

The Internal Changes of Becoming Older and the Inevitable Impact on One's Work

My mind is whirling back and forth. I have just come from a supervisory session where I called the supervisee a "stupid fuck." The group of course reacted accordingly. The presenter however said "I can get along without you, Art. I don't need you to be my savior." The case that she was presenting went round and round in circles. I felt the patient she was working with was akin to a spider keeping and playing with her prey, her therapist. The therapist could not extricate herself from this web. Around and around she went, trying to be helpful and the case going nowhere. The patient merely wanted more and protested about her helplessness. After a good deal of this report to the group, which I also felt was going nowhere, without thought or reflection it came out of my mouth. "You're a stupid fuck." You can imagine the response. Some felt it assaulted the case. The presenter started to get a hold of her own separateness and was able to be outside of her patient's web. She was tough and clear and demanding. Nevertheless, the group was shaking from this kind of response on part of their leader. I too was wondering whether I was acting out my rage or depression as I was getting older and making painful adjustments to be in charge of myself. I was a walking nursing home. I needed help for almost everything and I was enraged and felt loss, despair and sometimes acceptance.

In the next session, a member wondered whether I was going through something very disturbing. I admitted I was. I shared that I felt that my body was changing and it was difficult to bear. No one picked this up. However, the case that was presented was a case of deadness. The patient cut off any life part. This time I kept in the background. A member at the end said we are ducking our response to Art. There seems to be some unfinished business about the changes in him. I said to myself "Am I being ethical? Am I acting out some abuse as my body feels abused?" But this was authentically me. The presenter felt good about what happened. A member felt that we needed to adhere and worship the power of the leader. Others took issue. They felt they could argue and differ with me. There was a good deal of life about this. There is no question I was changing inside and invariably people will pick up on this. Can I live with it and still be helpful? I'll just have to watch what goes on in the future.

There is a good deal of dialogue and sharing of different points of view. There is no question that as I get older I do change and the people I work with are aware of this.