

Minding Your Own Business Can Change The World

January 15, 2012

Earlier this week I did a reading for a client I've never met before, and these new folks are always a real treat. Reading someone for the first time is a delightful flood of information, without any interference from memories or emotional connections. The impressions feel brand new because I've never dipped into that person's pool of energy before. They're also a bit exhilarating, socially, because you never know what someone's going to turn out to be like when you first sit down with them.

Good Lord, I've had the most pleasant, mild-looking people come in and act impossibly childish and rude, and I've read for people who appear skeptical to the point of being combative -- who turn out to be sensitive, engaging, and open.

So I have this woman here, who was referred to me by someone I don't remember reading, and I started by letting her know how I work and what she can expect from me. Usually I hold on to something, I psychometrize, close my eyes -- because impressions come to me visually -- and then I begin to share what I'm getting. I start out with what I'm picking up from the client in general, and then as the reading goes on, I get more and more specific information. Spirit people come in to be introduced in the beginning, and hang around once they're identified so they can chime in on whatever else comes up during our appointment.

When this very pleasant lady sat down, I brought her her spirit people, all of whom she was able to identify. Then, as I turned my attention to her energy, the first thing I got was a strong desire to tell her to mind her own business. There's no real way to put that politely, so I spoke in vague terms about reserving her energy for herself, and letting go of worry about things she couldn't control -- I think I even pulled out that serenity prayer about having the wisdom to know the difference between what she could and couldn't exercise control over.

I'm not sure she got it, and that was my fault, as I was dancing around the stronger message I kept receiving. As the reading went on and she began to ask me questions, it became clear what this impression was referencing. She asked me about her adult son's financial situation, about the status of his relationship, and about the status of her own marriage. And with every impression I gave her, I received an argument in reply.

Finally, towards the end of our reading, I told her as plainly as I could that if she could find a way to mind her own business, she'd be happier. Actually I think I told her a spirit person said that so she wouldn't think it was me who was being rude.

But she didn't want to hear it. She wanted to use her resources -- her good humor, her energy, her wisdom, and time -- to try to manage someone else's life. Any good therapist can tell you that when someone does this it's simply a mechanism to avoid working on oneself. If we focus on the

problems other people have, and make them our own, we have a darn good excuse to avoid getting to our own issues.

On the way here today I passed a billboard with an ad that said, “to fix the world, improve yourself.” Along with the bumper sticker that reads, “Be the change you want to see in the world,” we’re being asked to concentrate our resources on ourselves, first. To mind our own business, right?

This may seem counterintuitive to many of us -- maybe women more so than men, at least of my generation. Paying attention to one’s own needs or taking care of oneself first was equal to being selfish, and we may have had a whole lifetime of indoctrination in taking care of other peoples’ problems first.

But, realistically, taking care of other peoples’ problems is a huge waste of time! I’m not talking about taking care of young children, or the homeless, or caring for people as a career. I’m talking about people like my client, who spent an hour of her time and \$150 of her own hard-earned money to ask questions about how she could control another adult human being! She asked me the same question twelve different ways, and she still didn’t get the answer she wanted from me.

One of my favorite rules to live by, which I may have mentioned here before, is a simple instruction attributed to St. Francis: “teach the word of God wherever you go, and only when necessary, use words.”

Be the change you want to see in the world.

Later on that week I did a reading for a woman I see about once a year. Like clockwork this fantastic, vivacious, attractive woman calls me sobbing her heart out, because the most recent unavailable guy she’s dating is breaking her heart. Every single year, right around this time, Kelly calls me needing an appointment right away. He’s cheating on her, he pushes her around, he doesn’t appreciate or value all of the love she’s giving him. She uses up every single ounce of her energy trying to get a man to love her and validate her efforts. She literally makes herself sick. Every year she is on the receiving end of a lousy partnership, but she refuses to break up with the man because she doesn’t want him to go around saying bad things about her. She can’t stay in it, and she can’t leave. This client by the way is a yoga teacher, reiki master, and all around spiritual genius -- except when it comes to herself.

To fix the world, improve yourself.

You know why we don’t do this? It’s too hard. It’s too scary. It means admitting we have issues, some of which may seem too hard to fix, especially if we’ve tried before and didn’t succeed. It’s hard because along with the efforts to improve ourselves, we bring self-judgement. It’s so much easier to tell other people how to fix themselves, or heck, to step right in and try to do it for them.

There's no doubt about it. Minding our own business takes courage, humility, compassion and heart. More than would ever be required were you to take up minding someone else's business. It takes fierceness and an unwillingness to compromise, because your soul is at stake. It means abandoning your old ideas about yourself, or what your mother told you, or your father lead you to believe about yourself, the world, or other people. It means casting aside everyone else's opinion of you, that you have held onto or built your identity on.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says: "Do not think that I came to bring peace on Earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

There are many interpretations of this passage. Some people think it means that Jesus advocates violence or war in God's name. You know what I think it means? I think it means, we must be spiritual warriors. We must take that sword of Jesus, and cut away self-doubt, self-judgment, and self-loathing. We must sever the ties not to our parents as people, but to the ideas they may have passed down to us.

"He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." I interpret this to mean that whoever chooses to take as their approach to life what their parents have taught them, instead of the message of God, is making a mistake.

