

An Organic Approach: Cultivate the Authentic You™ **Lesson Eleven - You Want to Be Right? Or, Do you Want to Be Happy?**

“If man understood that ‘what I create has nothing to do with what anybody else is creating,’ then he wouldn’t be so afraid of what others are doing.” - Abraham

Many years ago, my first husband and I visited a marriage counselor. As the session was ending, she asked me a question: “Lisa, why do you always have to be right?” I, of course, immediately defended myself: “I don’t always have to be right! That’s not true!”

That question, however, continued to haunt me for days and days. DO I **always** have to be right, I asked myself? And, if so, why?

Was it that I was competitive and simply wanted to win every argument or discussion? No, that didn’t seem to fit. I do like to win games and the like, but it didn’t seem to pertain to the things I wanted to be “right” about. And, it went deeper than that.

As I examined my behavior, I found what I wanted to be right about, was, well...EVERYTHING! The therapist had asked the correct question and fortunately, I was willing to look at it and try to figure out the answer.

I wanted to be perfect and have the right answers in every situation of my life. And, more importantly, I wanted others to think the same way, do everything the same way and live their lives the same way. I had put so much thought into how and why I made the decisions that I made and why I thought the way I did, that I couldn’t understand why others wouldn’t agree. Obviously, MY way was the BEST way! Right?!

Well, RIGHT?!

Well, No. WRONG...

I found that the issue for me about why being “right” was so important was that it made me feel affirmed and confirmed if others agreed with what I thought or how I did things. Their agreement gave me a sense of approval - apparently, a sense of approval that I wasn’t giving myself. Or, maybe I didn’t think my own approval was enough. I needed an external approval that I believed was more worthy than my own.

When others didn’t think the same as I did or do things the same way, in my mind they disapproved of me. I didn’t get it that others simply have a different opinion or like different things....Sheesh...

So, my way of dealing with this was to be very judgmental of those of didn’t live their lives exactly the same way I was living mine, because, by God, they were WRONG!

Luckily, I've moved past this way of thinking (for the most part...I do still have moments...) and thank goodness, because it makes life very frustrating.

However, over the years, I've heard clients complain about the same thing. So, I often ask them the question: **Do you want to be right or do you want to be happy?**

Similar to Baggage Claim, how other folks live their lives is really none of our business. So, they cheat on their husbands or they spank their kids (or don't spank their kids), they have different religious or political beliefs, they wear Pajama Jeans. These things really don't affect us. It's amazing how many people get their panties in a wad over the actions of others - some of our biggest and bloodiest conflicts have been and continue to be about whose concept of God is correct - think about the Crusades...people were killed if they didn't convert to Christianity! Think about the tragedy of 9/11 - Radical fundamentalists decide they don't like our way of life and they fact that we don't embrace their Muslim beliefs and decide to kill our citizens because of it.

So, if you want to be happy, practice acceptance - the fact that people make up their own minds about their own lives and how they live them. This also doesn't mean that they're "bad" people because they do things differently than we do - just different. And, it doesn't mean that you have to agree with them, just accept that's how they are - and love them anyway.

If you'd rather be happy, then understand that you don't need anyone's approval of how you live and the decisions you make. Only you know how you came to the place where you are now. If they don't agree, it's their problem - you don't have to justify the way you're raising your kids or that you choose to vote a certain way or that you drive a particular car. This is where you get to practice self-trust and know that your own approval of yourself is all that you need.

To be happy rather than "right," is to let go of your need for approval and your need to feel superior to others and your need to be perfect. Live your life the way that makes you joyful - that's all.

Questions for Pondering and/or Journaling

1. Do you find that you need external approval for the decisions you make in life? If so, which ones seem to need the most approval?
2. Do you find yourself being judgmental of others' decisions and how they live their lives? If so, do their decisions affect you? If not, why are you concerned? Can you let go and concentrate on your own life?