mentally in his own mind, but did not communicate to you: “Ok I will do this favor for you, now you owe me one in the future.” If the favor is not returned when I want it and in the way they want I have the right to be angry and resentful.” Cognitive-Behavioral psychologists call this distorted irrational cognition: Reciprocity. (Morelli, 2007). Reciprocity is a one way, that is to say, unilateral contract that if I do something for you I can expect that you will do something for me.

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