

THE POWER OF BEING SEEN

by Deb Elkin, LPC

I completed a nine month training program this past weekend in energy psychology. Ten of us had come together, an excited, hopeful, yet somewhat skeptical lot. Over the course of the nine months, we learned a lot, we risked a lot, and we at times shared deeply of ourselves. We shared who it was that we really are. We got seen, for better and for worse. As we went around this weekend, taking turns closing and completing and saying goodbye, what was most powerful for me was how incredibly important and valuable it had been for each of us to be seen and accepted for who we are.

We were gifted these past nine months with a teacher who saw our light when we could not see it for ourselves. And he held us in it. He held it for us. He named it out loud and told us about our gifts. He drew us out. He helped us shine. And it was a gift to each of us, to be so seen.

We have all been the recipients of teachers or significant others in our lives who have seen our potential, our hidden gifts, and have drawn us out and nurtured us. They were people we probably still hold close to our hearts, whom we remember fondly, and who had a deep influence on us. They were special people. We felt, and were, seen by them, and that meant the world to us. We were taken seriously for who we are and what we are capable of. And it felt wonderful.

Unfortunately, we can probably count those special people on one hand, perhaps two. Many of our teachers/significant others, were not so loving, so open, so encouraging. They didn't see us, our depth, our hidden qualities and talents. They may have ignored us. They may not have had time for us. They may have teased or ridiculed or humiliated us. And intentionally or not, they closed us down.

We became afraid and we became ashamed and we learned to hide important aspects of ourselves. The risk was too high. It was safer to hide. And we suffered. And if we are still hiding, then we are still suffering, because we aren't fully, truly alive. We're snuffing out a vital and long forgotten part of ourselves that is our core, our essence, our light.

All of us are teachers, every one of us, everyday, to our children, our partners, our parents, our co-workers, our friends, and to ourselves. We have the ability to see the good, the light, the gift in those we interact with every day, and as their teachers, help them bring it out, help them shine. We have the ability, the opportunity to love unconditionally. What a huge difference we could make not only in one person's life, but in the world as a whole, if we each brought that gift of loving kindness and compassion, of seeing and acknowledging, to those we love and those we touch each day.

So I invite you to open your eyes to those around you. You have the ability to be a huge gift to the people in your life. And it is really so simple – take a minute to look through different eyes, to see the goodness in others. See below the surface of their defensiveness, their sarcasm, their shyness, their insecurity. Look for their loving hearts, their compassionate nature, their nurturing nature. Look for their honesty, their integrity. Look for their intelligence, their humor. Look for their passion for life. Look and see what makes them who they really are, what makes them unique, what makes them a gift to the world.

And then draw attention to it. Acknowledge it out loud to them. They need to hear it. They need to be seen again. They need help knowing they are appreciated and valued and not to hide themselves anymore. Hold them in it. Stay steady. Be gentle. Know that you are truly making a difference in someone's life. And it's so simple, it takes so little effort and time. Wouldn't it be lovely to be one of those people who someone looks back on one day and holds in fond esteem for the gift you gave them that deeply affected, or perhaps changed, their life?

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