

Do it Anyway — Mother Teresa

This is a wise "final analysis" perspective on life, relayed from Kent Keith to us (with some revision, as explained at the end of the page) by Mother Teresa, because "it was never just between you and them."

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered.
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind,
people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.
Be kind anyway.

If you are successful,
you will win some false friends and some true enemies.
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank,
people may cheat you.
Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building,
someone could destroy overnight.
Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness,
they may be jealous.
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today,
people will often forget tomorrow.
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have,
and it may never be enough.
Give the best you've got anyway.

You see,
**in the final analysis it is between you and God;
it was never between you and them anyway.**

This poem is a revision of an earlier set of *Paradoxical Commandments* by Kent Keith.

Both versions — revised (author unknown) and original (by Kent Keith) — are in [this page](#). A related version is engraved on the wall of Mother Teresa's home for children in Calcutta. A good explanation of the history and context (re: Mother Teresa) comes from [Kent Keith](#).

I like Kent's ideas — it's why they're in this page! — including his thoughtful evaluation of the final paragraph about "the final analysis." This is my favorite part, but Kent is "troubled" by it because he thinks "the statement that 'it was never between you and them anyway' seems to justify giving up on, or ignoring, or discounting other people." As Kent reminds us, "Jesus said that there are two great commandments – to love God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. So in the final analysis, it is between you and God, but it is also between you and 'them' ... We have to love people and help people anyway." I think the revision agrees, when it repeatedly urges us (as in Kent's original version) to do good things for people — to help them and love them — even when our efforts are *not appreciated* and are *not rewarded*. The revised version says "it was never between you and them" for final *evaluation* and *motivation*. God will be the ultimate *evaluator* of our thinking-and-actions. And our main *motivation* should be to please God, as in Colossians 3:23-24, "[Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people](#)" because "[Christ is the real Master you serve](#)." Kent says, "it is between you and God, but it is also between you and them." I think the revision agrees, but the clarity of its agreement would improve — with Kent (and me) liking it better — if one word was added, so it explains that your actions in life are "never between **just** you and them."

You see,
in the final analysis it is between you and God.
It was never just between you and them anyway.