

Interview with Lee Kelley

Conducted by Andrea Schara

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Andrea: Here we are, and between the two of us, we've figured out that it is the 10th of May, 2014! I sometimes say that's my signature that I try to get people to straighten me out about dates! Or something! Try to straighten me out if you can, Lee. Can you, just to start out, tell me a little bit about who you are, and how you first met Dr. Bowen, and what that was like?

Lee: Well my name is Lee Kelley, and I was Lee Keenan when I first ran into Dr. Bowen, at MCV. I was- I had been a social worker for the Richmond, Virginia welfare department. And when my first husband got out of law school, I took a job I wanted with a small family services clinic. And my job was to interview families. And, one of the psychiatrists on board- psycho- she was a psychologist, invited us to come to MCV, this would have been 1972, I think? And she presented her family, which was fascinating. The idea that somebody would stand up in front of a crowd- I mean, first of all, I watched Dr. Bowen interview families, which was fascinating, and I'd never seen anything like that. I had never heard of him before.

But at the clinic, and I wasn't there for long, because we ended up moving to northern Virginia, and you know, I don't know what of his I read, but she talked a lot about him, and I probably went to two of three MCV conferences, where it- the format was the same and he would- he would interview families and then somebody, at least one person from the audience, would get up and present their family. To that huge crowd, it was always a huge crowd. And, it was fascinating, but I moved to northern Virginia, to a good job; I get in with the welfare department, working in protective services, for the first time.

And having to talk to families, and I remember going to my supervisor, I don't think I even made the connection that Dr. Bowen was at Georgetown, you know, that I could go and get training there, but I did- I wasn't in my job long before I went to my supervisor, and said, "Look, I don't know much about families. I need- I need to be able to talk to somebody, I need to be able to go somewhere for some training. And she knew about Pat Meyer, at the court across the street! And she knew that Pat Meyer did a version of what Dr. Bowen did, which was interviewed families, in a group and let people observe. So I contact her; asked if I could come observe, and it just so happened, that she was interviewing to fill a position as a family therapist.

Andrea: Wow.

Lee: And I don't know why she took a chance on me, because I really knew nothing, but she had such good standing at the court that she could pretty much do whatever she wanted. So she hired me, and got me into the postgraduate course! And-

Andrea: Wow. What year was that now?

Lee: I think it was '74. By the time I- it was '74 my first year in the postgraduate course, and you know the thing I mostly remember was complaining to Frank Giove, who was in my supervision group about how Mike Kerr needed a sense of humor. What's wrong with him- he needs- what- you know, he needs to loosen up I said, he needs a sense of humor.

Andrea: That was before you saw his family diagram.

Lee: We've often laughed at that. Well, yeah, I don't- But, you know my impression was less of - my first impression of Dr. Bowen- Pat also, had- I don't know how she got permission for this, but a bunch of us would go, every month, take off work and go to Richmond, for his clinical thing, you know, for the clinical conference at MCV.

And one of my first impressions of Dr. Bowen was being in a crowd, a group, where after he had been on stage, waving his arms and saying crazy things, and I remember thinking, "My God what, that was just so strange- what's he doing?" And he explained in the small group, he said, you know, "I'm sick of coming to these meetings and having people from the audience say, 'What did you mean when you cleared your throat, or what did you mean when you raised your eyebrow, or when you-'"

Andrea: (laughs)

Lee: And so he said, "I gave them something to talk about." And after that, I was more aware that he was a trickster!

Andrea: A trickster! Plus, plus.

Lee: Yeah, that he would play with you. And that you couldn't you know, you'd best not get hung up on wondering why he's doing something and just try to ignore it and get a – you know, somehow get around it. But early- and then this is my second, thing that I've never forgotten, was an assignment he gave us, in that first year in the postgraduate course, which was "What are your beliefs and how did you acquire them?" I think all of us remember that.

