Filling Your Cup: A Beautiful Quote from a Beautiful Human

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"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." - Maya Angelou



Holidays bring many moments of joy as well as moments of frustration. There is tremendous pressure to create the perfect meal, give the perfect gift, and host the perfect event. During these moments, it is easy to lose sight of purpose. Moods become labile, stress takes over, and the emotional roller coaster begins. We slowly build up the tension, and we are thrust into full throttle.

Maya Angelou reminds us that though people may forget the words we use or the actions. However, it is the feeling that stays. We hold on to memories in our bodies and our souls. Trauma-informed care teaches us that our responses and reactions

result from the patterns we have learned after repeated assaults to our nervous system. With this said, during the holiday season there are many repeated assaults to our nervous system. The crowds while shopping, driving on the freeway, and even dining in a restaurant can feel like a pressure cooker, which suddenly erupts steam and a loud whistle. Gatherings with family and friends bring along with them their unique challenges, and old patterns can return.

There are ways to monitor ourselves during these situations. First, as difficult as it can be, it is important to acknowledge that we are observers in a situation, and not the targets. When we are just observing, it is easier to take a five-second pause before we give a response. That response does not have to be a reaction, and we can possibly diffuse a situation.

Next, the response is a learned process. When we allow a negative emotion to drive our reactions, this is when conflict, within us as well as around us, explodes. It can come in the form of road rage, snapping at our loved ones, and losing focus. Sometimes, it is okay to just let someone cut us off in traffic. There's no loss for anyone, and life continues. We are always in situations in our clinics when a parent is dissatisfied or wants his/her child to be unnecessarily prescribed something. It is not necessary to succumb, but we can take a little pause and then explore what the parent's concern really is, and come to a collaborative solution.

In these situations, when we are just an observer, the emotion has time to be processed and released. We can move forward and work together to maintain a sense of peace, not just within us, but around us as well. When we operate from that peace,

we share it with everyone who meets us. One act of kindness and patience can be the seed to plant a garden of love. Because, in the words of the inimitable Maya Angelou: “People forget what we say and what we do, but they always remember how we make them feel.”