

# Being Imperfect Together - 04-09-15

## Observing Without Judgment

Helen Gennari, MSW, LCSW

When I was a child, I sometimes ran into the woods to escape my father's violence. I would sit leaning against an old oak tree, listening to the sound of the wind singing through her branches. In her presence, feeling her trunk support my back, as she witnessed my fear and sadness, I felt safe...comforted...accepted...welcomed. This connection with nature saved me.

From this experience, I grew to believe that trees are aware of what goes on around them. It's not so difficult to imagine that they sense, feel, and observe our presence and perhaps, watch us as we walk or drive past them.

Have you ever hugged a tree? Did you wonder if anyone was watching you? Well, s/he was...and I suspect s/he loved it.

One thing trees don't do (I'm fairly sure) is judge us. I can imagine (can't you) that in their wisdom, they know we're doing the best we can...and if not, we'll hopefully learn, in time, and grow into our better selves

When I judge another person, I create an un-safe, un-welcoming, un-accepting environment...pollution within myself that may overflow into my relationships, especially if I speak that judgment to another person.

My perception of the person I judge is narrowed, so that I fail to see who they really are and what they may be carrying. I see only what I disapprove of and, perhaps, what may be a projection of something within me that I have yet to see and accept. When I judge another person, I damage the connection that is so essential to my relationship with that person and ultimately, the larger community.

We have so much to learn from the trees.

*Helen Gennari is a retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker/Psychotherapist who leads discussion groups with seniors at the Shepherd Center, does workshops at Woman's Place, is a mentor, and an accompanier with the L'Arche community. Her first book is soon to be published. Her passion is helping people connect in ways that make a difference.*

© Helen Gennari, MSW, LCSW, 2015