That has stuck in my brain, forever! I mean, it's just stuck there. On any subject, "What do I believe, and- where did that come from?" And it's humbling, because there's- not much of it is

original. Not much of it is original. And, if possible, to attribute where it came from. To say I read this in the newspaper, or in my family, or I heard this from a friend, and now I try to let friends and people know, when they say something that has stuck with me. You know, that I've used. Anyway, I did not see- okay, so my- I got a divorce- I separated from my husband probably the second year of the postgraduate course, or it might have been after the first. And, during that second year, I went in the hospital to have a kidney removed, and Dr. Bowen wrote me a personal letter. And it was you know- I mean, I couldn't believe it. You know, he knew about it, and you know, it wasn't "I'm sorry- I feel bad for you," or "This is too bad," it's you know, "This is a challenge, in the long run, you know, you'll learn something from this."

Andrea: Wow.

Lee: No, that was- I'm paraphrasing, I used to remember exactly- you know, pretty much exactly what he said but I don't now. But it was useful. As much for what it didn't say as what it did say. And I did not personally consult with him, because I had such a relationship with Pat, it was more she's who I learned theory from. You know, she was my supervisor, she was my boss.

And from Bud Andres, who consulted to the court, and had his own multiple. And I- you know, he just had a way of defusing the seriousness of something. And I'm thinking of Bud, not that others couldn't do it. Pat was more of a straight-shooter, she didn't play games. But I remember complaining to Bud about my dad's drinking, and he was also my supervisor, I think that first year in the training program. "What am I going to do, my dad's an alcoholic, blah de blah." And he said, "Well, for Christmas, why don't you buy him a bottle of liquor?"

And you know, I didn't do it, but I've never forgotten that as just- it was so crazy that it loosened me up. You know, "You just buy him a bottle of liquor. Wrap it up and put it under the tree. And see what happens." And just the idea of that. Made me, you know, made me laugh. So, I consulted, you know, I can remember these little personal conversations I'd have with Bowen, where I remember standing in the back of the room at a symposium once, and he said something like, he said, "So, if - what do you think, is there something- if a man depends on his wife to buy his clothes, is that a problem? Do you think that's a problem?" And I said, "Well, not if he can buy- not if he is able to buy them himself, I don't see what the problem would be, as long as he could -if he had to he could do it himself." He said, "I don't either. I agree with you."

Andrea: (laughs)

Lee: Um, which of course, made me feel really smart.

Andrea: Well, do you think he was actually telling you, you are smart?

Lee: No.

Andrea: No? You think he was tricking you? That was a smart answer, really.

Lee: I- you know I'm not sure it wasn't- I always thought it was a straight question, that he'd been thinking about it.

Andrea: Yeah, he was thinking about it, yeah. And you gave a correct answer for emotional maturity.

Lee: Yeah, he was thinking about it.

Lee: And I've thought about stuff like that too, is it a problem, you know, that you give up- that you let somebody else do something for you, and it's only a problem if you become unable to do it for yourself if you had - or you couldn't do it for yourself if you had to. Like, I think it's a problem for these people that don't learn how to drive and let them - their spouses - drive them everywhere and then the spouse dies, I think that's a problem. And you're 85 years old and you've never driven!

Andrea: Exactly.

Lee: Or seventy, whatever. Anyway, so, I mean, I can remember little incidences like that where- but I was a little bit afraid of him. I was always a little bit -you know, because he was unpredictable.

Andrea: (laughs)

Lee: Sometimes he'd speak to you, sometimes he'd ignore you. But he- you know, he did have a way of, sort of, throwing you off your guard. That I didn't, at the time, particularly appreciate how intentional it was, but in retrospect, I think that's how he operated with most everybody. And so I went to see him, after my divorce, and probably after graduate school.

When I'd been in a relationship with somebody that was not- I was not going to marry, because I wanted children and he did not, and I remember, I think one of the first things Dr. Bowen said to me when I was down, and told him my story, he said, "So how long is it going to take you to break up with this guy?"

Andrea: (laughs) That's so beautiful.

Lee: And I said, I forget what I came up with, hold on.

Andrea: Yeah, let's pause for a sec here.

[taping pauses]

Andrea: Alright, so we got to Dr. Bowen's good question, how long will it take to break up with him.

