

Work in Progress

Published monthly by Michele Crawford
Work in Progress is an electronic newsletter intended to assist individuals seeking optimum well-being.

www.michelecrawford.ca

www.willowhousewellness.com

E-mail to michelecrawford@dccnet.com

~~~~~

Work in Progress July 2008 Volume III Issue VII  
Feature Article: Two models of transcending adversity: Mindfulness and Assertiveness Part Seven

~~~~~

Please feel free to forward a copy of Work in Progress (in its entirety) to friends, co-workers, or anyone interested in personal development.

For Subscribe or Unsubscribe instructions, please go to bottom of this ezine.

~~~~~

In this Issue:

~~~~~

- 1) Note from Michele
- 2) Feature Article
- 3) About Michele
- 4) Counselling Services

~~~~~

1) Note from Michele

~~~~~

Dear Reader

The Serenity Prayer:

Grant me the courage to change the things I can control, the serenity to accept the things I cannot control, and the wisdom to know the difference.

There is a reason why the Serenity Prayer is recited at the close of every 12-step program meeting. People, who find their life's choices have led them to attend such a meeting, are there because they do not comprehend the meaning of this prayer.

In their way of life, they have not taken responsibility for things they can control, take responsibility for things they cannot control and do not know the difference. Instead, their belief system is immature, self-absorbed and especially, controlling.

Regardless of the meeting's theme: alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex, emotions, food... these are symptoms of the attitude of immaturity, self-absorption and control. This way of thinking is shared by both unassertive and aggressive thinkers.

Once participants have truly integrated the Serenity Prayer into the way they live, not only have they become an assertive thinker but they can graduate from 12-step programming.

Assertiveness often needs to be learned because unmet childhood developmental needs, as well as cultural and societal beliefs, may teach passive and or entitlement beliefs.

Next, assertiveness beliefs need to be practiced, practiced, practiced. As you become more skilled with the habit of assertiveness, qualities of insight and compassion emerge, letting you connect more genuinely with yourself and humanity.

~~~~~

2) Feature Article: Two models of transcending adversity:  
Mindfulness and Assertiveness Part Seven

~~~~~

The assertive boundary is flexible. You protect your own rights, do not walk on the assertive rights of others and have a clear knowledge of the roles of boundaries. This wisdom thereby determines what/who comes in and stays outside your boundaries.

An assertive thinker would ask politely and directly for a ride to Edmonton. If the situation was reversed, then he or she would offer that ride.

An assertive thinker also understands the rights of another to say "No" even without a reason other than it isn't what he or she wants. Most significant, an assertive thinker takes responsibility for your own needs and will find another solution.

Given the foundation of assertiveness is equality, an assertive person will offer parity; perhaps in the form of gas money or a place to stay along the way.

The concept of assertion is that anyone has the right to ask for anything and anyone has the right to say no. Passive and aggressive people are guilt-ridden, obligated, overwhelmed, offended, threatened, angered, outraged ... by the requests of others. Assertive thinking means calm persistence when there is disagreement.

An assertive person is like a willow tree. A willow may look fragile but due to its deep root system and ability to bend, the day after a storm the willow looks the same. Other trees are damaged, broken, even up-rooted.

Willow tree thinkers understand and accept that storms are part (a meaningful part) of life. Willows, like assertiveness thinkers, study the inner qualities he or she will need to handle adversity: resiliency, courage, decision-making and conflict-resolution skills, flexibility, moderation, common sense, perseverance, perspective and so on.

When a storm approaches, willows immediately acknowledge the presence of a tempest and bend in the wind. Your attention is on "the dawn," "the light at the end of the tunnel," "this too shall pass," and mostly, "I can handle it!"

After the storm, willow trees focus on its meaning and the gifts you can add to your repertoire of managing future storms.

Assertive people craft yourself as your best friend; your inner voice resounds with kind words of encouragement and humour. (It's difficult to hold strong reactive emotions when you are laughing at your own inner soap opera... at the ironies of life.) You catch your reflection in the mirror and say something friendly: "Hi Sweetie! How are you doing?" "How brave you are my dear," "What a little cutie you are!"

As an assertive person, you sustain yourself foremost with acceptance. Acceptance does not mean you agree, condone or like anything. It means you believe reality is the ultimate authority and start there instead of with your expectations, demands, shoulds, must haves. This promotes authenticity and calm above over-reactive emotion.

Assertive people understand the concept of an identity boundary. A familiar metaphor is a sailing ship with an automatic pilot for

navigation. The ship is hit by a powerful wave and then corrects by design; staying on course. Without the automatic pilot, every ripple will knock you off-course.

An identity boundary means you have a steady sense of self no matter what happens in your life or the world. An Aboriginal Elder told me this story:

Years ago, when he was six years old, he accompanied his grandfather to a local store in a town notorious for bigotry. Inside, there were three men who hurled racist comments at the elderly man. Showing no reaction whatsoever, he made his purchase and left the store.

“Grandfather! Why didn’t you beat them up?”

“My boy, how long were we in that store with those men?”

“I think... a few minutes...?”

“Yes, we walked in their poison for only minutes. Any word spoken by me would have made the time longer. Those boys live in their venom always. We can walk away.”

Empathy, the greatest gift of assertiveness, allows you to relate to the vulnerability of others, and demonstrate respect for both yourself and others, even when you do not agree or condone their behaviour.

Michele Crawford RCC CCC at
E-mail: michelecrawford@dccnet.com or
Phone: 604-515-9727
Web Site: www.michelecrawford.ca

~~~~~  
3) About Michele  
~~~~~

Michele Crawford is a therapist who assists individuals who are struggling with trauma, anxiety or depression. Her passion for her work remains embedded in being able to connect with you in your suffering, helping you find real solutions no matter how complex the issue may be.

~~~~~  
4) Counselling Services  
~~~~~

Are you prepared to live with more happiness, optimism, confidence, self-worth and hope? If your answer is "yes," then your next step is to contact me for a free 20-minute phone consultation. We can then discuss how I might best help you resolve your problems of Trauma, Depression and Anxiety.

The benefits of counselling with Michele include: significantly reduced stress levels, an optimistic outlook in life, increased confidence and hope.

~~~~~  
**Privacy Policy**  
~~~~~

I want to reassure you that your e-mail address will never be shared or sold to anyone else.

~~~~~  
**Pass It Along**  
~~~~~

Please feel free to forward a copy of Work in Progress (in its entirety) to friends, co-workers, or anyone interested in personal development. Copyright Michele Crawford 2006 All Rights Reserved.

Michele Crawford RCC CCC
Willow House Wellness Ltd.
Web Site: www.michelecrawford.ca
E-mail: michelecrawford@dccnet.com
Phone: 604-515-9727
Fax: 604-515-9728