

JUDGEMENT DAY?

🙄 "Inclusivity" - What are you talking about? I like everyone!

🙄 "Equal Rights" - Certainly, so how am I not seeing this?

🙄 "Prejudice" - Not me!

🙄 Monkey see 🙄 monkey do 🙄

Hello from Rev. Tiger at church of the Angels. Do we actually realize that we are being prejudicial? What do we turn a deafened ear to so as not to become involved? Who do we invite to dinner? Where is avoidance or a rush to judgement in our job description from Spirit?

I love my cozy country efficiency. I plug the vacuum cord into the kitchen island and it reaches to both ends of the apartment - everything is fresh in 5 minutes! I can sit in my sunny courtyard and snap off fresh mint to toss into my bowl of peaches. I have lovely neighbors who take the time to allow me to read their lips when they are speaking so we can laugh together. Waddling wild duck parades keep everyone entertained all day... Life is lazy, we stop and smell the roses...

I long for the intriguing ethnic smells that would waft over from my eastern Indian neighbors when I lived in the city. I miss hearing the musical staccato of the Latino Family on the other side as they would visit in their native language. I miss asking the old Asian Ladies at the farmer's market how to cook an unfamiliar food I would stumble upon. I crave tiny interesting, unexpected snippets like being amazed at the length of the dreadlocks on the man who was always wearing orange and smiling as he sold me newspapers on the corner; hearing a music student somewhere over on the next block faintly sharing live piano concertos on balmy summer evenings; seeing original artistic endeavors always strewn along the walkways by art students hoping to exchange their latest paper scribbles for \$10; orations as I walked through the park; daily thought exchange at the coffee shop...

I miss those urban adventures because they were always interesting surprises that filled every day with tiny unexpected happenings. Had I never been exposed to all those interesting vignettes I of course would not

miss them and perhaps appreciate my ever-reoccurring string of lazy days much more... Had I not been exposed to diversity would I be afraid of unfamiliar things when I occasionally came across them? Would I be nervous just walking past those different types of folks? What are the differences between welcoming discovery, discernment and judgement within our own analysis?

I now seem to live in a never-ending sea of fresh scrubbed ivory faces who nod and smile, are always polite and talk about the weather a lot. Wonder Bread holds a dominant shelf in the grocery store. Cutting edge spring fashion is sewn at home or found at Walmart. There are only 2 nearby restaurants that are not a 50's style dinner - a great Farm to Table Courtyard, considered super pricey and it is delicious, I go every chance I get or is the Amish Family Kitchen where you revisit maple smoked ham, pot roast and turkey with all the trimmings. I have to drive 30 miles round trip to buy foreign objects like nondairy yogurt, curry, sprouts and arugula. I can't seem to have any sort of discussion with anyone about levitation, 3D printing or bio luminescence, new NFT or Kusama art exhibits - what's that? I am a fish out of water!

What is Inclusivity? In a nutshell it's allowing everyone, not excluding anyone, for any reason... I truly believe the more knowledge we attain, along with varied experience, the less likely we will be excluding... Hello! We exclude all kinds of folks all the time without realizing it! Sometimes it is actually necessary or unavoidable, but are we actually aware of the fact we are doing this? When is the last time you noticed or apologized for an indiscretion?

"Inclusivity"

I play Mahjong once a week with a group from my local Senior Center. There is always chit-chat about Friends, Family, current events... I plan my strategy in the game as they visit - I am not a part of the conversation, I'm now almost completely Deaf. Sometimes I ask someone after we are finished playing about something I caught a gist of earlier in the chatter. I have learned to live with being ignored at the game, but I don't like it. I am a super outgoing person often directed now to quietly observe in a muddle from the sideline. I am being ignored in conversation at Mahjong because

there is no way to accommodate my inclusivity without constantly stopping the game. I look forward to weekly Mahjong brain gymnastics so I have made a compromise.

If you can't lift 50lbs don't apply for a job that requires it. Ski Jumpers and your Pharmacist have a certain expertise that others do not. The Inclusivity line is a grey area at the Mahjong table, it is black and white in the operating room.

We now have ramps with bumps for wheelchairs and blind people at the curbs at major crosswalks. Kids are suddenly allowed natural hair styles in sports. There is always going to be someone, somewhere, who is NOT being accommodated for a unique issue however... Society will constantly keep adjusting parameters to correct this, like slowly adding bumpy ramps to all crosswalks as areas needing that inclusivity come to light.

Who are you not accommodating? Are butter substitutes on your table for dietary restrictions, salt and sugar substitutes, how about toothpicks (just in case)? What are you observing? What are you glancing past? Who gets overlooked? Now ask yourself why.

"Equal Rights"

All are created equal. It seems to me this should be a less difficult equation to balance but assumption creates blindness! Our upbringing, habits and lack of experience create huge blind spots. Now that I cannot hear others often assume I'm not too bright either!

My friend loved a food he ate at my house asking what the name of it was. I showed him the jar of korma sauce that I had used to simmer the add ins. "Are you serious? I don't eat Indian food, it's spicy!" Was his response. "Was it?" I retorted (he had 3 helpings). At age 60 he had purposely NEVER even tasted Eastern Indian food because ick - someone in his past once said it was spicy. He could not ever remember even having an actual conversation of more than a few words with an Asian Indian person, ever! I like chili but I don't like it spicy. I eat lots of Asian food, but I avoid the hot peppers; fresh salsa is great when it's mild. These are my personal preferences, so I discuss it with the server when I'm looking at the menu.