Lee: Yeah! I mean, I probably could have left the session right then, because that was pretty much the only thing I got from it.

Andrea: That was an awesome question.

Lee: And, honestly, his asking it and me answering it, because I think I said something like, "I think I can do it now." And I think I sort of did. And then I saw him again, when I was pregnant, and Kevin and I were struggling with, you know, getting married. I was pretty clear I wanted to get married, Kevin didn't know he did. You know, didn't want kids! But, was an honorable- Yeah, was an honorable guy.

Andrea: He had some kids already.

Lee: So I said, "Well, we'll go talk to Dr. Bowen, and he'll help us sort it out." But, and he helped me out, because one of the first things he said, "Well, what do you want to do?"

Andrea: Yeah.

Lee: Yeah, you know, we explained the problem to him so he asked me first what do I want to do. I said, "Well, I want to get married." He said, "Well then, why don't you?"

Andrea: "What about me?"

Lee: (laughs) Which, sort of pissed Kevin off. Kevin's impression after that was always, you know- "What was helpful about that? He just took your side?"

Andrea: (laughs)

Lee: You know, "I don't think he even asked me what I wanted." Which I think is probably true.

Andrea: (laughs) That is so funny.

Lee: But, you know, as you know we got married and I never went back to see him. And I don't know why, I always felt I had to, you know, that I had to have a real question or a problem, and I could never formulate it quite. You know, I'd see other people, I saw other people in the system for coaching, for this or that, but I always had a theme when I went, it wouldn't just be an ongoing thing. But, you know, I was thinking, another way he intimidated me, is he wasn't much of one for small talk, I didn't think. Or at least I didn't know subjects that might interest him in small talk, and so I sort of avoided- You know, I could talk to Ms. Bowen, but I didn't really talk to him. But I remember, when- before- I mean, this is a funny story. Before I took Kevin to one of the banquets and introduced him to Dr. Bowen, for the first time, and when he found out Kevin was an engineer, they got into this argument, about 'is math a science?'

Andrea: (laughs)

Lee: And I'm thinking, "Oh my God, I'm bringing the man I want to marry to meet Dr. Bowen, and he's in a fight with him?" About math being a science.

Andrea: (laughs) Who won the argument?

Lee: I have no idea! I can't- I think Kevin's position was it is a science, and Dr. Bowen's was that it was not. And I remember standing there thinking "What difference does it, you know, how could this possibly make any difference? What's the point of this?" Anyway, so that's really, you know, I will say, in retrospect, after I got out of graduate school, it took me a year of going on interviews before I got a job. It's the first time in my life, I had not just been able to walk into jobs. You know, I'd get whatever I applied for. And so Ruth hired me, as one of the secretaries, I couldn't type worth a damn! And you know, I know Dr. Bowen had to have approved that. And I didn't make much money, but it was I mean, it was a lifesaver. And to be at the Family Center during that time, you know, I was also able to do an internship, in biofeedback, and it was just an important time to be at the Center, it's when he had his first heart attack.

Andrea: 1981?

Lee: Yeah. I mean, that was the year I was hired and left, but I was then from '80, until '81.

Andrea: Yeah, I remember you being there very well.

Lee: Almost exactly a year.

Andrea: And I remember meeting Kevin, who convinced me to go play softball! Was fun.

Lee: We played base- we played softball. Right, that was another story, entirely. Anyway, so that's probably all I have to say on that question.

Andrea: Would you- so you saw him after your divorce, you saw him after graduate school, about getting married.

Lee: About getting married. When I was pregnant. Yeah

Andrea: When you were pregnant, yeah. And a young chick. (laughs)

Lee: At age 39. (laughs) A young chick. Past the age- past the age where I thought it would kill my mother. And ruin my reputation!

Andrea: (laughs) That's so wonderful. Your mother was still alive then?

Lee: Oh yeah, oh yeah. Both parents were.

Andrea: Cause I thought I remembered meeting them at your wedding. But the curious part, I don't know if it's curious to you or not or just to me, but the curious part of Dr. Bowen, sort of being on your side, and fighting with Kevin, that's kind of interesting, how-

Lee: When he fought with Kevin?

