

The Communal Sharing of Enchantment

Mentoring and learning from each other is much more than taking a course or explicitly giving someone advice or help. Almost every moment of every day when we are with people has the potential for becoming a mentoring or a learning situation. We talk, gesture, and involve ourselves in many ways with many people. The exchange can be uplifting, informative, reassuring, kind or it can be depressing, depleting, annoying, bothersome and more! I'm sure you can think of both some good and some bad times with other people!

I teach that experiencing The Enchanted Self is unique to each person. We all have our unique ways of feeling comfortable with ourselves, when we know that our mind, body, heart and spirit are all lined up! We know that we are in stride with ourselves and our purpose in life for that moment. There is another level of Enchantment that we do reach, though and this can not be done alone. It is the shared positive experience of enchantment.

Can you even imagine what our world would be like if everyone learned to tap into their Enchanted Selves often and while they were with others? I think the world would be more positive, a place where people would communicate in a friendly manner, respectful of one another's uniqueness and feelings.

Let's bring our discussion back to times we have all experienced. Haven't you encountered people who exude confidence and a sense of well being? I bet you left the encounter feeling happier and more positive. Perhaps the next person you met had the opportunity to catch some of that positive energy. The truth is we all catch each other's moods and reactions. People often talk about how a smile brings on a smile. When we connect with our Enchanted Self, the joy and confidence we feel spreads to others. It becomes important to learn how to actually bring our positive states of being to the surface in such a way that others are encouraged to join in. Certainly we all respond better to enthusiasm and praise than disparaging comments and criticisms. Unfortunately, most of us are already experts on negative thinking and harmful criticism. Being in a good mood and then finding one's self in a negative situation is a difficult spot to be in. How quickly a positive state of mind can be interrupted!

For instance, we may be in a wonderful mood only to enter the workplace or home and be met by a scowl, a frown, or negative remark from a coworker or family member. How quickly one's positive state of well being can dissipate. For example, if I walk into the house in a good mood and my mother, or my wife, or my husband, immediately barrages me with a list of things that I didn't take care of, or criticizes me for chores I didn't accomplish to their satisfaction, I will find the experience a clear interruption of my positive state of being. However, if someone were to gently say, "Can you give me a few minutes? I want to go over some of the chores we had agreed to split," or "I want to check with you as to what has been done or what has not been done," then I may be able to maintain not only my state of well being, but be in a good enough mood to help improve the other person.

A speaker once compared giving constructive criticism to that of a sandwich. The first slice of bread is telling the person something honest and positive about that person. The filling consists of gently leading into a suggestion or sharing one's feelings about how something is being done. The second slice of bread again finishes with positive reaction or remark to that person. How desperately most of us need to practice the art of positive criticism.

Learning to communicate effectively to maintain each other's integrity and self esteem goes a long way toward creating and spreading positive, productive energy and making the world a better place!

Exercise 1: Successfully Connect with Others

This is a very simple communication exercise that requires the consent and cooperation of a partner. Begin by allowing the other person to talk about something important to him or her for at least three minutes. The topic can be anything: their opinions about a complicated subject; their expert knowledge in some field; an anecdote about something that happened in the past; or their personal feelings about something or someone. After you have listened, give back only positive feedback. This is not easy, as we often find it easier to be an 'expert' in criticism. However, it greatly enhances our mood to receive positive feedback. Reverse roles, and allow yourself to talk for three minutes, uninterrupted. Now it is your turn for positive feedback. I can guarantee it feels better than criticism. Try it. You'll like it!

Exercise 2: Enhancing the Human "Touch" of Communication

This September pick a day and have the fun of creating a special meal with family or friends. Carefully set the table. You could even put a flower vase in the middle or use a cloth table covering. Perhaps you could also start the meal with each person giving a blessing or stating a positive feeling about being together. Stretch and be generous of spirit -- maybe you could invite the neighbor that would never expect to be included. During the meal tell positive stories about the 'old' days or share funny stories about growing up. The immediacy of this type of human 'touch' can turn an ordinary day into an enchanted one.

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Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein , originator of THE ENCHANTED SELF?, a method of bringing delight and meaning into everyday living, invites you to view her new line of ENCHANTED WOMAN products, e-books, and free gifts at <http://www.enchantedsself.com>.