

An Organic Approach: Cultivate the Authentic You™

Lesson Ten - Do You Have a Claim Ticket for that Baggage?

“Loving someone else is always so much easier. But, I hold myself hostage in the mirror.” - Jewel

Have you ever pulled someone else’s suitcase off the luggage carousel at the airport’s baggage claim? Sure you have - we all have. They all look the same! Then, you see the name on the luggage tag or compare the numbers on the tag to the ones on your ticket and realize it’s not your bag. So, you put it back, right? You don’t carry it home, with you, do you? Of course not - nothing would fit! It’s not your baggage.

Ah, but how much emotional baggage that doesn’t belong to you are you carrying around? Good Heavens, we have enough of our own, already - we don’t need any more! Oh, but we do love to carry other people’s baggage, don’t we? It’s easier to rant about the dirty politicians, dish about what celebrity is cheating on her husband, fret about why your best friend’s daughter would choose THOSE dresses for her wedding, worry about how your perfectly capable 40-year-old daughter is going to survive post-divorce, or listen to the friend or family member who ALWAYS has some drama going on - than to deal with your own life. And, God forbid you’re a “fixer” or a “helper,” because then you want to get in there and not only tell them how to do it, but you want to fix it FOR them. I drove myself crazy doing this kind of stuff for years!

But, these things are none of your business and frankly, they don’t usually affect your life directly. Why spend your time and energy on them? The only person who should carry someone else’s baggage is a porter or a bellboy. Not you! I know, we all wish we could cure the woes of the world and we wish we could help all our friends and family members be happy and carefree. But, we can’t. Turn off the news, quit reading the newspapers, don’t take every phone call from the friend who’s the “energy vampire.” In other words, Mind your own beeswax!

I can feel the righteous indignation from you bubbling through the air! But, but, someone needs to help, how will I keep up with world events (that you have no control over) if I don’t read the papers, how will my son/daughter/mom/aunt/brother/best friend get through it, if I’m not there for them all the time?!

Funny, I have found that the world and our governments will continue to function with or without my help. I stopped watching news and reading newspapers years ago and the stress factor immediately diminished - the less I knew, the less I could worry about, get angry about and feel helpless about. It was a huge relief. Focus your involvement locally, where you really can make a difference and you’re not shouldering Atlas’s load. Get involved in an organization that focuses on something you’re passionate about.

As far as the personal side, remember that no one really likes advice - they may ask

for it, but they don't want it - anymore than you want it when you ask for it. And, guess what, they're NEVER going to do it YOUR way. Everyone wants to do it their OWN way, even if they reinvent the wheel. And, one more thing, when you carry someone else's baggage, you're saying they can't manage by themselves. My son, Dillon, when he was little and I would try to help him do something, would say, "NO, I wanna do it by my own!" Let the world, your family, your friends do it "by their own." Honor and encourage their inner wisdom as you nurture yours.

Questions for Pondering and/or Journaling

1. Are you carrying the emotional baggage of someone in your life - a family member, a friend, a co-worker? If so, how can you lovingly let go of it and allow them to handle it on their own?

2. What other baggage are you carrying that you have no control over, such as world or community events or problems? What can you do to truly help, yet let go of the worry and angst about the parts you can't do anything about?