Andrea: About the math. Yeah.

Lee: About the math, the first time he met him. And then I think he probably saw him casually at Family Center events, but it was after that, that we went to see him for a private session. And the question was over, "I'm pregnant, I want to get married, he doesn't, you know, he doesn't want any kids, blah de blah."

Andrea: But when Dr. Bowen you know, kinda got into Kevin's space, fighting with him, in a way, you wonder about that. The impact on Kevin. And what that- did it have anything to do then, with these two males, you know, the two males coming into contact with one another. And him giving way to you. To say, "You wanna get married? You wanna have children? Okay, that's good."

Lee: I don't see the two having any connection.

Andrea: Well see, if you know, male-to-male contact? Is a different thing, than male-to-female contact, right? Yeah.

Lee: Well sure.

Andrea: And so he's saying to Kevin in a way, I guess, you know, "You're man enough to deal with me. Maybe Lee avoids me, she'll come to me with a question. But you're not going to avoid me, you'll even fight with me. You're my type of guy. You know, that kind of a thing. Which.

Lee: Yeah, yeah.

Andrea: Which then gives him, alright, well, even big tough guys give way to females. You know, when it comes to children, and getting married.

Lee: Right.

Andrea: I don't know, but that was kind of the sense of how was Dr. Bowen, if I could imagine it, how was Dr. Bowen thinking about relating to you and Kevin. In a way that would set both of you free to get out of this whatever it is, little, little hiccup.

Lee: Right.

Andrea: But I don't know, you know I always put in, I may give Dr. Bowen too much credit.

Lee: Probably.

Andrea: But I think that he saw the family diagram, when he looked at you, and I think he knew about it, and he and then he looked at Kevin, he knew about his family diagram too. And then he figured out a way to relate.

Lee: No, I can't even remember if we did that, when we went in, if we put diagrams- he wouldn't have known Kevin's. But, yeah, if he'd remembered anything about Kevin, it was that Kevin would stand up, you know, would stand up to him. And yeah, no question he would have known I was more deferential.

Andrea: Yeah. Right. And that, and that it allowed Kevin, I'm just hypothesizing, to be deferential to you. If Dr. Bowen was deferential to you, Dr. Bowen would say, "Lee, what do you want?" What do you want to do? It's a deferential thing.

Lee: Oh, gotcha, gotcha. But Kevin- really, there was never a question in my mind, that he wouldn't marry me. You know? I don't think there was much in his either, he was just sort of

whining about it at the start, you know. And I understood, you know, he had raised three kids. He was 50 years old. Not 50, but closing on it. He didn't want to have to do it again. Anyway.

Andrea: Yeah. But he was called to be a man. That was my point, is you know, did Dr. Bowen have this ability to look at people, and say, "I'm gonna call you to be a man. And I'm gonna say to you Lee, you've got a pretty good brain here. You can figure out when fusion paralyzes people. And they can't even pick out their own clothes. But if you want somebody to help you a little bit, no big deal." But I think it's important in what I'm trying to do, anyway, is I'm gonna – my hypothesis is, Bowen could see instinct at work. And how it messed people up. And he could find a way to interrupt that instinctual commands, to get people to function up in the way he dealt with them. That's my thesis.

Lee: Yeah he did, I mean, I'm still amazed myself when I say, "Could anybody else have said- asked me the things he did, and gotten me to function up and speak for myself and act for myself as fast as he did? It still amazes me. And then I used to think it wasn't so much what he said, what he said to you.

Andrea: Although, I think it does matter what he says to you, because I think it clarifies what his instinct- what's messed up about thwarted instincts in people? What is the emotional system, when -when the emotional system gets thwarted, how do you unlock it? Kind of like a, if you have a muscle spasm, and you do acupuncture, the thesis is, that when you stick those needles in, when they're needling you, the muscle that's wrapped around a nerve, unwinds. So that's how I think about this, he needled you to unwind the emotional system and to let you be free. And he-

Lee: I'm sorry I didn't see him more times privately. When I think of how meaningful. you know, that I can remember those two sessions in just two questions. And you know, what a difference two questions made. Anyway,

Andrea: Yeah, cause he could read the system. Well, I mean, who knows how-

Lee: It's like, "What was I thinking?"

