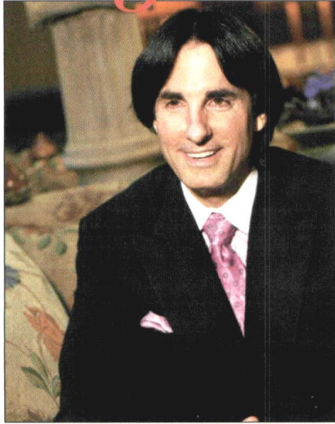


ask demartini

Dr John Demartini



answers your questions

DR JOHN DEMARTINI is founder of the Demartini Institute, a human behaviour expert, author, educator and health/business consultant.

Q: I have my mother-in-law coming to stay with me for the holidays and we simply don't get on. No matter what I do, nothing is good enough for her. She constantly criticises the way I do things, particularly when it comes to the kids. How can I improve this relationship? Should I even try?

You might as well master the art of communicating and work towards building a more meaningful and adaptable relationship with your mother-in-law, since you are probably going to be interacting with her for the rest of her life and much of yours.

Like you and all of us, she wants to be loved and appreciated for who she is, as she is. So whenever you feel challenged by her and she tries to project her values onto you, and is not appreciating you for who you truly are, ask and answer the following three reflective questions that could set you free to communicate effectively with her.

First, identify specifically what she is doing that is pushing your buttons. Then ask yourself: "What exactly is she doing that I find challenging, frustrating, irritating or dislikeable?" List each specific action on the far left side of a piece of paper.

Second, to the right of this first list, write your multiple abbreviated answers to the following question: "When have I acted in the same or similar manner towards others as she has done towards me?"

Yes, this means you must own the trait that you see in her fully within yourself. You may at first assume that "Oh no, I don't ever act this way", but you must break through that facade and keep looking deeper at your life for times when you have done the same or similar action.

Keep adding to the list until you fully own that action to the same degree. This will probably humble you a bit and calm some of your own judgment of her.

The key is to keep looking until you have owned it 100% within your own life. This could take as many as 30 memorable times. I have yet to find an action that I have not done within my own life in some form. We generally become button-pushed by actions from others that remind us of actions we have done that we still judge inside ourselves.

Third, to the right of the second list, answer the next and final question: "How specifically is the action she is displaying serving you, benefiting you, an advantage to you and helping you in any area of your life?"

It's amazing what will happen inside you when you answer this question about 30 times. You will begin to feel gratitude for her action. It's never what happens to you that matters; it's how you perceive it and respond to it. If you see only drawbacks to your mother-in-law's action without benefits, you will withdraw and feel like a victim. If you find enough benefits to the action, to where you don't react and actually feel balanced, you will become the master of your destiny and no longer the victim of your history. You will begin to appreciate and love her for who she is, and for what she is awakening within you and teaching you.

Anything you see in others that you cannot own within yourself will run your life until you own it. Anything of which you see only one side will run your life until you see both sides. By balancing out the perception that you have about your mother-in-law, you will master the skill of not having her run your life, and set yourself free to love and appreciate her instead of resenting her. When you love others for who they truly are, they tend to turn into the ones you love. ■

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