

Family Life... Bombarded with questions

Situation:

Last night I stopped by to see my parents. While we were having dinner they bombarded me with questions. "How's your job? How's the car running? Did you get the brakes checked like you said you were going to? Are you taking your medication every day? When is your next doctor's appointment? Have you talked to your sister lately? At first I didn't think much about the conversation. The question about my meds did bother me. I felt like they were invading my privacy. I got worked up about the questions and even though I got a little moody with them, the visit went pretty good.

Symptoms:

On the way home is when I really got steamed up. I replayed every question they asked and replayed all my answers. I thought I about what I should have said instead. I don't like them drilling me for information. It's as if I couldn't think of anything else. "Why are they always picking on me? I hate it! I really hate it!" I got so tense that my heart started palpitating, and it felt like there wasn't enough air in the car.

Solution:

The physical symptoms were starting to scare me, so I pulled over into a parking lot, shut the radio off, and got my copy of *Peace of Body, Peace of Mind* out of the back seat.

I opened it to page 213 – The Primary Formula, that's always helped me in the past. At first it was hard to concentrate, but I kept looking at the page. I had to command my eye muscles to keep reading. Then I read out loud to myself:

To eliminate feeling insecure or unsafe (fear) - The situation is distressing but not dangerous;

"OK – my symptoms are the direct result of my fear and anger – they are distressing, not dangerous. I am uncomfortable, but I am safe."

It is a triviality compared to my mental health; it is average. My feelings and sensations are average; they are distressing but not dangerous."

"This is only stress and I'm OK."

To eliminate the judgement that I am wrong (fear): I am not wrong, I am average.

When I thought about it, I was thinking I was wrong for how I acted and how I answered my parent's questions. I wanted to tell them that it was none of their business. I didn't though, I was nice. I acted with dignity. I didn't upset them by showing my anger. So, I could say that I controlled my impulses. And, every act of self-control produces a sense of self-respect. Rather than being mad at myself for how I acted, I could be proud of myself. I don't need to be perfect.

To eliminate the judgement someone else is wrong (anger): The other person is not wrong, he or she is average; I cannot control outer environment.

Right, they're outside me and all I can really control is me – my thoughts and my behavior. And they are not wrong. They are average. Everybody's parents ask those kind of questions. Average. Average. Average.

Maybe the questions were a little probing, but I can remember one of my Mom's favorite lines: "What I do, I do with love." She does love me. Both my parents do, and they both care about me and my future. They are not picking on me. I felt like they were picking on me, but feelings aren't always facts. They are showing they care. I am really blessed that they have always been so supportive, even during the chaotic times when I went off my meds because I thought I didn't need them any more.

In the past:

Not too many months ago when I felt as if I was being grilled I either got upset vocally, or I'd sulk. Now I know that sulking is a non-verbal expression of my anger. Either way, when I acted out, my parents would get upset right along with me. Everybody lost, me included. Now we all win. We don't have a perfect relationship, and probably never will have. An average relationship will do for me. Now that I am more stable emotionally, I can see that before I really wasn't too stable. It helps that now I see that my medication manages the symptoms of my diagnosed mental condition, and that it's up to me to manage my life with the Taking Charge Tools. It's amazing what I've learned. Now it's up to me to keep practicing. And I will, because when I do, every area of my life is smoother. Not perfect. But a whole lot smoother.