Andrea: you know, like you said, your- the way you thought about it might be the correct way, which would be that when I have something to ask, when I have a thesis, I-he -Dr. Bowen used to come in- Yeah!

Lee: When I had a real problem. When I had a real problem I was grappling with.

Andrea: Yeah, then you would see him. Used to come in my office, and-

Lee: But it's not like, I only had two problems in my life that were worth taking to Dr. Bowen. Do you know what I'm saying? I'm not suggesting I didn't have others. But that I was maybe not as clear about what they were. I don't know.

Andrea: Yeah. And there's a-

Lee: And I didn't want to waste his time. I felt somehow an obligation to go in as clear as I could be about what I was grappling with and not waste his time. And maybe there was only two times I felt like I was clear enough to do that. You know, that's not true. I think I did see him a third time about my dilemma with my mentally-ill sister when she was in a hospital. And he said, "Lee, you are not her mother. You are not her mother. You need to give that problem back to her mother."

Andrea: Wow. Could you do it?

Lee: I don't think so. Well yeah, in the end I probably did, but that one wasn't so- knowing how to do that was not so obvious to me. But it was helpful to hear that. "She's not your responsibility."

Andrea: Mmhm. Because your mom's still alive, and it's still hers.

Lee: Yeah, it's her child. Anyway,

Andrea: Yeah, that's another good one, in that case, he interrupted, with a clarity about whose responsibility is what, instead of asking you a question. He went the other way. He wanted to take a position in relationship to the dilemma you had, rather than ask you, maybe, to solve it. I don't know whether that's a more complicated thing, I think it is more complicated if he takes a position, to say to you, "That's not your responsibility. And now, what you've got to figure out is how to hand back your sister, to your mother." And, or your dad. Which would be, and I don't know what you think about this, but in his writing, he wrote about the way to differentiate a self is to put two together and get yourself out. And so, in a way, he was putting your sister and your mother together, and getting you out.

Lee: Well, you know, I did finally come to the point where, and it took a long time, it was I think maybe after he died, even, before I got to the point where it was- I could honestly say I didn't care who did the other in.

Andrea: That is a big relief. (laughs)

Lee: I wasn't going to take sides. I didn't care. So I think in a way that was giving them to each other. Whoever comes out on top of it, I've got no horse in the race.

Andrea: Who do you think did come out on the top?

Lee: I don't know that either one of them did. I mean, I could say my sister, because she's still alive and my mom's not, but my mom was 86.

Andrea: But for you to get to this point of neutrality, how long did that take?

Lee: Ah! Years.

Andrea: After he died, I mean, if he had mentioned that to you in the early '80s, he died in '90,

Lee: Sorry. I don't know. I don't know, I think you know I would say that one was probably one of the harder things I've ever had to do in my life. Get neutral about my sister and my mom.

Andrea: That would be the force of the instinctive force, in which your mother is so attractive to your sister that she can't separate from your sister. It's an amazing force to watch, if you can observe it.

Lee: Right.

Andrea: And just see that it's an amazing force.

Lee: Yeah.

Andrea: I don't know many people who could do much about that. Because it's so strong. And you're on the outside, thank goodness. Maybe sometimes all you can do is be grateful that you're on the outside of that! Yeah. And now, how's your-

Lee: Yeah, yeah. I was. I am. I remember, asking my mother once what made it so hard to say no to my sister, I said, "You've got no trouble saying no to me!" She said, "That's because you make me mad, but I feel sorry for her."

Andrea: Oh, well that's a beautiful one. Yeah, I'm just gonna say no. Say no to what?

Lee: Isn't that beautiful? Your turn. Turn it off. [referencing a ringing cell phone].

Andrea: Oh, it says, you can even- this is a new thing. "Remind me in an hour."

