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Columnist

Professional Development

What are you tolerating?

“Tolerations” is a term coined by Coach U to define the things we’re tolerating. We could relieve a lot of stress in our lives if we’d stop tolerating situations and putting up with stuff that’s dragging us down.

So, what are you tolerating? And how do you stop?

Tolerations can occur in small or large areas of life – anything undone that’s hanging over your head, things that need fixing or cleaning, bad habits, the negative way another person is treating you, your job, the house or town you’re living in, etc.

It’s important to understand that tolerating can have a powerful negative effect on you mentally, emotionally, and physically. The paradox is, that while it can drain you, it can also give you energy. When we put up with something it causes us friction, which can heat up our life and, yes, give us energy. But that kind of energy takes a toll on us. It holds us back, causes unhappiness, and wastes our time.

The good news is that every toleration can be eliminated, and as you fix each one you lighten up and enjoy life more. It requires raising your standards. As you do this, you raise your quality of life and tolerate less.

Here’s how to begin getting rid of your tolerations. First, write all of them down. A good way to compile your list is in a Word document. You’ll create three categories. Number each toleration as you list them. Number 1 is for **Home/Family/Community** tolerations, number 2 for **Personal**, and number 3 for **Work**. Then, under “Table,” select “Sort” and you’ll have items listed together in all three categories.

From the list, choose the five tolerations that are bugging you most in each area. Some examples of Home/Family/Community tolerations are: Size, style, or design of your home; messes/clutter; disorganized closets/drawers; walls need painting; items need repairing; yard needs raking; car needs a tune up. This list could also include arguing with spouse, children don’t mind you, a friend belittles you, disharmony with a neighbor, government regulations. You get the idea.

Personal tolerations could include smoking, not exercising, overweight, low self-esteem, bad temper, unhappiness, or an unforgiving attitude.

Work tolerations could be a boss who intimidates you, disharmony with co-worker(s), in the wrong job, inadequate pay, no chance for advancement, need more education/training.

The next step is to begin taking care of and eliminating the items on your list. Some require action, such as talking things out with someone, cleaning up the mess, moving from or remodeling your home. Others require a change of attitude such as your impatience with a person or situation. And most require both.

When you have handled all five tolerations in an area, give yourself a reward. When all are complete, make another list and handle those tolerations.

When you stop tolerating you become happier, healthier and more fun to be around. You'll have more energy to enjoy doing what you really want to do, and you'll be more creative.

I can give you a personal example. I was tolerating areas of my home that needed cleaning or straightening up. I didn't realize my tolerations were bothering me, but I was feeling bad physically. I was having aches and pains that I attributed to getting older.

Before Christmas I decided to give a party, so I cleaned and straightened those areas I'd been neglecting. I did my Spring-cleaning in December. Then after Christmas, when I'd put the decorations away, I did more cleaning.

The result was I felt really good knowing everything was clean and in order. Then I noticed I didn't have any aches and pains anymore and ever since have had a feeling of well-being I haven't felt in a long time.

Of course, I'm high in the Aesthetic value, so I feel especially stressed when I lack balance or harmony. The things I'm tolerating may not bother you and vice versa.

I suggest you come to grips with the things you're tolerating, handle them, and see if you don't feel much better.

There are three ways to handle tolerations. Do them, Delegate them, or Drop them. You may decide to change your attitude about a toleration and stop letting it bother you (the unsightly mess in your neighbor's yard). That has the same effect as getting rid of it. Some things are out of our control, so we need to stop stressing about them and work on the things we can control.

Begin with handling small tolerations first, because as you get rid of the big ones, your life will change drastically. Eliminating tolerations gets easier as it becomes part of a new life style.

Here's to a happier you!

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