

3 Steps to  
Being Yourself in  
Your Relationships

WITH YOUR ADULT CHILDREN

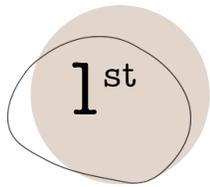


## Hello my friends.

Wouldn't it be nice to not feel like you had to walk on "eggshells" when you are with your adult children? To feel confident enough to know that you are "enough" just the way you are? To understand why you are not responsible for them loving you?

Here are the three steps that will help you know what you can do to just be yourself around your adult children:

1. Give up trying to control your adult children's feelings and actions.
2. Act in love toward your adult children. This causes you to not regret your behavior.
3. Learn to love yourself rather than being dependent on your adult children to feel loved.



## 1<sup>st</sup> Give up trying to control your adult children's feelings and actions.

Most of our lives as parents we have been thinking one of our responsibilities is to help our children be happy. It seems like a good thing to do, but this is where a lot of our frustration as a parent originates from. We were never taught where our feelings come from or even what a feeling is.

We think our feelings come from what is happening in our lives, but our feelings come from our thoughts of what these happenings mean to us. A feeling is physiological.

Let me explain what a feeling is. A feeling is a vibration in our body caused by our thoughts. Our thoughts are triggered by what someone does or what someone says. Then our thoughts cause a chemical to be released and our neurons to get excited and this causes a vibration in our body somewhere. This vibration is either a negative feeling or a positive feeling.

The normal assumption is that our feelings; sadness, happiness, disappointment, satisfaction, and so on come from what is happening in our lives or from something in the past that has happened. When our children decide not to follow the values they were raised with; for example, religion, child-rearing, use of time, choice of spouse, choice of career, we feel disappointed. We think it's their choices that make us disappointed. It wasn't their choice but our thought about what we are making these choices mean that cause us to feel disappointed.

Often when an adult child leaves the faith in which they were raised, the parent is sad because they feel their child won't be happy in life. They assume that this way of life made themselves happy, so they presume their child will not be happy if they are accepting the same values. Parents may also think that their child's life in the here-after may be in jeopardy.

When we are feeling sad or disappointed, we are having sad or disappointing thoughts. The next time you have negative feelings, find the thought in your mind you are thinking, and you will find the cause of your feeling.....a negative thought. When we are feeling happy or peaceful, we are having happy and peaceful thoughts.

A feeling is a vibration in our body that is caused by thoughts triggered in our brains by what is happening in our world around us. These thoughts cause a chemical to be released and some neurons to get excited. We cannot make our kids feel happy because we cannot jump inside their bodies and cause the chemical release and the neurons to get excited that cause a feeling. Their feelings are caused by *their* thoughts.

Our thoughts are coming from our brains, and they have the power to regulate our feelings. Since we can choose our thoughts, we can also choose our desired feelings. Because we know that it is not what is happening in our lives that makes us feel a certain way, then we also know it is not our adult children's reaction to us that cause us to feel unloved. Further, our children's feelings about us are not created by our actions or reactions. Their thoughts come from how their brain is interpreting our behavior.

We each have our own brain, thus, we each interpret the same circumstance differently, meaning we all are going to have different thoughts producing different feelings. When we have similar thoughts, we have similar feelings.

Too often we assume we know what our adult children are thinking/feeling so we do not act like ourselves around them. We act as a garden version of ourselves...we walk on "eggshells" around them, afraid we will upset them or cause them to be disappointed in us. We are afraid of a power that doesn't exist; the power to make someone feel content around us.

You don't have the power to control your children's feelings.

You do have the power to choose how you want to feel. Choose what kind of parent you want to be, then be that person.

2<sup>nd</sup>

Act in love toward your adult children causes you to not regret your behavior.

Our thoughts cause our feelings. I have talked a lot about this but what I have not emphasized is the truth that our feelings cause our behavior...how we act, do not act, or react in a given situation.

