

Seeing Others With Eyes of Compassion

This past weekend, I had an interesting experience I would like to share with you. I am sharing it because I know this has happened to others as well as to myself. I am hoping that by sharing it, we will all be reminded that offering unsolicited help and judgments can be hurtful to others rather than helpful.

I was attending a seminar and it was break time so I was walking down the hallway to go outside for a few minutes. I was limping because sitting for a few hours had aggravated a knee injury I had. A woman came up to me and asked if I knew about a certain technique. I said I did.

"Because," she said, "it just isn't right that someone like you with this light-filled, wonderful publication, should be limping. As long as it is just a temporary thing, that's okay."

My, oh, my. Suddenly I had the weight of the world on my shoulders. Because of my work, someone felt I should not have a physical malady. Yes, we could say that she was mirroring my own self-judgment and I will freely admit I do not like having physical (or any other kind of) issues to deal with. But, hey, I am here to learn just like everyone else.

I remember reading a blog awhile back where some students were tearing into a very well known teacher because they learned he was going through a divorce. Suddenly, nothing he said had value any more. They



were shocked that this particular teacher had relationship issues and were saying they didn't want to study with him any more.

Two things came to mind for me. First, teachers are not perfect. Personally, I don't want a perfect teacher. Why? Because someone who has not dealt with their own issues doesn't have any sort of depth to help me deal with mine. Second, who am I to judge someone else? I have no idea what this person has gone through or is going through. Maybe instead of judging this person so harshly, I could extend some compassion and love his direction.

In my case, I am sure the woman only wanted to be helpful. Unfortunately, it didn't come across that way. I felt judged and I felt like I needed to try to hide my limp so no one else would know I had a boo-boo and was in pain. There is no way I would have any interest in the technique she wanted to tell me about. All I wanted to do was get away from her.

What do we do, then, if we think someone could use the information or technique we know about?

First, trust that the person is on his or her own path and is being guided to the help they need, with or without you. Allow yourself to feel a firm confidence that the person will find any answers they might be seeking.

Second, if you have some information you feel could help someone you can hand the person a flyer or Internet address and simply say this is something that might interest them. It is not necessary to comment on whatever

symptom you saw them exhibit.

Third, give up your vision of a perfect world or universe. There are no perfect people. There is no perfect situation. I will qualify that by saying that whoever we are and however we are is perfect for us. Quit aiming for the sort of perfection where not even a hair is out of place. This puts you into a very stressful place of aiming for something you can't find.

Fourth, don't offer unsolicited help. How do you know what the person wants or needs? Simply be there for people if they want what you have to offer. If you just can't help yourself, refer to number two above.

Most of us are our own worst critics and we really don't need someone else telling us about our shortcomings. Give me a few minutes and I can tell you everything that is wrong with me. It would take me longer to

tell you everything that is right about me, but I am working on being able to do that more quickly.

One of the most important things I have learned over the years is to look out at the world and at other people with eyes of compassion rather than with eyes of judgment. I know that everyone has their story. Everyone has their own set of challenges and I can't begin to think that anyone has all the answers to anyone else's problems. Certainly, I don't.

That is one of the reasons I publish this newspaper. I know there are many different teachings and techniques available. I also know that not all of them are for everyone. We each have to find our own way in our own time. Remain open to finding your answers and teachers and they will come to you in their own marvelous ways. I know mine always do.

Krysta is publisher of *New Spirit Journal* and the author of books and CDs. She has free podcasts available through her website www.krystagibson.com.



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