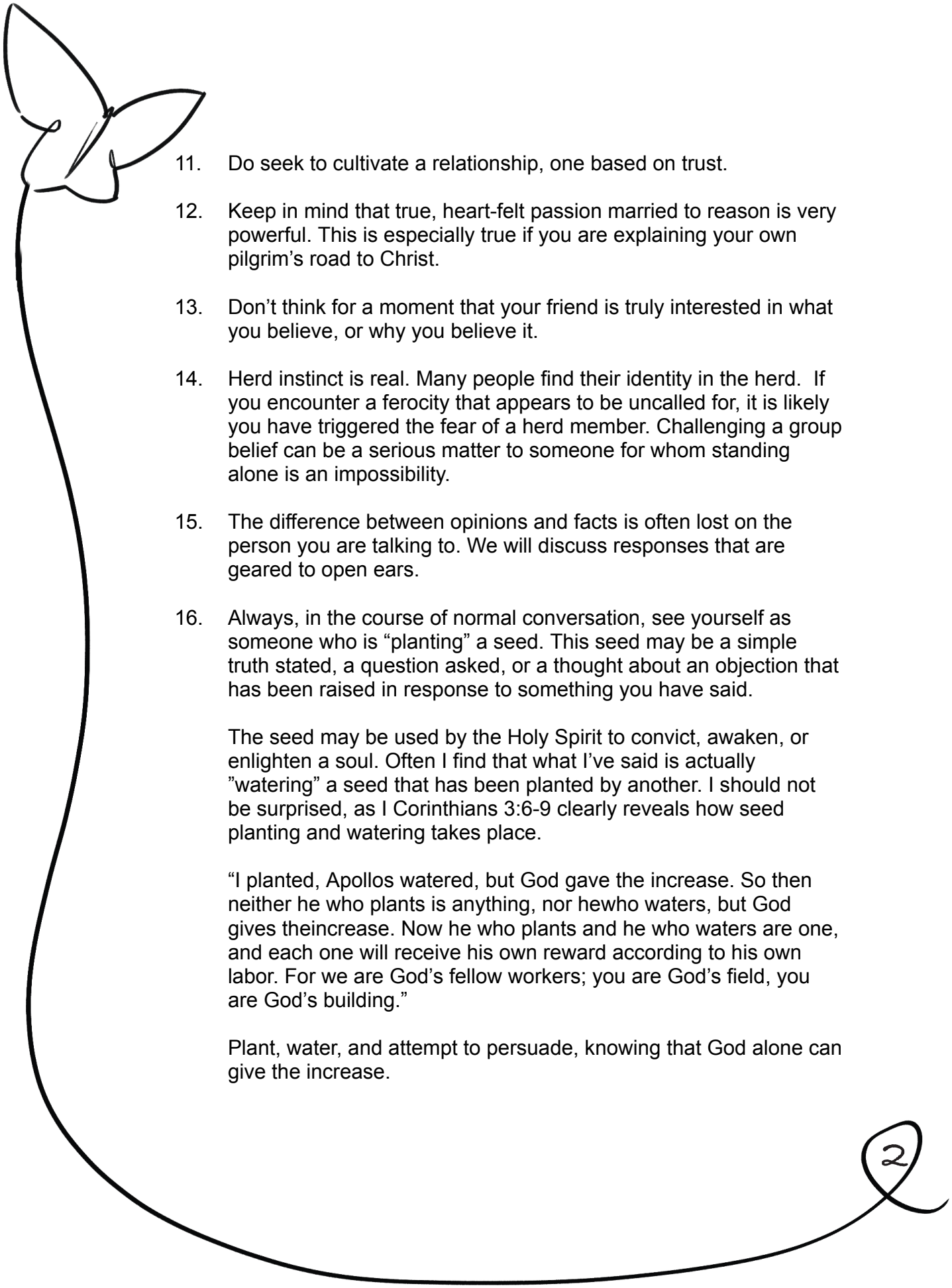




WHAT IS THE AVERAGE PERSON ACROSS FROM YOU LIKELY TO BE LIKE?

