

## Why does this keep happening to me?

Janet just couldn't keep it all flowing the way she wanted it to. At work, she would set up meetings but her coworkers wouldn't cooperate with her. At home, she would clean the house and put the groceries away only to find her 6 year old had again dumped out his bin of toy cars, and her husband kept putting the croutons back on the shelf with the soup. Whenever she made a schedule, it was inevitable that some problem would crop up resulting in someone being late. Janet was tired, frustrated and disappointed.

Janet needed to learn the lesson.

Sometimes you really have to take a step back to see the lesson that life is trying to teach you, because once you learn that lesson you can move on. When it seems that something you do always turns into a disappointing mess, stop. Take some time – just 15 minutes – to think about what is common to the situations that have gone awry. Is there a theme? Is it always the same people, the same topic, the same time of day?

Once you think you have figured out the commonality, try to follow it back to its root cause. Often, the root cause is you, painful as that may be. However, this realization is a good thing because we can always change ourselves. We can change our actions, or change our reactions to others. Every thing we do is a choice that moves us farther and farther down our path, with the destination being determined by the sum of those choices multiplied by our intentions.

In Janet's case, she was trying to control the details in areas that she was not in control of; a pattern she saw in her mother, and never recognized in herself. Both at home and at work, Janet can set up rules and expectations, but she needed to accept that others in her life might not be able to meet those expectations or cooperate with those rules. Janet can only control herself, not others. Once she was able to grasp that concept and let go of some of the "little stuff", she was able to find a greater sense of peace, gratitude and satisfaction. And with the little stuff out of mind, she could focus on letting go of some bigger things, too.

Do you find yourself facing the same challenges over and over? Give yourself the time to sit quietly and let your mind ponder the similarities of each situation. When you have an idea of the root cause, challenge yourself to learn the lesson and change what needs changing.

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