

:: Dana's Weekly Insight ::
11.10.08 – M'm M'm, Good!



Have you ever been caught knowing something beyond a shadow of a doubt, while someone else was trying to share with you, another point of view? And, have you ever had somebody try to tell you something that you were just too stubborn to want to hear, only to find out later on that you should have paid attention to what they had to say?

There have been times when I have been fortunate enough to recognize in real time, that if I would only be willing to listen, I just might be able to learn. There have also been times when I have found myself realizing in hind sight that I was wrong and that someone else, after all was said and done, was right.

The case could be made indeed that there is profound value in discovering something all by yourself, but it can also be argued that there is a unique benefit in being open to the tried and true experiences of another human being.

I just sat there staring into that piping hot bowl of *Bean with Bacon* soup, watching in disbelief as several teeny tiny worms floated around in the broth. Hungry, I wondered how in the world Campbells could have overlooked such a thing, while at the same time I was thoroughly confused about how my aunt, who was home from college on spring break, could have possibly neglected to recall this defective soup and protect me from what had definitely become traumatic.

I was willing to forgive my aunt her relative inexperience with this sort of thing and I was prepared to be generous when pointing out to her the oversight, convinced that she would be equally offended and appalled. Instead however, when I brought the floating worms to her attention, she just sort of laughed as if I had made a cute little joke and then she warned me to "finish eating the soup".

Certain that it was just that she hadn't seen what I was seeing, I convinced myself that she had simply misunderstood but when I called her back for a more thorough examination of the tainted soup, she was impatient when she had to explain to me again that the "worms" were actually hypocotyl, a healthy part of the bean, to which I replied without speaking, "If it looks like a worm and floats like a worm, as far as I am concerned – it's a worm"!

A Hypocot-o who? A healthy part of the bean my foot! What did she

think, I was stupid?

I did not care at all how many colleges she was on a spring break from, there was something that she clearly did not understand here, something that was absolutely crystal clear to me! She had no idea what she was talking about and, as far as I was concerned, I did!

Imagine.

My unwillingness to be informed by her expertise fueled in me a self righteous indignation that ultimately resulted in my early dismissal from the table and a mandate to go straight to my room for an unscheduled nap while the other kids got to go back outside to play. Later on that evening, as if channeling the spirit of *Mommy Dearest* herself, my aunt spitefully served me that wormy *Bean with Bacon* soup all over again for dinner.

There I sat staring into that awful slop, watching in disbelief as several teeny tiny worms were beginning to dry up in the broth. Defiant, I wondered how I would ever bring myself to trust Campbells again, while at the same time, confused about how my aunt could have been so awful herself.

In the end the soup was tossed out and I was excused from the table and allowed to get on with my life. Years later I would discover in biology class that hypocotyl was in fact a healthy part of the bean and I would laugh as I recalled the afternoon when my aunt tried to tell me what I was too stubborn to hear.

I am relieved to have finally figured out that, although experience has the potential to be a great teacher, other people serve as our greatest resource for discovering that which we do not know. I have therefore come to expect that at any given moment in time and from no one in particular, I might expand my modest little universe if I am willing to accept that maybe, just maybe –

I don't know.

And you?

Ever catch yourself knowing more than you actually do, while someone else is trying to share with you, another point of view? Ever had somebody try to tell you something that you were just too stubborn to want to hear, only to find out later that if you had only paid attention to what they had to say, perhaps you would not have missed out?

Life has a funny way of revealing to us that the more we learn, the more we discover just how much we don't know. And, accepting that we don't know what we don't know, while learning to appreciate that somebody else just might know better, is critical if what you want to do is continue to expand.

We can not know what we do not know but we can choose to recognize that, if we're lucky, there will always be someone who knows something

that we don't, and if we're smart we will allow therefore, for the possibility that their experiences might serve us, maybe even save us, but at the very least serve to foster in us, a healthy sense of humility, curiosity and the willingness to grow.

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