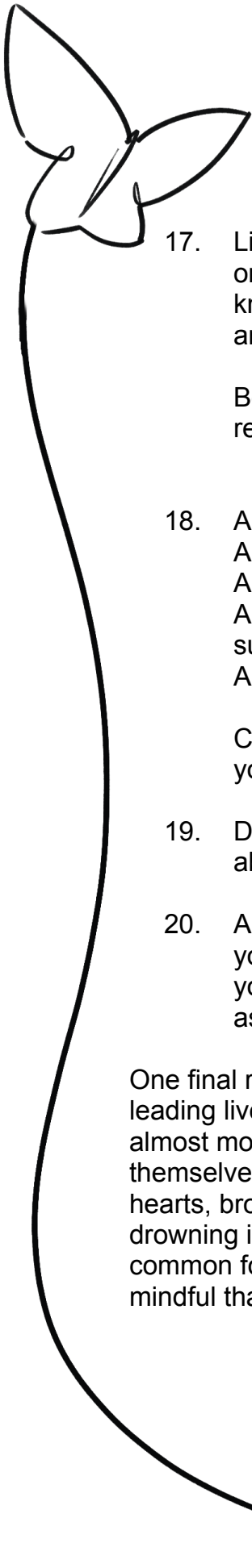
1. ***“Every man is a creature of the age in which he lives, and few are able to raise themselves above the ideas of the times.”***
Voltaire
2. ***“No one lies so boldly as someone indignant.”***
Friedrich Nietzsche
3. They are fearful, fearful you’ll soon find out how precious little they know about the very thing they are pontificating about.
4. They are in this to win. This is a burden they have that you don’t. If you don’t wish to win, can you lose? Help them relax. Once you understand this, you can be more gracious than you’d normally be.
5. Most of the time, the idea has the person you’re talking to, rather than the person you’re talking to having the idea.
6. The stakes are very high for the person you are speaking to. Often his/her entire identity is tied up in his/her position. Be considerate.
7. He or she is likely to be nervous or angry or both. Be understanding.
8. Unwittingly, they may be part of today’s “cancel culture”, so you’d be wise to see him/her as one who preaches tolerance while practicing intolerance.
9. ***“Every generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it.”***
George Orwell
10. Their aching for significance often weighs on them. Their need for importance makes listening to you calmly lay out your reasoning can literally paralyze their ears. In other words, their brain instructs their ears to close and their face to curl in a sneer. Be sympathetic.

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11. Do seek to cultivate a relationship, one based on trust.
 12. Keep in mind that true, heart-felt passion married to reason is very powerful. This is especially true if you are explaining your own pilgrim's road to Christ.
 13. Don't think for a moment that your friend is truly interested in what you believe, or why you believe it.
 14. Herd instinct is real. Many people find their identity in the herd. If you encounter a ferocity that appears to be uncalled for, it is likely you have triggered the fear of a herd member. Challenging a group belief can be a serious matter to someone for whom standing alone is an impossibility.
 15. The difference between opinions and facts is often lost on the person you are talking to. We will discuss responses that are geared to open ears.
 16. Always, in the course of normal conversation, see yourself as someone who is "planting" a seed. This seed may be a simple truth stated, a question asked, or a thought about an objection that has been raised in response to something you have said.

The seed may be used by the Holy Spirit to convict, awaken, or enlighten a soul. Often I find that what I've said is actually "watering" a seed that has been planted by another. I should not be surprised, as I Corinthians 3:6-9 clearly reveals how seed planting and watering takes place.

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building."

Plant, water, and attempt to persuade, knowing that God alone can give the increase.

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17. Listen closely to your discussion-mate. It is profitable to know his or her background, desires, failings, and painful experiences. The knowledge you gain will enable you to better frame your replies and questions.

Being wise as a serpent is good to keep in mind. Your goal, I repeat once more, is to persuade, not to win.

18. Anyone enjoy being talked down to?
Anyone enjoy being talked over?
Anyone enjoy being sneered at?
Anyone enjoy being told what to believe by someone with an air of superiority?
Anyone enjoy being scolded?

Consider your own case, which has made true change possible for you; a) power b) influence?

19. Do you realize how difficult it is for anyone to admit they are wrong about anything? You are my prime example.
20. Always measure progress in a discussion properly. If persuasion is your goal, then accept trust building, slight movement, and getting your discussion-mate to actually acknowledge your point of view as satisfactory results.

One final reminder, for me as well as you: H.D. Thoreau spoke of people leading lives of quiet desperation. He was right. Living, for most people, is almost more than they can bear. Mostly, they've done more harm to themselves than all the people and things they blame for their broken hearts, broken worlds, and the aimless mediocrity they find themselves drowning in. Luther's disordered chaos of darkness is the norm for the common folks, folks like you and me. Be merciful and understanding, ever mindful that it is grace alone that accounts for the hope that is in us.