



How Do You Really Feel?

I went to visit my mother last week.
I really love her.

Sometimes we get so caught up in profiling people and stereotyping groups that we forget to value the worth of an individual.

My mom? What do I value in her?

A constant love through all the stages of my life
Years of fun playing with her - even as an adult
Her time spent in teaching me her values
A role model for my own motherhood

It's chic to opine these days.
State your opinion. Show how well read you are.
I do it. You do it, too.
I've heard EVERYONE'S OPINION on EVERY SUBJECT!
Media personalities scream "My position is....!".

But what do you really feel?

Can you see an individual's worth
or
are you guilty of "broad-brush"
stereotypical judgments and opinions?

1. How do you feel about senior adults?

In the workplace, I see them referred to as "been here too long"... "aren't up-to-date"; "hard to work with"; "won't change". However, Tom Brokaw in his book, *The Greatest Generation*, referred to the older generation as one that demonstrated duty, honor achievement and courage. With generational values like that, I ought to be able to learn something from them. How do you feel? We might slow down, sit down, ask...then listen.

I suggest we show respect, ask questions, learn from their experiences. It seems foolish to me that I would make needless mistakes in my life because I erroneously chose not to pay attention to the experience and wisdom of an older generation.

2. How do you feel about a different race or nationality of people?

In the workplace, I see acceptance of differences, probably much of it is because we understand the laws that make it illegal to discriminate. What employee foolishly chooses to cause a company lawsuit? But, aha! Outside of work...in your "feelings": What are your feelings about

nationalities of people that eat different foods than you? Speak a different language than you? Dress differently? Worship differently? We have our biases. We have our opinions. And sometimes, we get carried away by voicing the opinions of others who are "like us". All emailing and groupie opinions may not be worthy of "passing on to all the friends on your lists". If you truly value that a message is worthy, pass it on. However, if you can stop profound prejudice, stop it.

I suggest, once again, that we can not go wrong by showing respect for those who are from different homelands and different races. We, actually, can learn from them. Have you tried? Sadly, our biases may not allow that closeness. I know of a child from another country that speaks 4 languages, and he is in the 3rd grade! How about YOU or me? How many do we speak? Another example: An individual from another culture celebrates in joyful merriment one of their homeland holidays. Hey! What's the holiday? "You don't know?" Ask! You may be fascinated.

3. How do you feel about the different political parties?

Americans today have, primarily, 2-3 political parties with which they align themselves. Interestingly, political parties came into being because there were two differing opinions about "the size of the federal government". How big should it be? How far should it reach? To me, that's a fairly logical reason. However, as we fast-forward to 2010, there is blanket disgust and outrageous language ON EVERY ISSUE from one party to the next. Goodness! Where is civility? Are we so blind with our own righteousness that we can not see merit in others' ideas? Can we not learn that each political party has admirable and worthy aspects of their platforms?

I suggest you become an "active government and history student" – but not from the media screamers – who are trying to boost their television ratings. Read great biographies, pick up your child's history book and read it, watch documentaries that reflect true epoch events. When we can see events through "others' eyes" and when we can "feel the painful predicaments" of past leaders, we can formulate clearer thoughts. I suggest our country, our government, our children, our companies, our economy....need YOU to think for yourself. Be a voice and choose to lead and to vote...with YOUR convictions.

4. How do you feel about different socio-economic classes?

Your language tells others how you feel. However, do you know that your body language and tone of voice (facial expression, head toss, smirk or smile) reveal what's in your heart? All of our "politically correct" statements can prove to be lies when our actions show the contrary. Be careful here. The HIGH ROAD is the best road to take when reflecting on those different than you. Assume the best. If someone is having financial difficulty, assume that circumstance, beyond their control, have dictated a tougher road for them right now. Or better yet, assume that they could have controlled their circumstances -- and so, consider offering them your help, your hand, or your shoulder. You could be there, too, one day. If someone is "rich", assume the best. Assume they deserve it all! "Are they crooks?", you say. "What do they need so much money for?" "What does anyone do with a 15-bedroom mansion?" Knock it off! You have enough to do today just keeping your own shoes tied. Take the HIGH ROAD.

I suggest developing greater sensitivity. See others through kinder eyes. Speak with a gentler voice. Give with a generous spirit. Smile. Be pleasant. Be gracious with compliments. No one died and left us as judge, so we should get out from under our self-imposed pressure to "set the world straight". Do you not want the same from others?

So, what does this have to do with my mom?
....just a few thoughts

1. Where would we all be without someone who believed in us?
2. What thoughts, beliefs, and values stem from our moms and dads?
3. How grateful we need to be for people that have influenced us for the good?

It's MY TURN to Be Influential:

- *Think for myself. Educate myself. Bring my "lessons" into 2010.*
- *Help others to think for themselves. Make decisions. Teach facts.*
- *Model behavior that will influence others for the good.*
- *Praise in public. Criticize in private.*
- *Fight for all things that will preserve our freedom*
- *Be considerate of the individual. Different from me? It's okay.*

Moms are wonderful.

**If your mom is still living, love her!
If your mom has passed, love her!**

**And if you're lucky enough
to be a parent....**

BE A DARN GOOD ONE!

***Pass on the great stuff in you.
Leave your biases behind.
Sadly enough, kids will find their own.***