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Disinhibited Thoughts #11

I used to think that learning to accept myself was to be the final step in my personal climb to wellness. At first it seemed this intuition was correct -- benefits both expected and unforeseen materialized as belief in my own self-worth bloomed. However, with it came cynicism and disappointment in the world as I conceived it. I also detected an alarming fury mounting within me – fury at a planet that had for so many years wronged me incessantly and, I now believed, undeservedly. I felt myself hardening and, in so doing, jeopardized a very special relationship I was in. With the possibility of this loss came incredible clarity: a realization that if I'd almost driven away this angel I must be doing something very wrong. Maybe self-acceptance was only a way station – a plateau on which to rest before embarking on new and succeeding ascents. I had learned to accept myself. But now I had to learn to again accept everyone ELSE.

Yes there has been plenty of hurt. It IS justified anger. There WERE tough times in the past and they DID ache. It is not somehow small, weak, inferior or stupid to feel bitterness: there are totally valid reasons for this. But I must move on regardless. I cannot allow past interactions, or the assumptions they produce, to tarnish or squander new opportunities.

I have done so in the past: it was a protective function, and an understandable one. For a very long time this was an adaptive way to be – odds favoured that my actions or words WOULD be misinterpreted or reacted to in the most negative of ways, and I was scared to hurt anymore. It was safer to pre-emptively anticipate and react in order to dull the subsequent blow and avoid a rage borne of surprise.

I realize now that I'm reading from an old book though – ironically I was starting to put my walls back up just as others were ready to finally take theirs down. I have been diagnosed. People around me are now educated, aware of why I am the way I am, and ready to apply this new information. TS in general is so much better known and recognized today. I, through education and experience, have become a considerably different person who now elicits very different reactions than in the past. Now it is "safe" to be the loving person I've always wanted to be.

If I continue to assume the worst of new people and situations then it is MY behaviour that is now in question -- now it is I who is not being fair to the WORLD. It's time for me to catch up to the circumstances and show forgiveness. In my heart and not just my head. If I damage my own future by not doing so this allows past unfair acts to continue to win. They don't deserve to have this power over me.

I will not replace old assumptions with blind optimism: this only puts a new face on the same mistake. I will instead do my best to treat new situations with a clean slate. And if I do happen to be treated unjustly my newfound self-assuredness will lead me to DO something about it rather than endure it passively or fester over it.

It seemed appropriate that, having experienced this catharsis, I should send out a “Hello I'm back” correspondence to the many friends and family members I had feigned impenetrability to. It also seemed appropriate to take a chance on some new people I had summarily dismissed. I received in reply such openness, kindness and generosity I was ashamed to see how many people had been willing and waiting to show me affection if I'd only let them.

For one thing, I have this phenomenal sister I never knew I had. I can't wait to get to know her better.
Until next time, my friends! Duncan December, 2000