If we are living in resentment, fear, judgement, or disrespect, our behavior will show our feelings to our adult children with a behavior that our feeling prompts us to do. We will often act contrary to how a loving parent acts.

We might show up awkward and not engage with our adult child; no texting, no calling, or no engaging with them when with the family. This is **withdrawing** from being a part of your child's life. We think if we "withdraw" (no action), we will provide a safe place for our child to be when they are around us. Not only does this lack of action do nothing to improve the relationship, but it also causes us and them to feel disrespected.

If we **react** by crying and maybe even yelling, we again do not get the results we want. We think we might be getting their attention in sending a message that we are feeling unloved, but we are only driving them away.

Our children have a hard time trying to fulfill their own needs. They do not want to be responsible to fulfill the needs of their parents. They feel like the "bad" child, so they find it uncomfortable to be around their parents.

If we take **action** by having a conversation with them with the intent to "clear the air" and explain to them how they have hurt us (which they have no power to do), we are probably not going to resolve anything. It will cause them to have thoughts that will trigger them to feel offended or even surprised learning there was a problem. It will, again, be easier not to be around you.

Your kids want to be themselves, **not the version you want them to be.**

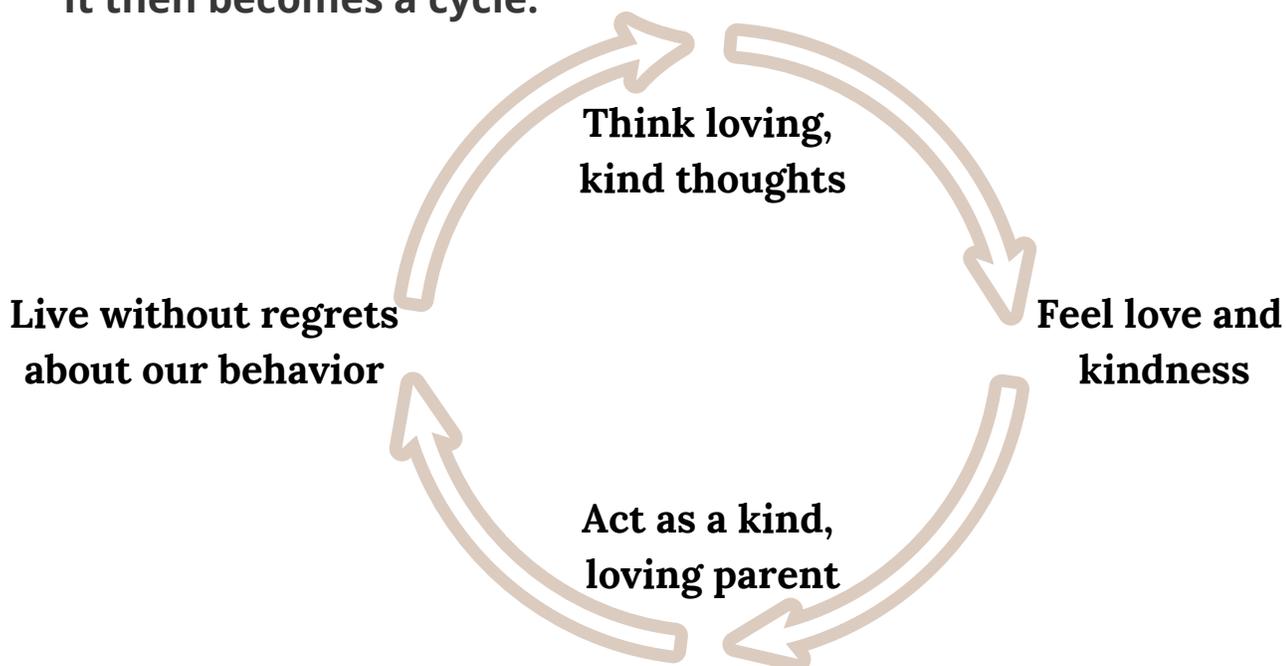
Two thoughts prevail often; one, nobody likes to be told they are doing something wrong and two, they do not recognize that a problem even exists.

