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The Art of Receiving

By Chaille DeFaria MCC, CDWF

Are you good at accepting compliments? I thought I was until a recent experience that called forth every part of my being. Even when we know we are worthy of love and belonging, it can be hard to experience vulnerability.

How do you know when what someone is saying to you is really what they believe to be true? We know that when someone asks how you are doing you don't always give an honest answer; maybe to avoid explaining yourself or maybe you don't feel that the person really cares. But what about close friends and the people who love and admire you? Why is it still a challenge for some of us to not accept their compliments?

I have never *not* appreciated the nice things people say to me. I actually think I am pretty good at acknowledging and expressing gratitude. I don't even say, "No, that's not true" anymore, which is big for me, as I was always more comfortable playing small than big. However, I have realized that I could be a lot better at receiving compliments.

I am learning that kind heartfelt words can be both powerful and hard to digest. My experience is that you hear the words first and then there is the opportunity to listen to those words and hear their meaning. What comes next is usually what highjacks me: the choice to be vulnerable and process what may feel uncomfortable. Feeling deeply loved and appreciated. Letting it all in from my head to my heart and into my bones. An "A-ha" moment for me.

Imagine if we could allow ourselves to be more present and engaged when someone is paying us a compliment. This is fuel! We could fill ourselves up with the energy to embrace so much more of what life has to offer us. Our common humanity is made up of strength and struggle, but it also is about love and connection.

So the next time someone you know or loves pays you a compliment, dig a little deeper. Do more than say "Thank you." Listen and let their words in. Trust what is true about you. That is the art of receiving.

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