

## "Kindness and Compassion vs Enabling"

Hello from Rev. Tiger at Church of the Angels. This week will challenge your love, question levels of responsibility and hopefully strengthen your Spiritualist walk...

Spiritualism talks a lot about love from Spirit, universal love, using your heart space... Kindness and compassion are of course components of the complex emotion love and contribute to motivating our behavior. Kindness and compassion can also become driven by responsibility for another's welfare, especially when dealing with family harmony and others we must keep the peace with on a regular basis like coworkers...

### The big "E"

In a valiant attempt to bring kindness and compassion forward in your daily actions it can become easy to slip into enabling instead. Enabling is a tough subject that requires 'tough love'. I don't mean like imposing consequences or offering a severe tongue lashing to another - those types of response just go in one ear and out the other.

We as Spiritualists are expected to inspire acquisition of knowledge and to lead by example. No, the 'tough' part is curbing OUR reaction to the behavior that is demanding us to enable a refusal! We need to instead encourage others to learn how to navigate life's obstacles as a joy for themselves - we must offer direction instead of caving in to foot the bill so to speak.

Keep in mind I am looking at this from purely a Spiritualist perspective, as I am not any sort of Psychologist. If you live in a chronic manipulative situation perhaps in depth work should be considered for all involved with a health care professional. My aim today is to point toward recognizing that we may indeed be enabling when it is not our intention. I think simply recognizing enabling allows us to adjust our behavior greatly.

We have been previously exploring "Personal Responsibility". When we enable, we prevent the other person from exercising their God given right to

perform their own personal responsibility! Last week we discussed how exercising our responsibility creates manifestation, which in turn reinforces one's personal connection with Spirit. Spiritualist's hope of course that everyone will learn to experience the continual joy of Spirit...

Perhaps we enable because another refuses to exercise their responsibility. They might be stuck in a rut or have some other reason like fear of making mistakes, doubt of personal abilities or laziness - all are major reasons. Occasionally it's a cry for outside help, induced by depression or chemical dependence. Often though they just never learned to be responsible in certain areas in the first place because it was never permitted, or they were never forced to practice - part of their Soul is sleeping...

I try to evaluate why a person is refusing to motivate on their own behalf. When I ask the answer is frequently a bewildering stare. This is because they are not sure why they don't want to act or are not willing to admit they just find it easier to not motivate which tells me they are definitely not awake.

You can lead a horse to a watering hole, but you cannot make it bend down to drink. You can bend down and fill a bucket yourself to bring water up to the horse so that you don't feel anxious watching it refuse. Has the horse always had water brought to it? Maybe he never thought about bending down to drink because water always just appeared in front of him. This is all learned behavior of course. If the horse were parched, he would finally look for water on his own. If the horse is somehow infirmed than you would make ongoing provisions for water to be brought to the horse out of kindness and compassion.

If you had a choice of running out and purchasing everything to make a pitcher of margaritas plus all the ingredients for 'Taco Tuesday' or simply being handed it already prepared and ready to consume which would you choose? Would you ever learn to cook? Lots of bars and restaurants are out there. I bet you choose your favorite food outings where they provide the best food and the best service at the best price. I bet sometimes you eat out just because you're tired of preparing meals at home. I personally enjoy 'girls' night out' for 'Taco Tuesday' on a regular basis.

When I lived in Connecticut, thirty years ago, I had a great friend Barb. She had a fabulous relationship with her Husband and her two teenage Daughters. We lived out in the country about six miles from town. Houses were acres apart. Most of the High School kids drove themselves to school as soon as they were old enough but in Connecticut driving age back then was 18! Most Mom's drove their kids to school and picked them up afterwards to ferry them to outside activities. There was one morning school bus and one after school bus which Barb's Daughters relied upon as Barb and her Husband both had fulfilling full time jobs many miles away.

Barb's oldest Daughter was very active in basketball; she even went on to UCON with a basketball scholarship. Picking up the ball player after practice was not in the cards for Barb. The Daughter was instructed to try and solve her transportation problem herself! This was shocking to other women in our civic group.

Barb explained that they would help their Daughter figure out a safe solution with suggestions if necessary but they wanted her to feel empowered and self-reliant so they first threw the ball in her court to solve the problem. What a smart fifteen-year-old, she had it all figured out in no time - trading services with other families, like tutoring math in exchange for transport, with rides already leaving hoop practice toward her neighborhood. She even had backups... She ended up using a variety of transport sources so that no one would feel too put-upon!

Great illustration of not enabling plus a show of returned compassion from the Daughter for those helping her. Both Barb's Daughters are now happy productive members of society with their own families. They possess positive self-esteem with an effortless style because they trust their own abilities, they had practice... I don't know if Barb and her husband had ever heard of Spiritualism, they just did not enable their girls, they lead by not caving in - 'tough love'. They also just happen to have grown up in Ohio where I guess it might be more expected to be self-sufficient.