If your parents taught you -- like mine did -- that to put yourself first was selfish, then you need to do whatever you can to stop that old tape from playing in your head. God tells you you are special, unique, and perfect. Your parents may have told you differently, and if they did, cut away that old belief, and follow God's direction. Believe me, He knows better.

Of course, this is very difficult to do if you've never tried it. I work as a hypnotist as well as a psychic medium, and the thread that runs through every single challenge is some old message the client got in childhood, a message that makes them doubt their own value. With a core belief like that, it's not surprise that it's easier to turn our attention to fixing someone else's problem!

Be the change you want to see in the world.

Why? First, because it's the only change you can actually make, and second, because we are all connected. My favorite 12th century man St. Francis, asks us to not only to teach the word of God by example, but he tells us in his famous prayer that minding our own business affects the whole world, when he says "it is in giving that we receive."

We are all one precious thought of God's, reflected in billions of different -- not separate -- people. In a recent reading a spirit grandfather came through for my client, Sharon. He showed me railroad tracks appearing to meet at the horizon. We know of course that railroad tracks never

meet, and as we travel on them and the horizon stays ahead of us, they still always appear to meet at the vanishing point. In showing me this symbol, Sharon's grandfather wanted me to convey that there are things in her life that may never come together. He was talking about people who may never see eye-to-eye and there's nothing wrong with that. There's still a relationship, there's still a balance between things that are parallel, even if they don't come together. He was referring specifically to her brother, about whom Sharon was thinking "If he'd compromise more we'd get along," and she was spending a lot of energy trying to influence him. Her grandfather said, "Instead of pretending that something would be fine 'if,' just pay attention to the reality of now, and know there's nothing wrong with two things that don't meet or agree. There is nothing to fix."

Sharon believed, "If I keep working on him, he'll come over to my side," but her grandfather said "That's a trick of the eye. That future may never come, and in the meantime you ignore the present relationship chasing that mirage. Running parallel is just as beneficial because the relationship is still there and you don't always have to merge to have balance. If you focus on your wish being unfulfilled all the time, you'll lose site of the perfect balance that exists anyway."

Her grandfather continued to teach us. "Don't waste any time managing other people's feelings. Let them have the relationships they're going to have with you or with other people. All you're responsible for is the direction you're going in, and where other people are going is none of your business. And if you try to make it your business, you're wasting a lot of time.

"If you truly want to influence the direction someone is going in, you have to change yourself," and he showed me again this set of railroad tracks, with Sharon being one of the tracks, and bending herself off to one side. Because the ties held the other rail to her -- even though they never truly intercepted -- she could effect a change in the other rail.

This wonderful spirit grandfather showed me much more succinctly than I ever could have come up with myself, the importance and power in minding your own business.

It's not just people we're connected to either. It's not just people we are one with. Last Friday night, sitting on the couch watching TV, I felt this tug on my heart. A tug, and a pop. I have what used to be called a heart murmur; my heart says "lub-dub-a-dub," rather than "lub-a-dub." Every now and then I feel a squeeze around my heart, or a funky flutter that seems out of step with whatever's been going on before. Usually after several seconds my heart seems to reset it's own beat, and I go back to ignoring it. This tug and pop felt totally different, and sitting there on the couch I said to myself, "What is this now?"

And I waited to see what would happen. The squeeze, the extra beats? I was for a moment totally focused and aware of my body, specifically the center of it where my heart beats. Nothing more happened. Just a tug, and a snap.

Now, what I haven't told you was that a cat I've had for about twenty years had slowly been approaching the rainbow bridge over many months. This Friday night I knew her life was winding down; in fact, for the previous several nights I'd said goodbye to her, fully expecting to wake up and find her dead in the morning.

Right after this tug on my heart, I heard my cat start to gasp a bit, and I went to lay down beside her. She gasped a few times more, stretched her body out a couple of times, and then was still. She passed away. I lay there next to her in total silence, trying to track her spirit's movement. (Hey, I'm a medium, we like to keep tabs on spirit movements). In the very quiet living room, it was so clear to me that what I felt was our connection in the physical, snapping. It was like she unplugged from me. And I swear I could feel one less heart beating in the house.

I can't prove this, maybe no one can. Maybe it's only clear after the fact. But I can tell you that the more I work on minding my own business, the more I hear God's voice, and feel my connection and oneness to other living things. The more I use that sword to cut away old beliefs and labels, the more courage I have to face my own business. The more I pay attention to improving myself and being the change I wish to see in the world, the more I recognize that the world and everyone in it is already perfect. We're in God's hands, and I know the more I mind my own business, the closer I get to truly knowing that.

So, what does minding your own business mean?

- Keeping your own house in order; taking responsibility for yourself; no blaming or pointing fingers or using the excuse of external events or people as the reason for your unhappiness.
- Honoring your body, so that you're healthy and vibrant; quitting smoking, wearing your seatbelt. eat your vegetables.
- Being responsible for your part in the dialogue with God.
- Identifying your values and making sure your relationships, career and hobbies are in tune with them. Notice I said YOUR relationships, career and hobbies -- no one else's.
- Identifying your challenges and looking for a spiritual solution to them/

In closing, I quote my favorite 12th century saint Francis once again. He understood more than anyone the importance of minding your own business. If you know this prayer, say it with me. If not, just listen, and say "Yes."

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

*O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
Amen.*

Now, go home and mind your own business.

Amen.