

The Blame Game

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When we point an accusing finger at someone, we only understand 20% of the dynamic. We unravel a mere one fifth on the equation. Every time we point a finger of blame at the other, we are also inadvertently pointing three fingers at ourselves: which contributes another 60% of the problem. Of course, we are also pointing the thumb up to the universe, which contributes another 20% to the dynamic of every situation.

In every relationship, whether with friend or foe, spouse or kin, partner or parent, a

time comes when there is a bump in the road with a crossroad ahead. How we negotiate the bump may decide which direction the relationship will take. Many a times, the relationship is dashed to pieces if we try to rush over the bump without discernment, temperance, tolerance and reflection.

The most important discernment is whether we focus on the other's role in the difficulty which may explain 20% of the dynamic or focus on our own shadow which may contribute to the impasse, which is likely to untangle 60% of the dynamic. 20% is the intangible God thing, the black box of the universe, which has its own mystery, beyond our comprehension, since God works in mysterious ways.

So when we feel like blaming a spouse, adversary or someone for our problems, think about the 60% contribution you may have made to the situation. You, not the other, has the key to resolving the problem. By blaming the other, you are giving control to the other and missing an opportunity to harvest the gifts of insight about your own shadow or dark side. When we reflect on our own shadow, soon we may discover the source of light; since there is no shadow without light!

I see this dynamic play out several times daily in my clinical practice as a psychiatrist and a psychoanalyst. When an executive comes and complains about his employees, he is much more likely to succeed when he

focuses in his own leadership (or lack of) style rather than blame his team. Is he inspiring, affirming, present, guiding, has a vision for his team, set clear guidelines, measurable expectations, realizable goals, or does he has a fuzzy, uninspiring, absentee leadership style?

When a parent comes and complains about rebellious teenager, are they blaming it on their child or willing to explore their own emotionally distant, relationally non-affirming, lukewarm attachment, self absorbed parenting paradigm?

When a spouse complains about an intimacy block and lack of Eros in the relationship and blame their partner for it, are they willing to look their own emotional withdrawal, their personal insecurity, their past baggage that may contribute to the intimacy block. Over the last thirty five years of working with individuals and couples, it is sad to see the blame game set in. However, when the dyad looks at their own shadow, the outcomes are heartwarming. When a husband looks at their own mother complex, their attachment blocks with their mothers; their mother complexes, and how the husbands tend to project their inner mothers onto their spouse. When they get insight into their own mother complex, they are able to discern the mother from the lover and see their wives with a completely new lens, thus rejuvenating the relationship.

Often, wives project their father complex onto their husbands. When they unpack their father complex, let go of the baggage of the emotionally absent father or abandoning parent onto their husbands, they may be able to resuscitate a flagelling relationship. There are many variations on this theme; however, the central dynamic is blame versus insight and reflection on our contribution to the relationship tangle.

Not only this self reflection undoes the relationship block, it enhances our sense of mastery on the psyche's dark side. When we understand our complexes and shadow, we have a more accurate sense of ourselves, our relationships, our world and direction for our future. Rather than live in the shadow of our past, we are able to pursue the light of the future.

In simpler dynamic terms, the difference between winners and losers in the game of life is between the blame projectors versus reflection interjectors. When we project blame, we are making the other the higher power. When we reflect on our own role in the predicament, we are blessed with insight, mastery and a sense of empowerment as to what we can do to reset our lives rather than hoping the other would change. The other is unlikely to change when they are under the barrel of our blame pointing finger. They are much more likely to change, when they do not get reciprocity for their dysfunctional contribution to the relationship fire. When

that fire is not fueled by the blame fuel by the other, it tends to die out. It has no audience. It loses steam.

Of course, this is easier said than done. We all feel light when the other is responsible, but this is just an illusion. To an ant, the mole hill looks like a mountain. But when we step away from the mole hill, we are able to see the bigger picture and our own contribution. This takes courage, integrity and self reflection. At takes magnanimity to forgive the other for their contribution to the problem, to forgive ourselves for our past indiscretion based on ignorance, to sublimate our unattainable wishes, to suppress our legitimate anger, to anticipate based on our understanding of the matrix, to use humor, to not take ourselves too seriously, to be reflective rather than reactive, to be detached from the battles so that we may win the wars. This shift of consciousness is the key to move from being a loser to winner in the game of life.

When we shift our consciousness, we step into our potential to be the best lover, parent, partner, friend and even a worthy adversary. It is said in Hindu scriptures, that we are fortunate if we have good friends, but we are blessed if we have worthy adversaries. Mahatma Gandhi was grateful to have the civilized though cunning British as his worthy adversaries in his quest for India's independence and resurrection of the human spirit of fairness. If the Nazis had been his adversaries, his non violent

movement would have ended in a quick commute to Hitler's gas chamber.

Remember: Self Reflection is the magic key to the most daunting of life's problems. Blaming others is the easiest way of fueling the fire of relationship tangles and disastrous outcomes. You can make a choice. Choose wisely! May the force be with you.

Namaste

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Trained in India, Great Britain and the US, he is interested in the emerging frontiers of Spirituality and Healing and the synapses of the Mind, Body, Soul and Spirit. He is author of the book, Path to the Soul, Weiser Books, 2000, Awaken the Slumbering Goddess: The Latent Code of the Hindu Goddess Archetypes, Booksurge Publishers, 2007 and the coauthor of Retire Your Family Karma, Nicholas-Hays, Inc. 2003, These and his other upcoming presentations can be previewed at his website www.pathtothesoul.com

Ashok Bedi has been in practice in Milwaukee for over twenty- five years and specializes in Adult Psychotherapy and

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