This example may not seem like such a big deal but where I lived in Connecticut a disproportionately large number of young people were

impolite, selfish, felt entitled, relied upon domestic staff, never worked themselves, and just expected to go off to whatever ivy league school their parents had gone to in a sporty new car they would receive for high school graduation. More than a few of those kids have ended up in serious legal trouble for things like fraud, tax evasion, hacking and embezzlement! To be comfortable being enabled is a learned response.

I was an enabled child in the housework department. It took a long time to be comfortable out on my own learning to cook for myself, stay on a budget, picking up after myself, keeping up with the laundry... Juggling these chores with a new job everyday was something I had no practice with. I had truly been oblivious to how intricately organized all those types of activities should be coordinated into each day as just no brainer tiny extra add-on efforts. I had never seen dust in my house growing up, so I was mortified at how quickly it accumulates! I now love to try new recipes. I look forward to spring cleaning so I can look out sparkling windows and rearrange the furniture. I love to suck up the barefoot irritating crunchies on the carpets or slowly plan a vacation a few dollars at a time. My favorite thing is pulling a hot robe out of the dryer after a nice bubble bath...

I was not idle while I was not learning necessary chores as a child, but I still had to struggle with daily survival techniques eventually on my own later. Guidance would have been nice, having it be something I could easily control for myself like it was no big deal would have been empowering as a young person, like learning to drive. It also would have been way easier to learn housekeeping when I was not forced to do everything else for myself at the same time. The first time I used a laundromat on my own was a daunting experience as was the condition of my wardrobe for a few months.

My Friend growing up had a winey, disagreeable, sulky sibling. My Friend's big sister was always comforting the little sister's crying, coaxing her to do something, caring for the sulky child. I asked my Friend once why she never had to take care of her sister. She said "Oh, I'm not putting up with that. She doesn't pull that stuff when she's doing things with me. She acts like a brat to get out of having to do things"! Out of the mouths of babes...

Instead of learning housework I observed behaviors at an early age sitting

Hospice Gate Keeping on a regular basis with my Parents or participating in after school classes and activities every single day. Childhood and adult learning curves were sort of reversed in some ways for me, but we are each on our own individual adventure.

Live and learn. It is not a perfect world. Perhaps it's best to have a few prepared retorts in our hip pocket to pull out when we are detained from our own direction, coaxed by others to enable.

> "I'm not available to help you at the moment, I have an appointment" (probably with myself). "Start without me and give me an update at dinner".

> "That will be an interesting thing for you to figure out, try googling".

> "How do you think that should be done"?

> "Let me know what you decide".

These types of responses usually work for me, not doing but rather encouraging - by pointing out a direction in which to start and showing support by not dismissing a need for revisited nurturing and reinforcement.

The act of enabling others causes them denial. It is often something many of us are doing to others without realizing. We rob another of their own self esteem in some way, rob them of their personal responsibility. We keep them from manifesting and therefore feeling the thrill of an ongoing connection with Spirit energy! I think just talking about this occasionally can remind us to stay on a positive tract with our intensions and response.

> Initiating "K & C"

Kindness and compassion are entirely different. I have ongoing interaction with an independent senior living, special needs community. I noticed they help one another with things. Mostly their biggest challenges are lack of outside interaction and income.

One of these Ladies is visited often by her kind Friend from outside the community who shares fresh picked vegetables from her garden, servings of homemade soup on cold winter days or chunks of birthday cake left over from family gatherings... There is always a special goodie in the bag like a chocolate bar, Amish preserves, a jar of Dejon, sparkling juice, a splurge

item like scented soap - always some fun item not affordable within a food stamp budget.

You cannot believe how excited a person on a meager income becomes with a gift of \$12 packs of the softest toilet paper or emollient shampoo that doesn't come from the dollar store. It is life changing for them to be able to count on visiting a relative for a few hours every month also being invited to bring laundry along to wash and dry for free during their visits each time. It's a \$5-\$10 bill back in their wallet! Their assistance does not pay for a haircut, fun sweat shirts, a bottle of nail polish and remover, a new ball cap or swim suit, crossword puzzles, sports magazines, chewing gum, scented hand cream, an herb plant, a holiday bobble...

Outside goodies are gifts of compassion but mostly the love shown by Friends showing up or inviting them over on a regular basis for caring conversation and fresh sheets is a life affirming act of true kindness and compassion on a huge sustaining scale.

Adopting someone in need to interact with occasionally on a regular basis is 'Spiritualism walking it's talk'! Especially during a pandemic but forever onward... A helping hand might always be more meaningful for all concerned than writing a check for a charity drive. Who might you adopt?

Next week we shall "Heal Thy Self"...

... ..  ... ..

Today's Invocation:

Great Teacher of goodness and light, please help me to unravel the great mystery of understanding, so I might steer my intentions on a benevolent course for myself and those with whom I share my day...

Safe Journey,

 Rev. Tiger