

Nobody Deserves Your Time More than You Do

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The discussion happened around Wilma's dining table in Canmore with a view of the Three Sisters mountains. We gals love the Three Sisters; even the name brings a smile. Jannette told us that her coach had challenged her with this statement, "Nobody deserves your time more than you do." I tried saying the personalized version in my head. "Nobody deserves my time more than me." Somehow it was harder for my trained brain to accept.

I am reminded that years ago I served on a committee that decided to hold a women's public event. We had no funds but I was quite willing to phone a distinguished community psychologist to request a complimentary presentation. Her response shocked me. "No, I will not. Your organization is not on my charitable list. I do not give away my money, nor time indiscriminately. Women too often do not value their time and energy. If you were a jewellery maker would you sit by the roadside and give it away? I don't think so. All the best with your event." This self empowered woman decided when her service was a benevolent give away and when she expected payment equal to her value. How do we women decide the monetary value of our time, knowledge and skill? Don't we women tend to diminish the worth of our time, skills, experience and education? It doesn't help that society as a whole does not value "*women's* work," the important work of caring for the home, children, the disabled and elderly.

What about the concept of *deserving*? If we conclude we *deserve* the best, what about people in India or Guatemala? How do we reconcile their condition? Do we conclude they do not *deserve* and somehow, because we were born into a more affluent culture, we do? Perhaps we have a responsibility to live to our potential when we are given much—the saying "To those who have been given much, there is much responsibility."

Then around the table our conversation deepened to ask, "When our minds are overflowing to dizzy proportions with possibilities, what do we do about focus and decision making? What do we do with these ideas while maintaining self care?" One idea was to place our written ideas and dreams in a box for future reference.

Another idea was to become more congruent and authentic with our *beingness* rather than random *doing* or unstructured action. The concept of choosing two or three roles as our primary focus may help with choosing where we focus. For example, for years my primary focus was Wife and Mother. During that period I developed a saying, "I would be more successful if I had a wife like me." I was focused on acting

supportively to my hubby and children. Then there was a period of being a Student followed by Therapist. More recently Author, Speaker and Caring Watch of my grown children have been centre stage. Recommended for those who have primarily been a Care Giver is a turn at being a Care Receiver. What about the Playful Child? That's a great role to take on for a few hours every week.

Sometimes there are more questions than answers. When is it healthy and appropriate to **be** for me and when to **be** for others? *Seeking* balance is recommended by many experts. We're there and then, "Oops, I fell off the teeter-totter" it's time to learn more. Consider Hillel's words in the form of two more questions but at least they have a balanced perspective--"If I am not for me, who is? If I am only for me what is the point?"

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