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Tourette Syndrome • OCD
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Disinhibited Thoughts #12

Three instalments ago I told you how important it is to feel good about yourself. Then over the past two instalments I proceeded to make mention of the many unfortunate reactions you receive. I stated that you must show understanding and forgiveness in the face of these reactions. Finally I suggested that rather than hold the perpetrators responsible for their lack of knowledge about TS you must take the opportunity to educate; moreover you must be prepared to accept some blame for negative reactions aimed at you if you have not done so.

That's a tall order. I'll show you what I mean -- let's try a scenario: I've often experienced difficulties with the friends of girlfriends I've had. A person that has the capacity to understand me, patience to live with me, personality to enjoy me, strength to handle me and willingness to assume some public and familial awkwardness in being with me is a rare and special individual indeed. The odds that all of her friends will show the same combination of unique and coveted qualities are scant. Perhaps that is why I've often been plagued by the 'normie cheerleader squad': people that can so easily and quickly dismiss, judge or condemn me based on a very surface knowledge of who and what I am and rally to convince my partner to return to the fold of normalcy.

What is even more difficult, however, is that I cannot react to this behaviour. These people would be (and have been in the past) so quick to pull their friend away from what they perceive as an oddity, a danger.....yet when I manage to climb past my own defences I can appreciate their perspective as good friends watching out for someone they love (and what is more I'd better see this if I don't want to cause major rifts with my partner).

After reaching deep into myself, I snuff anger at rude and even malicious acts with the knowledge that I AM the disruption to the rule; I AM a discrepancy in expectations that I cannot blame people for not intuitively adjusting to. The final kicker of course is that I walk, spent and robbed, down a hallway to find yet another person jumping, staring or snickering at my tics. My recent mental wranglings have not 'bought' me any right to retort to this salt in the wound. I must continue on. The obligations of living in disorder are relentless.

It may be true that for us to hold the knee-jerk reactions of others against them we ourselves are then small and in the wrong. People WON'T always understand, some people CAN'T understand, and we must leave it at that -- to do otherwise is being intolerant and unfair ourselves. However whether the reaction was necessarily purposely malevolent or not, the end result is that we have been hurt and are left with little recourse to alleviate the pain.

That leaves us doing all the work. That means that others can react with impunity and we cannot. It's unfair. It's a difficult burden. And it's the way it is. While I'm not going to tell you that there is a fair solution to this quandary I, at the very least, thought you deserved some recognition, validation and commendation for living it day to day.

Until next time, my friends!
Duncan
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