

If Issues Were Tissues, I'd Have A Whole Box



When I was a young adult, people really bugged me.

It bothered me that other people were different than me. How dare they? After all, people that were different than me weren't doing what I thought they ought to be doing. (For those of you who know me, I get that it would be a sad place if everyone was as messed up as I was back then, but I didn't see it at the time.) I knew what I knew and no one else was as smart as me.

At least that's what 'I' thought...

I think it's safe to say that we all have issues of one kind or another with those that we know and especially those we are close to.

I once heard a young man say to an older man that he had 'marriage problems.' The older man looked at the younger man and asked, "Are you married?" The young man said yes, and looked down at the floor. I think he missed the amused smile on the older gentleman's face as he replied, "Then of course you have marriage problems."

Relationships are like that. If you don't have issues and challenges with at least some of your relationships, I'd say the odds are pretty good your relationships aren't all that deep. It's just a matter of the geometry of human relationships.

But here's the thing or at least the thing that I finally learned. An extremely high percentage of those issues within our relationships are a result of someone wanting to control someone else... And it's usually going both ways.

The first thing I needed to realize was that I couldn't control anyone else; I had enough of a challenge trying to control myself.

I can't control anyone!

That sentence says what it says but it also says something more. I can't even stop the people around me from trying to control me. No one can control anyone because everyone is actually choosing for themselves whether or not they want to be controlled including efforts to control others.

If someone succeeds in controlling my life, it's because I allow it, which is also a choice. I can claim to be blind to my ability to choose but in the end, that seems like a cop out for not taking responsibility for me and trying to pass the buck – making someone else responsible for anything I might not be happy about.

But what can we do about it? It's a prevalent illusion in most relationships.

There is only one way out that I have been able to find. (If you know another, please contact me and tell me what it is.)

We have to be content with where others are; even if where they are is trying to tell us how to live. Illusion can't be

fought with force; it can only be changed through the awareness of personal choices.

By being content with where other people are, I stop trying to control those same other people and I become an example of what I wished to see in the world. That doesn't mean that everyone will take notice and stop trying to control me but it does allow me to recognize that no one can control me and ignore their attempts at control.

Whew... Hope that made sense in some strange way!

I can remember my Mom telling me that "if I want the kids at school to be kind to me, I should first be kind to them." I can also remember thinking that that was the stupidest advice I ever heard. I mean, how can I be kind if they are being mean? And besides, why should I have to be first?

Well turns out she was right in more ways than she probably knows.

If I want others to allow me to be and do as I want to be and do, I must first be content with where they are and become an example of the possibility that everyone can see...

When I am content with where other people are shows a willingness to give up my issues with them. I can throw away the whole box.

Being content with where other people are is the beginning of a new kind of individuality and freedom for all of those willing to take on the cause.

Shall I see you there?

In Gratitude
Kathleen Anne McCarthy

