

Leaning Into What Rubs You!

What makes you uncomfortable? What “rubs you the wrong way”? What ‘bugs you’, ‘gets under your skin’. What makes you uncomfortable in ‘coaching lingo’ is what is referred to as ‘an edge’.

“Edges” are those particular places, situations, thoughts and feelings that push us into territory that rubs up against a value, or brings up those ‘shadow selves’ that we may push away, places most people don’t want to go. What is unacceptable to ourselves about ourselves is what we will also tend to find wrong ‘over there’, projected onto someone else.

What are edges? How do they show up?

“An edge is the space between the known and the unknown”.* It is like a horizon that the individual cannot see over. It is at the limit that we know about ourselves. Edges are a part and process of everyday life. Anytime you try a new behavior or have a new idea or perspective, you are crossing the edge of what you know and identify with.

Some examples of crossing edges might include:

- Trying a new sport or hobby
- Saying something that someone else might not want to hear
- Speaking in public
- Doing something that ‘scares you’ just a bit
- A place where you begin to feel anxious, that makes your heart beat just a little bit faster ☺

As people who are on a path of personal growth, we will always be bumping up against an edge, ever moving into a new frontier. In individuals, edges produce a question of identity, of “who I am”. In relationships, edges create a crisis of myth, “who we are”.* Edges also show up as a communication barrier, the sudden inability of individuals to speak or complete what they are saying.

One way to gain a better understanding of our deeper conflicts is to examine who and what bothers; who or what we judge. When something bothers us, it stirs something in us; it bumps up against a belief or value we hold, as well as sometimes ‘bumping up against’ a part of ourself we deny or marginalize. The same holds true about our judgments. If we judge another person it is likely that we are judging some aspect of who we are.

For example, if we judge people who have no money as ‘trash’ or someone who looks a bit different as ‘ugly’ we might actually be uncomfortable with our own financial past or present, or our own physical features and looking for someone else to be ‘better than.’ Additionally, if we judge emotional songs as ‘stupid’ or ‘silly’ then it may be that we are denying vulnerable emotions these songs address.

A poignant example comes from a sad but true kindergarten story. A little girl has a milk allergy. Everyday at milk time she would cry because she knew she would feel uncomfortable and even sick by drinking the milk. The teacher scoffed at this, the other children made fun of her and called her a big baby. Where do 5 year olds learn that a person is a 'big baby' for crying about feeling and fearing illness? Yes, unfortunately most people in our culture learn (are programmed [READ MORE](#)) at a very early age that one way to feel 'good' about one's self is to be better than others. (Oh, by the way, the little girl's mom got involved with the school and she was given orange juice at her breaks.)

Be intentional in your learning! Here's how!

It is useful to make a list of all the situations that 'stir us' as well as a list of people you have been telling yourself you don't like the specify exactly what it is that you judge about the person. Try to examine if there are repressed aspects of your personality that relate to these traits you don't like."

When you feel a rub, irritated, or even anxious... what is the rub? What are you creating here that brings up these feelings of discomfort? What in you is being 'touched' that is shouting for your attention? Here is your learning... here is your growth.

My past coach Jeff wrote a great article inviting you to "freak out" once per week. ([READ MORE](#)) I invite you to join me in honoring the value of personal growth, of becoming more of who you are.... And at least once per week, do something to "Freak Out"! You might surprise yourself with how much fun you have!