

We Acknowledge You

I had a conversation with someone about manifesting. She said, “I was telling a friend that I remember holding my hand out, wanting an apple, and one would appear. Just like that.”

No eyebrow was raised in astonishment. No lip curled in sarcasm. Events such as this are common. Not the fruit appearing out of thin air, but events that seem as though they did. I nodded my head in agreement. Nothing new here, just advanced manifesting.

She asked. “How can we get back to that?”

If I had taken the time to think, I might have realized the oddity of the question. “The best we can do is give it back,” I responded, as though this question were normal.

“What,” she shot back at me in disbelief.

“What is the one thing people take away,” I began. “A sense of self-worth. Parents spend a good deal of time telling their children they can be anything they want, and how great they are. As they get older, they invest the same amount of time disenfranchising them of their self-worth.” This seemed like an appropriate explanation, but it wasn’t. The confusion she was experiencing wrinkled her face.

“I remember when I was eight or ten,” I began, “one night after a school program, I commented that none of them had said they were proud of me, loved me, or even enjoyed the show.” Come to think of it, they didn’t even bother to correct it after the fact.

She blurted the name of some well-known author, who escapes me now, that others are not here to validate us. Our purpose for being here is not to be validated.

Disturbed, I chose not to pursue the conversation. That night, I dreamed of being in a crowd searching for someone to acknowledge me. Oh, I was there, but anything I did was empty. To them, action, and words were empty.

Validation is confirmation. Self-satisfaction is about developing self-worth. How does one build self-worth? We'll share how our sense of worth is developed.

Before developing a relationship with our energy-based friends, I was a miserable piece of existence. My path seemed to go from one screw-up to the next. Whenever I thought I had accomplished something good, someone else came along and made it seem as though it were a wasted effort. Does any of this sound familiar? We're not that different. My opinion became, why bother, I'll get it wrong anyway. Eventually that's what I did. I didn't bother doing anything.

Fortunately, this was a short-lived endeavor. Eventually, I did what most do, I adopted the attitude of not caring what anybody thought. Personal satisfaction became the goal. Criticism was immediately followed by choice words. Who cares what others think anyway? Well, we should care about what they think, especially if we want someone talk to, to hear us, or just to socialize. Nobody cared about me because I didn't care about them.

Self-validation is worthless. In order to be recognized, you must recognize them. In order to determine if our life is satisfying, we need a comparison. Without a comparison, we have no way of knowing if we are doing something

beneficial or destructive. We're left with one big question mark. Nothing can be considered worthy unless we have a comparison. Thus, we need others in order to establish some sense of worth.

All strive to be accepted by others. If it were not so, we would have no need for friends, lovers, spouses, or family. In order to satisfy our need to belong, people will endure abusive relationships, even insist on returning to the abuser. Why do they do this? A person will continue a detrimental relationship because they need to be accepted; they need recognition. Being accepted is validation.

What if we are looking for validation for our actions?

Searching for validation for actions is a desire for others to see us as being competent, someone to be valued. Myself, I was not only searching for acknowledgement, but acceptance. When our actions are acceptable, we know they are appropriate. Choosing appropriate behaviors promotes value. Being satisfied with what we accomplish doesn't mean we've accomplished something good, bad, or mediocre. Acknowledgement comes in the form of compliments. We need some form of recognition for comparison. We cannot improve ourselves if there is nothing to compare.

Albert Bandura developed the theory of vicarious learning¹, which is simply that a person can learn from observing others. By observing the behavior of others, we learn to correct our flaws. When doing this, our self-

¹ (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2005)

identity changes.² This identity is what guides along our path. Validation from others determines the behavior we select. This validation comes in the form of recognition, not whether we did something correctly or not. Acknowledgement is the foundation of self-worth, of value. The expression and emotion associated with acknowledgment is the mortar of our foundation.

The role others play in developing our worth is through validation. The need to be accepted is a gift from Nature. From the time we are children, we strive to please others. We are social creatures and crave acceptance. One of the Natural Laws is to nurture. Our closest evolutionary relatives survived through the act of nurturing, socializing, and belonging.³ The desire to be a part of a group may override our need for self-worth and survival. This is an innate need and is universal. When we refrain from contributing to another's sense of worth, and subsequently our own, we contribute to their and harm ourselves.

Yes, that may be an overstatement, but consider this. We hold positions of authority in the lives of others. Mental health professionals, ministers, doctors, readers, life coaches, etc. literally hold another's sense of value in their hands. They have an obligation to validate their existence, and nurture them on their path.

We all need of acceptance, recognition, and the approval of others. This is part of the Natural Laws. To do otherwise is unnatural.⁴ Something as mundane as hello or a nod can elevate another's demeanor. We would like to

² (Myers, 2008)

³ (De Wall, 2009)

⁴ (De Wall, 2009)

close with this narration. We attended a group meeting and greeted each other in this fashion. I am Phillip. The group responded together, Phillip, we see you. This means that I am important to them and they recognize that I am in need of them. We closed the meeting in this fashion. I am Phillip. They responded, Phillip, we will remember you. I responded; I will return.

We are who work with Phillip. We greet you, for you are important to us.

Works Cited

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Hergenhahn, B. R., & Olson, M. W. (2005). *An Introduction to Theories of Learning*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson; Prentice Hall.

Myers, D. (2008). *Social Psychology* (9 ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

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