Lee: (laughs) I hadn't seen that.

Andrea: Oh! It's a new thing. Nice. Apple helps you out. So, that's really a marker, of the kind of emotional- where the instinct for fusion lives. In this pity thing. And it reminds me, again, that-

Lee: It's a big one in my family.

Andrea: in, probably, every family. But another reason why he didn't, when he wrote you that note, that you know, "This'll be an opportunity for you.-

Lee: Feeling (sorry).

Andrea: You'll learn a lot." When you were in the hospital with your kidney. So he comes at it knowing theory, I guess you could say, knowing what an emotional system could do! It can ride on pity and do you in. So that was a great question you asked your mom. Anything else you can think of?

Lee: I can't, not right this second.

Andrea: Well when we talked about this a little bit earlier, which would be where do you see that Bowen Theory has been a tremendous aid to you in being able to be more free of the emotional system and to live a more meaningful life. Than when you're controlled by the emotional system, which most people are blind to. And I sort of have this thesis that the reason that people have a hard time picking up Bowen Theory, is they don't wanna see the emotional system, they like being blind to it! It's extremely hard, maybe you have to be in pain to see the - or want to - see the emotional system.

Lee: It (sort of) damages-

Andrea: What're the advantages to Bowen Theory to people who are not in a lot of pain? Is there? I think there is.

Lee: I just think- It's so hard, when you've been living with something, and using it in your life, you know, for correctly or incorrectly, or off and on, for as many years as I have, since '70 let me say, '74, in a way. To know what a different, you know, to be certain what a difference it's made. But I feel like there's some things I absolutely believe, I think I could easily have died, in the family I was in, although, you know, to some extent my sister saved me from that. I would

have married again, I would not have had children. I think I had children by using theory. And, I mean, there have been times I've regretted that, but not, you know, not overall. I wouldn't have missed it. I think it's made a difference in the people that I'm friends with, they're, you know, I can think out loud with them. They ask me good questions. They use theory too, and I mean, that's just invaluable. So, it's given me a set of relationships that I wouldn't have had otherwise. So that I do see the world you know, I have a broader perspective on things. I don't automatically settle on- I mean I look for as many factors as I can, and I'm always sure there are at least double that many I'm missing. But I think it makes a tremendous difference to have a broader perspective. And to be thinking about science, and to be you know, but I'm not a full- there's something immensely appealing, I mean I can see the appeal, to have an easy answer, to believe it's God, to be able to blame. To not have to look at one's part in something. You know, that's not always such fun! Ignorance- there's a degree of comfort that would be in just letting oneself be ignorant. Not wasting time trying to figure stuff out.

Andrea: No, you can't.

Lee: But, how would you go back? I can't not do it. I can't go back. And I wouldn't want to, not really. But I can see, you know, there are days when I think (it would) be really nice to be a born-again Christian!

Andrea: Yeah. I hear that. Do you think there'll be a reason for Bowen Theory to be better known or for the ideas of systems theory without attribute to Bowen, to just be more widely available? That-

Lee: Yeah, I think they are. And I mean, does it really matter if he gets credit for it? Because I'm not sure you know, how much did he make up? I think some, but you know, they're just ideas that are around. I mean it's interesting, I see people doing things without Bowen Theory, that I wouldn't have known to do. It wouldn't have come natural to me. But there are people it does. I'll have to say this is a fun story, my son lost a friend least year, and immediately went to the parents' house and spent two hours talking to them. And I said, "Oh my God! I could never, it would never have occurred to me to do that when I was your age. How did, you know, where did that come from?" He looked at me, he said, "Mom," he said, "Are you kidding me? Who's my mother? Who do you think I learned it from? Who do you think I learned it from? I see what you do!" But I was amazed. It's like, "I wouldn't have done this in my twenties!" I had to learn this from Bowen.