Any of the above actions may cause us to live regretting how we “showed up” to our adult children.

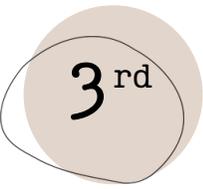
**Solution:**

1. We want to act as a loving, kind adult parent.
2. We want to come from a place of feeling love and kindness, not from disrespect and judgement.
3. To feel love and kindness, we need to think loving and kind thoughts.

**It then becomes a cycle.**



This does not mean you can never make a request of an expectation. If the request is coming from judgement, it will back-fire on you; the distance in your relationship is likely to grow. If the request is coming from love, you have a 50/50 chance it will be acknowledged. Showing up with love means you will not be living with regret.



3<sup>rd</sup>

Learn to love yourself rather than being dependent on your adult children to feel loved.

Love just loves; just like my grandson that loves his “lovie”; his priceless stuffed dog. The stuffed animal gives nothing in return to him, but he keeps loving it. He cannot go to bed without it. He cannot leave the house without it. It feels so good to him to love that stuffed dog. By loving this toy, he is giving a gift to himself...the gift of feeling amazingly full of love. When we love another person, it is a gift we give ourselves.

**We cannot force our children to love us.**

We cannot buy their love with money, free childcare, or by altering ourselves. We get to be us. We know other people that like us just the way we are. It serves us to love ourselves in the same way.

The fact is, the better we get at fixing ourselves, at bettering ourselves, the better we get at not being dependent on others validation. The better we get at loving ourselves the easier it is to love others just like my grandson loves his “lovie”.

It is not possible to lose the value and lovability that you were born with. Many have a hard time accepting they are allowed to see their value and love themselves. We get caught up in this philosophy that liking ourselves, or even self-validating ourselves, is not a sign of being humble.

My thought is because I know I am a child of God; I am valuable and lovable which makes me feel confident. Because I know everyone else is a child of God which makes them valuable and lovable, that makes me feel humble.

It is when we are feeling confident that we act the way we want to act when we are around our adult children. We do not worry about whether we are saying the right things in the right way or acting the way they would want us to act. Because we feel confident about who we are, we can just show up and be ourselves. Being confident looks like a person who knows they have goodness and kindness and love and also know they are a human who has flaws and weaknesses. If our adult children do not like our behavior that is their business, not ours. They are the ones missing out on feeling the amazing feeling that only love offers.

**Love just loves;** we love our children because we choose to, not because of their behavior; not because they love us back.

If there are things you personally want to fix about yourself, then go to work on fixing yourself and get better. But if you think others will love you more, or that you will be easier to love, you are only setting yourself up for disappointment. Others love others because they think loving thoughts about others; not because others show loving behavior.

You were born with the God-given given gifts of value and lovability. No matter what you do, those gifts cannot be taken from you. If someone gave me a one-hundred-dollar bill that was all crumpled, discolored, or ragged, I would still love that one-hundred-dollar bill and it would still be worth \$100.00.

We are asked by Jesus to love our neighbors as we *love ourselves*. There is a reason for this; when we love ourselves it is easier to love those that are difficult to love.

Our children will enjoy being around us if we get really good at self-validating ourselves, fulfilling our own needs, and loving ourselves. When we are able to do this, we do not show up as a needy, judgmental parent, but as loving and kind parent; we show up as love and “love” always feels amazing to be around.

Love always wins; love is always available; love is a choice. Choose who you want to be, and then be that person. When you are in charge of your life you will find it is always possible to choose love.

**LOVE** will allow you to be yourself when you are with your adult children. Learning to being yourself around your adult children is a process. It’s easy to understand but harder to apply.

With help from a coach, you can learn to Love on Purpose.

LET'S CHAT!

Click here to sign up for a free, 1:1, 60 minute consult. Just you and I, chatting about your struggles with your adult children and finding the root cause.

I love helping people learn the tools they need to end the pain with their adult child relationship and to connect their child in a way they never dreamed possible.



♥ **bonnie lyman**