

Tension and Needlecraft

By Bonita Porter, First Friends Meeting

Whatever type of needle-crafting you do, you must deal with the tension of your thread or yarn. Too tight, your piece puckers or curls out of shape. Too loose and there are gaping threads in your quilting or holes in your knitting. To achieve a smooth, finished product, the tension of the thread or yarn must be constant, neither too tight nor too loose.

Stories abound of tension becoming a problem as young people learn to knit. Many learn to knit socks first. Socks were small pieces and offer a sense of completion fairly quickly. In order to speed the process along, a mother may trade turns with her child. Beginning knitters are famous for pulling the yarn too tightly around the knitting needles, dropping stitches and not exactly following the pattern. The mother's turn picks up dropped stitches, loosens the tension and corrects any errors in the pattern. This process creates some pretty lumpy looking socks as the looser knitting of the mothers bulges out from the tightly knitted rows of the younger knitter creating an accordion pattern of bulges and tight places alternating up the leg.

With practice, the crafter learns to relax the tension of the yarn or thread to make their piece look professional and easier to complete. With the right tension the completed work is pleasing to the eye and more rewarding to its creator.

This same concept applies to our daily lives. Many of us over-scheduling our time. How many of us must leave something or someone we love to do something we would rather miss? How many of us end up screaming at our children to hurry up, because we are late for that undesired activity? We abandon playing with our children, the needed conversation with our spouse or boss. We miss the simple pleasure of passing on to them something we love to do. Who knows, they may love to knit or quilt one day themselves.

How many of us fill our prayer time or spiritual waiting with stuff that is not nurturing to us or our families? To be religious literally means to 'link' ourselves with other people and with God. How tightly or loosely we link ourselves can make all the difference in our spiritual lives. Practice makes the tension relax. A life of relaxed tension creates beauty, in needlecrafts and in our lives with God.

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