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MP 78 Demons on Display 12-26-15

A situation a couple of months ago revealed my issues better than anything in a while. I was called out of community to go to medical. I had missed my callout which is violation of DAP rules. I reacted defensively and an old friend came to the rescue: I am right (Demon #1). My ego was activated as soon as I heard my name called by the DTS (drug treatment specialist). I latched on to my old friend as I made my way to HSU (Health services Unit). A very typical response came out of my mouth asserting "I did not see my name on the callout." The sound of my own voice seemed to pop my arrogant bubble. I knew at once who was doing the speaking and that let me know I was falling back into old trouble.

I started doing rational challenges only after I heard myself challenge the HSU staff. I thought back and realized I had to check the callouts twice like I usually do but only once and that was only to check and see if I was on Team (weekly meeting of mentors, DTS staff, and individuals invited). I stopped looking after seeing no team. So my ego had caused me to assert something that I did not know to be true. Sure enough, I confirmed the presence of my name on the callouts when I returned to the unit and did my second check of the callouts. My arrogance also caused a ripple effect as the DTS and HSU staff were dealing with my statement. HSU secretary did not hear my words "my name on" and only heard "I did not see the callout." This caused the DTS to take time out from community to confirm the implication of my statement that there was no callout to check.

I normally keep my arrogant-know-it-all-self in check. But this time that voice was so dominant that I had no contradicting voices in my head until the moment the words left my mouth. Then I realized I had yielded control to the know-it-all. I was disappointed in myself. This pushed me toward another very typical demon. Denial and escape from the situation or feeling. I went into escape mode. I left for the yard and walked the track in a trance. As a child I would escape from a schizophrenic mom's undependable emotional states by leaving the house and going into the yard to day dream alone. As a young adult I escaped an abusive male partner by retreating into my mind. Later I escaped the shame and grief of that abuse and my refusal to extricate myself in porn and alcohol.

By the evening I had moved on to another very dominant negative energy, which is self sabotage or self punishment. I found lots of small ways to punish myself by withholding small pleasures and large ways like derailing an academic career, keeping myself stuck in an abusive relationship or involving myself in criminal activity. In this case my self punishment was convincing myself I should give up the mentor band. The mentor band meant nothing to anyone but me, so I would not hurt or help anyone else. I would only hurt me to give it up.

But others convinced me to keep my band and just take the accountability actions (ABAs) and stay helping others as a mentor. I realized and began to get some perspectives. The importance on not isolating myself was made very clear to me. I could spin a tale of delusion in my own head. I needed social interaction in order to keep me grounded in reality. Some of the fear was fear that I had not really changed. But after talking with my support network and meditating on my feelings, it became clear that the change was real, but relapse is always just a step away.

So this episode made my old demons clear: Fear, shame and self punishment. While I have made progress, I cannot stop doing what helped me to stay grounded: meditation, exercise, and support network. I am liable to relapse (like any other addict). So keep at it day after day, moment by moment. Be kind to myself when I falter.

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