

## MINI-SEMINAR OF THE MONTH

### Dealing with Arrogance

The neighborhood bully, of either sex, has a fear of being found out and turns to inadequacy as a major resource, and not knowing how else to behave will, over time, self-destruct. An arrogant person's swagger and bragging is designed to hide his insecurity, his sense of inadequacy and self-doubt. He not only brags about how much money he has, he also over-spends to prove it. He not only boasts about his conquests in love, he has several episodes of infidelity to prove it. He may also set out to prove what a warrior he is by picking fights and arguments. The arrogant person always has something to prove. In a word, arrogance is ignorance if ignorance is ignoring certain valuable information. If arrogance is resisted it becomes more profound and takes different forms. Why? The arrogant person survives on the pretense that he is keeping others from seeing his lack of self-esteem. He may even huff and puff about how therapy, spirituality and self-discovery are for sissies. Besides, he thinks, if you let your guard down people will take advantage.



So how do we deal with such behavior? First admit the arrogant person is doing his best and know he will do better when he can, but first he'll have to learn other behavior, which he won't do unless he chooses to. And if you want him to learn it sooner and insist that he does, then you've got a problem—perhaps some arrogance of your own.



Next admit that arrogance is your interpretation of his behavior and he may not interpret his behavior the same way, so don't drive yourself nuts with trying to convince him. Have the compassion that allows his behavior to be what it is and enough self-compassion to not intrude his behavior into your life. In other words don't make him wrong for his swaggering and bullying. One of the first lessons I learned in Karate was don't resist the attack, just don't be there, let it slide past and help it on its way. In the same way take a stand, stay your own course, side step his nonsense by letting his arrogance be his business and don't make it yours.

The sad fact is that the impenetrable shell and hard core of arrogance makes such a person difficult to be with. His arrogance promotes intolerance of others' behavior, making it necessary for him to be superior, keeping him isolated and mistrusting. This adds to his unspoken inadequacy that leads to super-imposing reluctance over letting others know him, which of course puts true intimacy out of reach.

I've had many such clients, whose desperation to join the world out-weighed their desperation to remain superior and aloof. They are the smart bullies, both women and men willing to admit that being a neighborhood bully doesn't work. A friend of mine says it's their come-to-Jesus-time.

One bully in particular stands out, a physically beautiful woman in her early thirties—nice to everyone on initial meeting. But if asked a personal question she would say something like, if you're writing a book, leave that chapter out. Then she would swing the brown leather bag off her shoulder, take out a cigarette, light it and blow smoke in the direction of the questioner—an attitude of don't mess with me if you know what's good for you. In sessions she was finally able to admit that many people appeared friendly toward her because they were afraid of her put-downs, for which she was well known. Needless to say her friendships were few and long term ones even fewer.

The first barb she flung at me was, "I'll bet a good looking guy like you is unfaithful and a bad lover."

Without guile I said, "I guarantee you'll never find out from personal experience."

"Can I trust you on that?"

"Absolutely."

Finally one day during a session she said, "I wish others were as unafraid and as honest with me as you are."

I assured her that learning to be honest with her feelings and practicing appropriate expression of them would continue paying off. Shortly after that she moved away and I didn't hear from her, until a couple of years went by and I got a letter explaining that she was married and both were very happy.

I didn't make her arrogance wrong and the bully self-destructed.

#### Something to Think About For a Month

If you catch yourself feeling you must prove some prowess: intelligence, financial status, looks, athletic ability etc ask yourself, Is it absolutely necessary to prove this? If the answer is no then stop, and if the answer is yes, then ask what else could be true and make a long list of answers (ten or more) and if the answer is still yes then continue proving and know that it's not arrogance running your show.

#### AT PLAY ON THE FRINGE

##### Questions To Tickle Your Imagination

While children live in states of wonder, adults live on islands of belief. Make wonderment your home address and questions your daily bread. Answer the following questions just for the fun of it. And each time you answer a question ask yourself, and what else could be true?

§ If there is a moment in which you're not discovering and rediscovering something about yourself, when is that moment?

\* What if your history was only a series of events—neither good nor bad?

§ What would life be like if you could look forward to your timely death?

\* If a perfectionist is one who seeks to know perfection, then aren't we all perfectionists?

\* If I can admit that I'm a good person and know that each moment, good or bad, was a step toward that admission, should I have left any of those moments out?

§ If the purpose is to become more awake to our humanness, then haven't the bad names in history done as much for us as the good ones?

\* After you've cured the ham can you heal the hog?

\* Isn't getting conceived our biggest challenge?

\* Are humans supposed to have natural enemies like other species? If yes, then why are we trying to wipe out cancer?

\* What would our human world be like if we all became instantly blind?

\* What if crimes were necessary to human development?

\* What if we could only write sonnets?

\* What could happen if all possessives were removed from our spoken and written language?

§ If our walking became our dancing and our dancing became our walking, would this affect our social structures?

\* Is anything more important than giving all of your attention to eating a cookie in the moment you're eating it?

\* If we were not bilateral, how might that effect our perceptions?

§ At what point is a bungee jump a spiritual trip?



Be good to yourself. You're worth everything that requires.