

Home Life... Let's play cards

Situation:

Last Sunday afternoon five of us were just sitting around doing our own thing and Susan suggested that we play cards. We talked about it a little, and I know that most card games only take four people, so I told Janet that if she wanted, she could play because I didn't care if I did or not. I played last time.

Janet got real quiet, said no she didn't want to play and right away she went outside. This is when I started feeling funny, like I had said something wrong. The rest of us talked about Janet walking out and then we couldn't agree on what card game to play. So we ended up not playing. It was pretty quiet again, as if everybody was mad.

Symptoms:

I kept thinking that maybe I should not have asked Janet if she wanted to play. I was trying to figure out why she was so gloomy. It seemed to me like she was making a big deal of the whole thing. In fact I was a little mad about how she acted. I was just trying to be nice. She's so sensitive.

I was trying to read a magazine to keep my mind off of Janet and what had just happened, and it worked for a little bit and then I couldn't concentrate on the words I was reading. It was like I was just staring at the page. Thoughts about what had just happen kept popping into my brain. Then I got afraid because I couldn't concentrate.

Then I realized that I was making a big deal of the whole thing too. I can see that about me when I can't let go of something that happened.

Solution:

So I told myself:

The fact that I can't concentrate now is distressing, it's not dangerous.

The whole situation is distressing, not dangerous. We've had things like this happen before in the house. In fact, my sister was telling me about something that happened to her like this when her friends wanted to rent a movie and they couldn't all agree on which one to rent. So that makes it average. Average means things like this happen.

The fact is, sometimes a group of people will agree and sometimes they won't. It's uncomfortable when they don't agree, but it's just part of life. It can make you feel tense, but that's OK.

I'm not wrong for asking Janet if she wanted to play. Janet's not wrong, for not wanting to play. So nobody's wrong, and nobody's right.

Plus Janet is my outer environment. I can't control what she says or does.



All I can control are my thoughts and my muscles.
Even though I try to be nice to other people, I can't make them be nice back to me.
I don't know why Janet acted the way she did. And I don't have to know.
The whole thing isn't worth me staying upset over it.
Once I took the time to stop and think about what I was thinking and replace the thoughts, I started feeling better – more calm.

In the past:

Before I would have really thought I did something wrong. And I would have been more mad at Janet and a whole lot more nervous around the group for maybe a few days. I might even think I was no good and get real moody. I thought it was part of my job to look after the others and make sure they didn't get upset or anxious. Now I know that each individual is in charge of their own mental attitude.

This time I felt better after I changed my thoughts. I didn't make a big deal of it, and none of the others did either. Later on that night we all watched TV and had a good time. Most important is that I felt better.

