

Curiosity Corner

Grow your awareness and open doors to an inspired life!

Anticipating Others

A tool to help you stay calm and allow life to be as it is!

Time: 10 minutes or more... you choose!

People are habitual... they behave in predictable ways, yet we are often surprised by their actions and reactions even if we have seen them 1,000 times before. Use this tool to stop being surprised so you don't have to ride the emotional roller-coaster. Remember, you can't change others, but you can change how you experience them and how you respond.

WHAT IS THE TOOL: Identify and anticipate the people in your life that you struggle with most. Create your own unique tool to use before, during or after challenging interactions.

WHY USE IT: Remind yourself about how others behave so you can anticipate their reactions and simply allow them to be as they are! This helps you take their behavior less personally so you can experience more peace and calm inside of you. *Note:* This is not a replacement for setting boundaries or speaking up.

COMMON NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS

- **Judging / Blaming:** Fault finding ... *"You never park the car correctly." "You take forever to wash the dishes"*
- **Criticizing:** Attacking who someone is as a person. *"You are so lame and inept with how you park the car."*
- **Passive Aggressive Behaviors:**
 - *Sideways, under the breath, or sarcastic comments:* "If you were further from the curb, we would have to take a cab to get to the curb." "You did the dishes so fast, what a miracle!"
 - *Contempt - despising or disapproving:* Rolled eyes, glaring, noises such as huffing or big sighs.
 - *Stonewalling:* Withdrawing or withholding.
 - *Pretending to agree* but might silently sabotage.
 - *Deflecting:* Twisting it back on you, or changing the subject.
 - *Intentionally failing to follow through.*

CREATE YOUR OWN TOOL

Take the following steps by yourself, or for more fun and insight collaborate with a friend.

Step 1 - Make a List: Identify the people with whom and you struggle and end up feeling disconnected and unhappy to be around. Choose the first person you want to focus on and move to Step 2.

Step 2 - Identify Other's Behaviors: Identify and write down what they do to push your buttons, e.g., any of the Common Negative Behaviors (page 1), their decision making process, actions they take or avoid, or something else.

Step 3 - Identify Your Feelings and Reactions: What *feelings* arise in you, e.g., anger, hurt, sadness, disappointment, frustration, fear, etc. How do you *react*, e.g., lash out, go silent, withdraw and stew over it, etc.

Step 4 - Create a New Practice: Write about what you want to do differently the next time that takes the high road. *Note:* At a minimum, avoid personalizing what happens... instead remind yourself that their behavior is about them and NOT you. Allow them to be as they are because you have no control over them, but you do have control over yourself.

Step 5 - Post Your New Practice: Put your new practice in a place with easy access.

- Add notes to your phone in a Notes APP or something you use frequently. Label clearly and pin them so you can find them with ease.
- Write it on a sticky note and post it where you will see it regularly.
- Write it in the front of your journal.

Example 1: When (person's name) judges me...

- *Feelings:* I feel sad and hurt, and like I have done something wrong. I question if I can trust my own decision making.
- *My Reaction:* I withdraw and hide parts of my life and myself so I will not be judged.
- *New Practice:*
 - I imagine an invisible shield between me and them.
 - When the words come towards me, I let them bounce off the shield so the unkind words don't reach me.
 - I remember this is how they behave and in my mind and heart, I allow them to be as they are.
 - I remember, their behavior is not about me... it is about them.

Example 2: When (person's name) is passive-aggressive...

- *Feelings:* I feel angry.
- *My Reaction:* I want to retaliate by lashing out and yelling and tell them to stop being so mean ... or I don't say anything at all and then withdraw and stew inside.
- *New Practice:*
 - I will take three deep breaths and politely ask a clarifying question, e.g, "When you said, 'If you were further from the curb, we would have to take a cab to get to the curb,' did you mean you think I should re-park and get closer to the curb?"
 - I remember this is how they behave and in my mind and heart, I allow them to be as they are.
 - I remember, their behavior is not about me... it is about them.

Let us know if this tools helps you! We would love to hear your story! cera@lifeworksacademyllc.com