

19 INHERITED PATTERNS

As Richard and I reviewed some of his family dynamics, we processed several issues he had with his mother. I suggested that it might be valuable to consider that his mother probably came by her behavior, her "off the mark" patterns, the same way he did. He acknowledged that she very likely never saw what she did as abuse, but rather as a way to protect herself, as he had.

"Abuse," I said, "is one behavior that tends to be transmitted from generation to generation. Facing and processing through the abusive patterns is the best way I know to stop the behavior from being passed on to our children . This work is about taking on the generations, for the generations. What you don't deal with will be passed on; what you are willing to face, sort out and heal will no longer infect family dynamics. The pattern then stops with you!"

"Does that mean my daughter has the same issues as I do? You mean if I heal, she won't have to deal with them?"

"It is very probable that she grew up reacting in some way to the same issues as you do. I'd be willing to bet that you have unintentionally treated her in a similar fashion to the way your mother treated you.

[Book contains graphic illustrating the genetic chain of abuse.]

"As you heal the issues with your mother, not only will your relationship with her improve, most likely your relationship with your daughter will shift as well," I assured him.

"Sometimes my daughter avoids me like the plague, and I've always wondered why. Now I think I know. She used to tell me I treated her poorly, but I never listened. I didn't see it that way. I guess my mom didn't either. Come to think of it, my mom used to brush me off the same way my daughter says I do to her. It feels like a relief to know that I can do things differently and develop a more Loving relationship with her. You know, I'm feeling pretty good. I think I might be feeling that 'empowerment' feeling you were talking about earlier. For the first time in a long time , I'm feeling like I can do something about my life."

"Richard, my mind keeps going back to a thought I had when we were talking about your issues around your mother. Would you be willing to look at that?"

He spoke with hesitation. "What the heck, I feel pretty good, considering what I've been through today. If someone told me I could uncover and deal with events and issues of such proportions as I have and come out the other side with a smile on my face, I'd have said they were crazy."

"Recall that the key to process and healing is holding the space of Love . Bringing these issues to the surface in another setting could lead to craziness," I acknowledged.

"Is this the kind of thing that people do at your intensive workshops?" he asked.

"That is the focus. In an intensive, we work to give the best tools and understanding possible. The rest is process , and it is like watching miracles happen when a number of people get together to do healing work," I replied.

"I know you wouldn't engage me in this conversation to avoid looking at the issue I asked about," I said with a chuckle. "Are you willing to look at that one?"

"I'm willing," he said as a trace of fear flashed across his face.

"Have you ever thought that living with you might be like walking through a minefield?" I inquired.

"No, of course not!" came his indignant reply.

"Are you feeling defensive, Richard?"

"Perhaps a little, wouldn't you be?"

"Probably. I want to be clear that the purpose of bringing things to the surface is to gently look, own them and let go of what does not work. I'm on your team and want to support you in that process . Has anyone ever given you that feedback about a minefield before?"

Richard did admit that he had been told, more than once, that living with him was like walking on eggshells. He again affirmed that he had never thought of himself in that way.

"Seldom do we see ourselves as others see us, and most people never take the time to listen to what others are really saying. Truly taking the time to listen to others provides us with the opportunity to look differently at unconsciously driven behavior, as does being aware of our responses to what others say."

KEY THOUGHT—Your relationships and your words are mirrors of your mind.

I spoke about his making a practice of searching for his patterns of unconscious , driven behavior. I reminded him of our opening conversation—or mis-conversation—about responsibility . "Recall, Richard, we each experienced the same actuality, we each heard identical words , but your listening spoke to you of fault and blame, while mine informed me of 'response-ability.' Remember the upset that surfaced for you and how much hostility you expressed?"

"Actually, I didn't express nearly as much as I felt at the moment!" he informed me.

"When upset surfaces, we call it an opportunity to learn to Forgive—an opportunity to learn to let go of the tendency to blame others for what they trigger in us.

"Most people tend to experience their mind's interpretation of an event in the world and think that is what is actually happening. We tend to think ours is the only Truth. Like ripples distort an image on the surface of a pond, there is always some distortion of the images output from the mind when we are in upset. The Truth cannot be reflected accurately in a disturbed mind."

"If I'm clear on the bottom line of this work it is that at every moment we are each experiencing our own reality, correct? You're saying that our realities are made up of internal information and not caused by outside events? What we have been trained to think of as an actual event in the world is really happening in our heads, and what happens in our heads is distorted by upsets and grievances we hold?" Richard looked at me for confirmation.

"The world repeatedly triggers the realities we hold onto and then we wonder, ' Why Is This Happening To Me . . . AGAIN?!' Recall now that projection is blaming our inner happenings on others. When in blame, the tendency is to think the outside event is causing your experience. It is not!

"Projection does not work to alleviate pain because when you pretend the problem is outside, you leave the pain inside and cut yourself off from being able to resolve it. The reason running away does not work to put an end to your pain is that you take your painful realities with you. Has moving ever done much to change the quality of your relationships?"

"No. I guess avoidance is not the answer."

We talked about the idea that anger does not work and is never justified. We also explored the stresses involved in holding anger in the body and the pain from the tensions of keeping falsehoods in place. We considered the possibility that as these patterns are passed on, they might contribute to what is now thought of as genetically inherited disease. "Is it possible that family dis-ease patterns can be changed, michael?" Richard asked.

"Absolutely! My experience is that holding the space of Conscious, Active, Present Love while unresolved issues surface can shift any energy pattern."

Richard was reaching new levels of clarity and enthusiasm in his process. Anyone who has done this work knows that the event that follows a new level of empowerment is a Healing Crisis. It is at this point in the process that many people become filled with self-doubt about their ability to truly heal their pain. For some, the process seems too hard, too complicated; for some, too simple; and for others, the pain seems too deep. He looked forlorn as old feelings of hopelessness surfaced for healing.

"This sounds so hopeless! If all of my pain is inside of me, how can I ever hope to get away from it? Why are we not all taught as children that we create our own reality ? How will I ever work this out in my relationships ? How can I ever... ?"

"Slow down, Richard. Remember, these feelings will pass! The surfacing of hopelessness is an opportunity to deal with that reality in your mind. You are at least learning these things now! Most people go through their entire lives without ever discovering what is going on, without ever having tools .

KEY THOUGHT—Upset is an opportunity to learn Forgiveness and to let go of blame.

"As for your question about why we were not taught this as children , Benjamin Franklin made a statement that sums it up perfectly: ' You will observe with concern how long a useful Truth may be known and exist, before it is generally received and practiced upon.'

"Richard, I have some good news and some bad news. The reason for your distress is your new level of empowerment . Your pain signals the opportunity to be aware of patterns that do not work, and heal them. That's the good news."

"Shouldn't my new level of empowerment make me feel better, michael?"

"Definitely, but first the blocks to that empowerment being actualized in your life must be surfaced and healed. Everything unlike your empowerment must be Forgiven. This is only possible when you have reached a higher level of vitality than your norm."