

Personal Growth Concepts™

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Q&A Forum - Review

Communicating With A Difficult Friend

Dear fellow Q&Aers,

Happy belated Thanksgiving.

Our anger management program is finally off the ground and involves a detailed evaluation to rule out a variety of psychological conditions and then, if appropriate, 6 sessions of education about anger and the role it plays in our lives and how to manage it better. If you are interested, please contact me and I will mail you a brochure.

I am pleased to welcome Holly Heaven to our staff. Holly is a Licensed Professional Counselor with many years of experience in the vocational area. She is a welcome addition after the losses of 3 part-time counselors during the summer. We welcome her and know she is already becoming a valuable addition to our team. I am now out of questions to reply to, so this would be a good time if you have one to send it in. We continue to be interested in growing our list so think about who you could encourage to join us. We currently have 135 subscribed.

A special thank you to Nancy, Kathy and Barbara who contributed our bonuses for this issue. And now..... to our question. Peace, John

Q: I have a friend, sober 14 years, who has Bipolar Disorder with no medication. She was once diagnosed with Borderline Personality but she is "over" that (or so her therapist says). Anyway there are times when she says one thing and then says another. I never know which way she will be i.e. one day its a crisis and the next day everything is perfect. I can't keep track of what she says and what happens to me is that I am "thrown" off course because I am always trying to shift gears, i.e. do I believe what she said yesterday or today. What is the truth??? I ask myself. Ok, so my question is how do I interact with her? How do I be a friend to her? Do I tell her how yesterday she said one thing and today it's something else? .Thanks

A: Here are my quick thoughts: Bipolar Disorder with no medication leaves one prone to mood swings - up or down that are out of the range of normal. Your question doesn't indicate that she is depressed or hypomanic but I would suggest that she be evaluated for medication for bipolar. A diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) may be of more concern as it is more difficult to treat, usually pretty entrenched. I doubt she is "over it," particularly in light of her day to day inconsistency - one of the symptoms of BPD is a quick shift from valuing to devaluing people. I once had a borderline patient who wrote me a note. The first sentence read: "Dear John, I hate all therapists. You are the best therapist I have ever had." Quite a swing, wouldn't you say? Borderlines are often from seriously dysfunctional families where there was early deficiencies and inconsistent parenting and mixed messages. There was often difficulty getting basic needs met consistently at an early age. Adapting to such dysfunctional families often leaves one with two sets of realities, one for when they are home and one for how they are when they are out. Managing two sets of realities sets the scenario for lying and mixed messages. Certainly, in your friend's case, these predisposing factors may have caused and been aggravated by her alcoholism. Is she dry or sober?

Now to your questions: how do you keep track and how do you manage you when you are thrown off course? What is the truth and how are you to interact with her? I would suggest you work hard when you are with her to stay grounded, connected to your self and your reality. The tendency would be pulled by codependency into trying to understand, adjust to her. It sounds like you already have a good grasp on the inconsistencies, try not to get caught up in them and stay with your reality. The truth is what you know, what you have heard, including the inconsistencies. You need to know your course and stay on it. Perhaps the most challenging of your questions is how to interact with her. I

would gently point out the inconsistencies but not expect her to be happy about it. You might try something like this: "_____,(her name), I seem to remember that yesterday _____ and now today _____. I am not sure what to believe or if something has changed that I am not aware of. Could you help me make sense of this?" Again, don't expect it to be smooth. You may have to pick the issues that you try to clarify with her. She is likely to get angry. Remember, it is difficult to have a relationship with someone who is inconsistent - it definitely effects the trust. If the relationship is valuable to you and you continue to have difficulties, perhaps you would consider seeing a therapist either alone, or with her. You may also want to check with her other friends (if she has any) to see if they are experiencing the same things. Collectively confronting her is not likely to be very effective. Let me know how things are going. Finally, since she is sober, I assume she is in a 12 step program, you may want to discuss your perceptions with her sponsor. Peace, John

Quote: God doesn't play dice. Albert Einstein

bonus 1

1. No man or woman is worth your tears, and the one who is, won't make you cry.
2. Just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to, doesn't mean they don't love you with all they have.
3. A true friend is someone who reaches for your hand and touches your heart.
4. The worst way to miss someone is to be sitting right beside them knowing you can't have them.
5. Never frown, even when you are sad, because you never know who is falling in love with your smile.
6. To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world.
7. Don't waste your time on a man/woman, who isn't willing to waste their time on you.
8. Maybe God wants us to meet a few wrong people before meeting the right one, so that when we finally meet the person, we will know how to be grateful.
9. Don't cry because it is over, smile because it happened.
10. There's always going to be people that hurt you so what you have to do is keep on trusting and just be more careful about who you trust next time around.
11. Make yourself a better person and know who you are before you try and know someone else and expect them to know you.
12. Don't try so hard, the best things come when you least expect them to.

bonus 2

A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20.00 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, Who would like this \$20 bill? Hands started going up. He said, I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first, let me do this. He proceeded to crumple the \$20 dollar bill up. He then asked, Who still wants it? Still the hands were up in the air.

Well, he replied, What if I do this. And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now crumpled, and dirty. Now who still wants it? Still the hands went into the air.

My friends, we have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20. Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value.

Dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless to those who love you. The worth of our lives comes not in what we do or whom we know, but by WHO WE ARE.

You are special - Don't EVER forget it. If you do not pass this on, you may never know the lives it

touches, the hurting hearts it speaks to, or the hope that it can bring. Count your blessings, not your problems. Never be afraid to try something new.

And remember...Amateurs built the ark. Professionals built the Titanic!

bonus 3

There are 3 good arguments that Jesus was Black:

1. He called everyone "Brother" or "Sister"
2. He liked Gospel.
3. He couldn't get a fair trial.

But then there are 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was really Jewish:

1. He went into His Father's business.
2. He lived at home until he was 33.
3. He was sure his Mother was a virgin and his mother was sure he was God.

But then there are 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was Italian:

1. He talked with his hands.
2. He had wine with every meal.
3. He used olive oil.

But then there are 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was a Californian:

1. He never cut his hair.
2. He walked around barefoot all the time.
3. He started a new religion.

But then there are 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was Irish:

1. He never got married.
2. He was always telling stories.
3. He loved green pastures.

But maybe the most compelling evidence of all---3 proofs that Jesus was actually a Woman:

1. He fed a crowd at a moment's notice when there was no food.
2. He kept trying to get a message across to a bunch of men who just didn't get it.
3. And even when he was dead, He had to get up because there was more work to do.

Amen!!!

end of bonuses

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