Preferences need to be recognized for what they are - an acceptance or rejection into a personal comfort zone be it peppers or people - I prefer not spicy but offer tabasco to my guests, please add as much as you wish... To not allow tabasco into my house for others to enjoy or to bar someone's acceptance into a group simply because I would be personally uncomfortable with it is unacceptable - it violates another's equal rights (but what about my rights)?

Everyone personally has the right to not rub elbows with someone they dislike or to avoid tabasco, just go stand in a different line or join a different group. Where is dismissing equal rights in our job description from Spirit? We do not have hierarchy to deny another person's right to join in the group, but we can choose to not join in ourselves. When we all cross to Spirit everyone is included so practicing now seems to make sense to me but when am I blindly not practicing this?

"Prejudice "

To go join another group because of personal conviction would mean having to confront my own personal prejudice, to acknowledge to myself in the first place that I do indeed have a prejudice! I would be the odd man out - shocking, but as long as I am not negating another's rights it is respectful. If I don't want to be part of something and avoid it because I realize why then I am practicing discernment and not requiring anything from the other person. As long as I am not denying another an opportunity, I may pursue any cockamamie idea I wish and still be upholding equal rights for myself and for others. We touched upon this when we examined "Personal Responsibility". I do think most Spiritualist already recognize all this reasoning most of the time as Spiritualists agree to disagree - practicing the art of not judging others now so we are prepared to harmonize our energy with one another comfortably when we cross...

Avoiding prejudicial behavior is certainly woven into an intricate braid with the other two behaviors we are examining. When we as an individual or group repeatedly allow behavior, symbols, etc... that demean another to be overlooked, excluded, negated, abused within the groups we associate with then we in some ways are ourselves, by association, aiding and abetting

the prejudice simply by remaining silent! We talked previously about Spiritualists marching as Suffragettes while others simply practiced inclusivity through their daily behavior. Spiritualists have a discerning choice, but we need to first acknowledge inequality when we see it happening in order to reason discernment.

My ginger cat is named Geronimo. I have always thought that was a way cool name for a cat. I have a number of First Nation Friends - Maori, Lakota, Apache and Ojibwa. All my Friends have no problem with my cat's name but all have a huge problem with exploiting a name for money with no indigenous connection, like the Cleveland Indians Baseball team! Even worse, they are mortified about "Chief Wahoo" and the "hatchet chop" motion used in sports! (Indigenous People usually only became warriors when threatened by outside warrior behavior toward them first! Remember who saved the Mayflower crew during the first winter?) I had always considered the Cleveland Indians Baseball name to be honorable but I'm a little Dutch girl - prejudice by ignorance! My Friends taught me to understand and amend my blind spot.

How do we more easily recognize our prejudice, exclusion, violation of civil rights before or as we are executing these behaviors, so as to apologize or not be offensive? I'm not too sure we do all the time! We have to keep on top of it - sometimes we are blind as a bat and our behavior must be pointed out to us. Sometimes maybe we need to openly acknowledge our oversight to those we have offended along with being mindful of not repeating our faux pas. We have to keep readjusting, ask questions, apologize when we blunder and get comfortable with constantly reacclimatizing to an all-inclusive norm. I do not think any type of cancelling is being requested, just polite redistribution.

There is a proper setting for almost everything. Confederate statues for instance represent our Nation's history and many gifted Artists. Surely there is a place to display and visit them in connection to their specifics without shoving their symbolism down everyone else's throat in public government locations... I have never known of anyone to show up at a wedding with wet hair for example which would be shocking, disrespectful and reasonable fuel for ridicule, but I might see it in the grocery store

occasionally and think nothing of it. This I feel is about respect and nothing in anyway scary or threatening to my lifestyle or asking me to exterminate something, just readjust where I place my discernment.

Wow, it is a lot of work to keep up with respectful behavior (maybe that's the real objection), finding an appropriate circumstance (a home base) for each thought and behavior to occupy without offending or diminishing itself or another... It really is so worth the effort though to keep accommodating inclusivity, equal rights and lack of prejudice. It forms such warm sustaining friendships and shared universal achievements that harmonize worldwide momentum, which of course infuses "Collective Spirit" with positive energy... As a Spiritualist I'm open to working at it...

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I say put yourself out there. Ask questions so as not to assume. Assumption always gets me into trouble - being a jackass the first time is just a donkey mistake, so I ask questions, that way I won't be an idiot a second time! Awaken me to what I need to know to readjust, include, enjoy... Life is an exciting adventure, if that means I keep changing parameters to include everyone and get along I embrace the ride...

Next week we conclude our Lyceum by visiting the "Kingdom of Contentment"...

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Today's invocation:

Mother, Father, Infinite Spirit, thank you for your ongoing love and help and protection. Thank you for your patience and companionship as I experience this earthly adventure; that I might have a fulfilling life here and share forever within your loving Spirit...

Safe Journey,
Rev. Tiger