

Friends and Loves.

We are taught many things without formal instruction. This teaching comes from our sphere of influence. From sports, religion, politics, the food we eat, and the people we associate with, we are taught and we learn.

We learn because we are wired to please our parents, family, and certain people. Of course, this is a generalization, as you probably know. The core learning we do is to survive as happily as we can. We learn to wash our hands before sitting at the table to eat because life is easier that way. We learn to do our chores before Mom or Dad gets upset because life is easier that way. We move forward in life, learning the combinations that unlock a happy life and which combinations keep life from being happy.

Some ways we learn are from the looks our parents give us or those from grandma and grandpa. Other times, our sphere of influence uses subtle yet clear signals to inform us that our behavior is unacceptable: a slight clearing of the throat, and as we look, there is the shortest shaking of the head saying no, yet we see it.

We learn about friends and loves from our sphere of influence. We learn to treat others as we want to be treated, and we also begin to understand that doesn't always work. But we didn't learn what to do when that doesn't work. If someone apologizes, we learn to forgive them, but we didn't learn that an apology implies two things. The first is the apology for hurting you, and the second implies they won't do it again. We didn't ask what to do if someone didn't mean the second part of their apology. When a friend says, "I'm sorry for cursing at you, but I was drunk," do we hear them say that it will happen again if they are drunk again?

We go through our lives applying what we learned informally, and many struggle with the part they didn't learn: how to treat people who don't behave.

Of course, we learned that opinions are everywhere and vary from negative to positive. As we apply our moral code to those friends and loves in our lives, we learn the dynamics involved in keeping and losing people we like and love. Yet somehow, we find that we are on our own in figuring out what to do. We find that advice from one person is too strict and advice from another is too lenient. Or the advice will not work or will take too much time. Perhaps we learn that a friend or love has a mental defect they cannot control, and we want to stay, yet we want to leave at the same time.

And, of course, the all-time favorite is to ignore the problem and hope it goes away.

Some will only take the option of looking inward to find their truth about dealing with friends and loves. Many find that creating a barrier that clearly defines their boundaries works exceedingly well. The barrier is constructed using their morals, ethics, and code of conduct regarding how they treat others and how others can treat them. Anyone crossing through the barrier does so at their risk and is treated as a trespasser. This is not as easy as written because some know the pain of rejection and hurt, and they refuse to hurt others. But their mind becomes their protector, and they begin enforcing the barrier. After the enforcement, they go, silently and alone, to deal with their feelings. They soon smile because their freedom releases them from the intense pressure of trying to please the unpleasable. They smile more and more. They become happy and optimistic.

With their barriers in place, they continue to seek the friends and loves they desire.

Written by Peter Skeels © 8-1-2024