



WHEN OTHERS MAKE HURTFUL DECISIONS: ACCEPTANCE VERSUS APPROVAL – by Marney W. DeFoore, LCSW-S

I've been thinking about this for some time now and am eager to get these thoughts out. Here's the issue. How do you deal with someone that you love very much when they are making decisions that are hurtful (i.e. using drugs, abusing alcohol, or living a lifestyle that is against your morals or convictions, etc)?

This is what I have learned. There is a thin line between approving of the choices that another person makes and accepting that the choices are theirs and not ours. Of course there are exceptions such as in the case of a minor child or an elderly loved one for whom you are responsible.

This idea parallels another that I have written about in previous newsletters. That article dealt with the difference between forgiving and condoning someone's behavior (past or present).

So, here is a summary of my thoughts. While I may forgive you I do not necessarily condone what you are doing. And, while I may accept you for who you are as a person, I do not necessarily approve of what you are doing or what you have done in the past. Does this make sense? I hope that it does. Making this distinction has been very helpful for me and I hope it is helpful for you as well.

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