

I am that, and that, and that

by **Connie Brisson**

There I was... an innocent flower in Catherine Potter's chakra class, just trying to take in enough sunshine to keep my bloom for the afternoon class.

Little did I know that Catherine was about to shake up some of my delicate roots and replant me. But, as many of us know, she does have a special way of doing that.

Catherine started off the class by asking us to think about someone that really annoyed us. Okay, I thought - easy. I came up with a few annoying people and then patiently waited for my turn.

A fellow classmate started off by telling Catherine that someone she knew was manipulative. And, quick as a whip, Catherine looked directly at her and said: "You are manipulative."

My eyes got big as saucers and my stomach crunched into a tight, tiny marble. Was I ever glad that I didn't go first! Still, I could not believe what Catherine just said. I felt like I was back in Grade 2, when someone insults you and you retort: "I know you are, but what am I?"

Then the classmate (who had completed this class with Catherine before and knew *exactly* what was going on) replied: "Yes, I am manipulative."

So there I was... in shock, trying to figure out what was going on, when Catherine looked at me and said: "Tell her: 'You are manipulative'."

Oh no, no, no, no, no, no.

I looked at Catherine and said: "No, there is no way I'm going to tell her she is manipulative."

Catherine asked me: "Why not?"

I answered honestly: "Because I know there are times when I've been manipulative and I can't accuse her of being something I know that I've been too."

She insisted and I persisted. And at the end of it all, yes, there was a fine moral to the dramatic exercise.

Catherine talked about the whole concept of: "I am that" and the beauty of being able to accept ourselves for what we are and having the same grace to accept others for what they are

- and knowing that often those qualities/traits are exactly the same in all of us.

I am that. I've never forgotten the lesson.

Sometimes my memory gets a little rusty though ☺. The other day I was on the phone talking to a friend about something that upset me (that someone else did) and suddenly I stopped in the middle of my story - because in that moment I clearly had a memory of myself in a similar scenario - and then I solemnly said: "I am that."

It's a show stopper.

It's so easy to see the mistakes of others and then judge them. In fact, the older (oh, I mean wiser) I get, the more I see that my judgments about others are a clear indication of things I cannot currently see about myself. My judgments are thin little lines, with really big neon colored arrows at the end, that always lead back to myself.

I think once we've experienced something for ourselves, and know it to be true (whether we judge it as 'good' or 'bad'), there is an acceptance and understanding of why/how someone else could "do such a thing." Because we have lived through it, we are able to have empathy, compassion and understanding for the other person.

I am that, and that, and that too.

There's a jewel in that moment - when you get the "I am that" similarity between you and that other person. It's almost like time stands still and for a brief instant you are one; you know what it is like to stand in the same shoes as that other person.

As I mature, the more I stand in my mother's shoes. The more "I am that" insights I have, the more that I realize that my mother and I were more similar than different. And for me, there is a lot of healing there. I see old memories from a new perspective. Now, I understand both of us more.

Sometimes "I am that" is a very good thing.

Connie



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