



Emotions

By Lynn Bieber

Emotions register the motion of our Being. If we pay attention to them we will learn a great deal about ourselves and others. Often emotions are signals of deeper activity that has not yet been put into words. Naming and owning emotions allows us to befriend them. As emotions are acknowledged and given form in words they become more manageable. We are all familiar with the phrase, and experience, of being at the effect of our emotions.

For a remarkable demonstration of the effectiveness of acknowledging and naming emotions try this: the next time someone you know is angry, simply make the statement, "You are angry." If the person continues to express anger state, "You are really angry!" observe the reactions of the person. They begin to calm down and are more able then to discuss what has caused the anger.

This same process takes effect in other emotions. It is just very visible in dealing with the emotions of anger. Anger is usually the most upsetting of emotions that we deal with in our relationships. The other emotion that is challenging for many of us is grief. We invariably want to lessen, or minimize, the grieving person's responses. These are deep emotions. If we have not explored and learned about our own deeper, unresolved emotions we are much more likely to respond to others in a way that is not helpful.

Emotions are powerful and wonderful. They can also be frightening and debilitating. Learning to honor, respect, acknowledge and communicate with them is of primary importance. As we do this for our own emotions we are much more able to do this for others.

Dealing with the emotions of family members can be more challenging than in any other relationship because of the complexities involved. One of the blessings of this situation is that the love we have for our family members helps us hang in there until the issue can be resolved. The very love that makes this possible also makes it more challenging. We tend to forget that others are not extensions of ourselves, but are individuals in their own right with all the attending differences that implies.

Strong emotions are the motivating force for great achievement, high ideals and world changing concepts. Channeling strong emotions leads to strength and direction in one's life. The two extremes are (1) those of us who are a raging river of emotions, and (2) those of us who register no emotion. Neither of these is a comfortable place for a person. One has too much life force. The other does not have enough. The ideal is a balance between the two. An important question to ask ourselves is: Who is in charge....me or my emotions?