
Therapist's Thoughts E-Zine For January 2006

DEBUGGING YOUR LIFE

Through the years I've worked a lot with anger management. One of the things I tell clients regularly is to notice their anger on a gradient of intensity that goes something like this: bugged, bothered, irritated, annoyed, angry, furious. Somewhere in there, you need to know where your point of no return is. If, for example, you are clenching your fists or red in the face, you are beyond safe in an argument. When you get that fired up, you are too emotionally charged. You lose the ability to think rationally at that point, so you might as well walk away instead of trying to argue or win. It almost never goes well.

Also, metaphorically, I think we all have little resentment boxes. When the box gets too full, we dump the contents over our partner's head. That's what it looks like when we start bringing up old issues and pains from the past. Similarly, little irritants in life that occur on a daily basis can fill up our box. A box that's too full is a dangerous thing because we don't have much room for the unexpected frustrations that pop up during the day. One method of keeping your box empty is to express your little frustrations as you go so they don't build up. The other is to eliminate all of the daily bugs in your life so that you have room to take on struggles.

Below are a few examples of ways that I have eliminated daily bugs in my life so I can be more at ease.

1. I put a nail in the wall to hold my robe so it is easily accessible.
2. I purchased roller-ball-type shower curtain hooks for easy sliding (no more hooking on the lip of the expanding rod).
3. I installed a shoe holder and coat hanger by the front door to reduce that irritating clutter.
4. I purchased a headset for the phone so I no longer get a crook in my neck.
5. I'm about to buy a universal remote so I don't end up exasperated at everyone that can't figure out how to use the ones we have.

See if you can come up with some of your own daily bugs and fix them right away. Living without those daily irritants can give you the room you need to handle the surprises.

Once again, many thanks to my clients that allow me to let this material bubble up while in their presence.

Sincerely,

Russell

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