

A Proactive Way

As I look back on my life, it is interesting to me to look at how I reacted to both good and bad situations. Obviously when I was not medicated and imbalanced, my reactions were not consistent with my personality, therefore were in a very reactive manner versus proactive.

We give so much power and control away when we go through life living reactively, always waiting on something to happen rather making something happen. When we react in a negative manner, we immediately relinquish control over the situation and hand it to another person or entity.

I became very reactive when I entered the legal system. First of all, I trusted our system and coming from a small community, I placed even more trust in the system. By doing so, I had given all control and power to the entity that was the court. It had always been my understanding that the purpose of the judicial system was to find the best solution. I had no doubt that I would have many restrictions, sanctions and consequences for my punishment, but I never considered what happened to happen. I never dreamed that my punishment would be living with rapists and murderers and that while I produced financial victims, I would become a physical victim myself. It is obvious this is what was intended because the same solution was given the second time. However, the second time I became more proactive emotionally. I knew there would be very little I could do to change ignorance and prejudice, but I could change how I reacted to these elements. When my sentence was handed down, I made a very conscious effort to turn my back on the judge, look at my loved one's and move on emotionally from what was behind me. I believe I said, "let's do this" or something similar.

I handled more entire 11-month sentence like this. While I was threatened by inmates and guards and verbally assaulted, I listened to my parents and myself and said, "I Refuse to give anyone power over me."

For a great deal of time, I felt bitterness towards those who were on the list for the prosecution. I found that bitterness to be very reactive and damaging to me, as I gave that part of myself to the anger, hurt and pain. By taking a proactive approach, I evaluated what it was that hurt and decided to take control of the situation. I wrote down how I felt and while tearing up what I wrote, I forgave them and released them from my life. Now, I will say my idea of forgiveness is – truly releasing. I don't care to ever see any of those people again, but if I do, I don't have bitterness. I will react with peace rather than anger.

So that was the past....

Today, I look at everything a little different; my issues and others. I immediately isolate the problem and place it in the context it realistically lives in – which is the universe as a whole. I do not prioritize or categorize the problems, but I find the relationship to them. A big dinner that I must prepare for and get groceries relates to hunger that I have seen in third world countries, I am immediately balanced with the reminder. I still have the dinner and the responsibility of it, but the effort is transformed from stress and obligation to gratitude and peace. The mental health issues we face, I isolate – I have studied the mental health response in over 12 countries, I consider myself a citizen of the world who happens to live in the United States, everything I or you do affects the world – not just your family, country or self, but the entire universal balance.

The country of France makes the United States look like barbarians when it comes to mental illness. I love the United States, but I don't wear rose colored glasses. If someone else is progressing in something, my pride is not going to get in the way of learning how they are doing it.

I digress, Mental Illness is a world issue and we need a world solution. This comes from communication, awareness and education. So, while mental illness an enormous problem, when isolated, my mind shifts it into a flow chart, spreadsheets and graphs – search for the parallels between treatments for the mentally ill from state to state and country to country. This is a proactive approach. I assure you I could write two or more books just about the judicial, legal and criminal systems – complaining. That would only present more issues and no solutions.

All in all – if you are chemically balanced, you have a choice of how your view and live your life. If you are not, you have a responsibility when you are medicated to make sure that all your houses are in order – for when or if you get sick.

I go through a mind checklist every day. “If I can't get out of bed in the morning – will everything be alright?” “If I get manic are there safeguard to make sure I can't spend too much money or travel?” “If I become suicidal, am away from anything that could be lethal?” Every day, every minute these things run through my mind. If the answers to these questions are not “yes” I get busy changing things. Those who are mentally ill have a couple extra steps in life to be “okay” – it is what it is and we need to accept it and be responsible to it. The alternatives are simply horrifying! In order to control and maintain your illness – you have to be proactive!

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