

Observation and Judgement - Two Different Actions
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Taos News Article

The Taos News has committed to implement a weekly column to help educate our community about emotional healing through grief. People may write questions to Golden Willow Retreat and they will be answered privately to you and possibly as a future article for others. Please list a first name that grants permission for printing.

Dear Ted,

I have just turned 30 and as a gift to myself, I chose to do some personal work on deeper levels than I have done at other times in my life. What I have found is that certain aspects of my present world correlate to historical wounds, traumas, and upbringing. I also see that in recognizing these parts of me, I may not always be reacting/responding to present issues very well. My question is about how to navigate present and past as well as setting new boundaries and how can I set new boundaries if I need to judge others and their actions in order to decide what best serves me within relationships? Thank you for your response. Laurie

Dear Laurie,

Thank you for your all-encompassing thought process and questions. I'll take a shot on ideas to explore during your on-going personal and growth. You have gifted yourself with the bravery to have a healthy intention of being more conscious in your daily life internally and externally. I commend you for taking this on - so many people forget to do this type of work. Each day brings opportunities that can disrupt our internal serenity and then cause difficulties in the external world.

You mention judgment as being a part of boundaries. What if you play with semantics for a moment and use the word "observation" rather than "judgement"? As animals, we are continuously observing in order to survive as a species. Our brain uses all senses in order to avoid danger and find physical and emotional safety. This is often discussed as the fight, flight, and freeze responses within our brain, also known as the "reptilian brain." Observation is mandatory for your survival! Judgement enters when you cultivate your observation into a categorical paradigm that praises or diminishes the other person. Often this means you are trying to demand they change for your comfort and safety.

This leads to co-dependent contracts that usually do not serve you or others. Knowing that observation and judgement are not the same may allow you more mental malleability in order to go deeper into the discovery of your unconscious actions as you will be able to possibly identify historical wounds not from a judgement perspective but from a fact in your history that may need some attention so it is not played out in present situations.

This idea pertains to boundaries as well. You can observe other people's actions, as well as your own, and see if they serve you in a healthy manner. If you find actions of others

do not bring you well-being, then you can set boundaries to keep yourself safe. The observation may help break levels of denial resulting in the normalization of situations that are harmful or in the choice to ignore situations that are hurting you in some form or manner.

Boundaries are more about what you are going to allow into your life, not about the other person or issue. In this you are able to keep your autonomy while navigating the world around you with a conscious view from your observations. I wish you well. Until next week, take care.

Golden Willow Retreat is a nonprofit organization focused on emotional healing and recovery from any type of loss. Direct any questions to Ted Wiard, LPCC, CGC, Founder of Golden Willow Retreat at (575) 776-2024 or GWR@newmex.com