

How Am I Supposed to Handle “Hypocrites”?

By Dania Dbaibo Darwish

You are, indeed, blessed when life hands you the right kind of supportive people who get you all enlightened, validated, or nourished. But, like it or not, you may bump repeatedly with mere hypocrites. If you're the tough-minded type, you wouldn't easily let them off the hook. You may openly defy their emotional blackmail and confront them with the truths you observe. But what happens if you're the overly sensitive type. You abide by societal etiquettes that require you to continually swallow your observations? Your personal standards dictate gentle interpersonal dealings. You'd tell yourself: "let others discover the hypocrisy just as I did" (maybe let them quell the lies for you). But then what? It just irritates you that you have to keep tolerating the deceit. Hypocrites have been preying on my mind lately; and I am having difficulty dealing with them. I am just saddened by the idea of being lied to. I might as well write about it to gain some clarity. Maybe in the process I get to reduce their harrowing effects.

Let's see: The dictionary defines a hypocrite as "a person who professes beliefs and opinions that he or she does not hold in order to conceal his or her real feelings or motives". It's not those diplomatic well-meaning people that will be referred to here; rather, the malicious type who continually live a big lie to portray a good image. They intentionally or not neglect to practice what they preach (i.e. their actions contradict their declared beliefs). They hide the truth for having motives that are either unappreciated by others (could be hidden agendas), or that they don't feel so proud of to start with. It seems to me as if they underestimate that others are bright enough to figure out their pretense. They live by double standards; and to reduce their internal arising conflict, they cleverly self-rationalize this duality by providing all sorts of justifications. But, would this defense mechanism succeed in zeroing-out the precipitating imbalance? Would it eliminate the emerging inner anxiety? My belief is probably not. They will remain in an ongoing battle to protect their charade. I wonder if they get too drained to persist, or if they ever anticipate for the predictable moments of being discovered.

What about you at the receiving end of being bombarded with unsolicited lies? Our natural tendency is to start avoiding these people especially if honesty is a guiding cherished principal in our lives. As impractical as it is, some of these hypocrites are woven into your most intimate connections (i.e. could be family members, colleagues on the job, or even members of your own circle of acquaintances). By now, you know them too much; and when they get going with the “parade”, it feels to you that you want to grab out your daggers and stab their lies to death. But, no; the caring sensitive type can’t allow that. You resist the urge of descending to lower levels of dealing; you want to keep rising to higher standards of ethical conduct. To you, ignoring them might be the right thing to do; and how many times do we choke by having to do the “right thing”? Sometimes it sounds like too much pressure. Are you to lash out and bend your rules some time? Hmmmm! that seems tempting and you’ve got good reasons to do that. Gees! These people keep invading your territory. They walk all over you!

Giving it a good thought, I’m inclined to stick to my guns. They press my buttons, but let me keep doing what I believe as the “right thing”. Let me use some self-affirmations. Something like:

- *Dania, wait! Suspend your judgment. Are you basing your observations on assumptions or on repeated and well demonstrated action / declared belief discrepancy? Re-visit your stance EVERY time.*
- *If I do find such discrepancy, understand well where it comes from. These people might just be covering up something embarrassing to protect you, others, or themselves. They could have good intentions after all, so keep your eyes open to find the good core in people (even in those hypocrites themselves).*
- *Don’t let their prevalence keep you on your toes when you deal with well-meaning others. The “good guys” and the “not so good guys” inspire us alike.*
- *Let’s keep our hopes high in their coming to terms with their true self. Life can be made much simpler if we just acted naturally.*
- *Let us tiptoe through the minefields of their insecurities and ignorance while being alert to not being coaxed into their hidden agendas.*

- *They are “small stuff”; let’s focus on more worthy pursuits.*
- *Let’s persevere in being sincere. Be the good example; maybe by observation they get that “wake-up” call.*
- *They are here to teach us a lesson. Think of many good reasons for why they exist in your life. Refine your life skills and exercise your patience.*

It’s amazing how my disgust subsides as I state what I can do to manage their inevitable presence in my life. See, I can still disagree without being disagreeable. Eventually, these hypocrites will realize that the masks they wear are transparent and people can actually see through. Their masks wear out. If they don’t shape up, they will look around one day to find themselves living in total isolation. Give them ground to discover on their own the serenity of being true. Shrug it off! You can’t teach them. They’ll have to learn it on their own from you.....