Andrea: Oh, that's so beautiful. I remember whether, early on when he did the NIH project, he did a version of this, in which he said, to the staff, "You can't come and complain about the families, but you can talk about the difficulty and the challenge the families represent for you. And the families can come in and listen." And all the whatever you want to call them, nursing meetings, or community meetings, were held so that the families could come in and sit outside

and listen to the staff! Talk about the challenge that these people presented, for them. And so rather than telling people what to do, like, you know, "What you should do, son, is run over to these people's houses," you live it, and they pick it up. And that indirectly is such a freeing thing. Because you're doing it the way you believe and then they pick it up, that makes sense to them.

Lee: Well, you know, that's another thing I would say, that to some extent, Bowen Theory has made life- I've talked about how it's made life more difficult in looking for your part in things, it's not always clear what to do about it, you know, you're caught in triangle, you know. But to some extent, there are sort of principles and rules that you develop to live by. Like I don't have to think twice what to do when somebody dies. I just automatically, you know, have some things that I know to do. And it is a relief not to have to work, you know, not to have to wring your hands and say "Oh, what do I do now?" You've got some principles. There are some things you believe. You believe 'em because you've done 'em before and they've worked. And, you know, somebody dies, you show up for the funeral if you can, if it's at all possible. And that does set an example for the next generation. They watch what you do, they don't listen to what you say, so much, they watch what you do. And yeah, I think you know, these ideas, you know, they will spread, they may not get attributed to Bowen, I don't know whether they'll spread fast enough. To save us from ourselves. I have some serious questions about that, but, I do think, that to have a segment of the population working at raising its level of differentiation, has gotta help right a sinking ship. It just may not be, you know, we may not have enough time.

Andrea: Yeah. But the only answer to saving the sinking ship, I guess, is that you're raising level of awareness, as best you can. In your little corner of the world. That's what Dr. Bowen used to call it, if you-

Lee: In your little corner of the world.

Andrea: If you, actually, I went to see Jan Kuhn, and she gave me this quote from Dr. Bowen. She was copying an audio and that basically it said, "I'm a part of the great Republic, and I can do something to shed light on the corner that I live in. And if a majority of people can shed a little light on their corner, it's a different society." And then he went on to say, "If people bitch about the Washington, and the Supreme Court, and Congress, then you know, it's not going to work out." And he says, "It's that simple and that difficult, but it could make it livable if we can say we play a part in everything and I want to do the best I know how to do." In making my corner of the world better. It's a challenge for all of us to do it, we don't know whether our neighbors will do it or not.

Lee: Right.

Andrea: And if you just keep doing it, there'll be more people following you, than you

realize.

Lee: That's good. I like that. Thanks for reading it to me.

Andrea: Yeah. It just happened, when you said that. And I happened to have the notes that I took from Jan Kuhn! That was in here.

Lee: You know, I feel a huge sense of gratitude, for having been exposed to Dr. Bowen and his ideas. And exposed to him, you know, personally. You know, less than so many others, but it has made a difference to know him. Personally. In his lifetime. But his, you know, his ideas are timeless, and they do become principles. For living. You know, I would say, and it came from Dan Paparo, but I, you know, Dan got it from Bowen. And that is, "How do you see the problem that you create for others in dealing with you." I mean, that's one that'll keep you busy forever, you know? How do you, how do you get clear about- And I've been able to say that to other people, "How do you see the problem you create for so-and-so?"

Andrea: Now you gotta have a -like a video camera that's shiny, and gives you direct feedback! You know, and then you could say, "Well, wait a minute. Upon reflection, I looked at the interaction we just had and upon reflection I'd like to say, I'm a pain in the butt!"

Lee: Yeah. But you know, I know I'm a pain in the butt. And sometime- my son said, he said, "The thing that bugs me about you, Mom, is you know you're an asshole. You just don't feel bad about it." He said, "You're not trying to do anything to change it." And you know, to some extent that's the truth! You know, people need to deal with -people need to have some difficult people in their lives, that aren't all sunny, and

Andrea: So, is he trying to say "You're not trying to make it easier on me," or is he trying to say "You're not trying to make it a better world?" I mean, you know, it's one thing to say, "You're a pain in the butt to me, because you challenge me, and you make it hard on me."

Lee: Well, he means that, but I don't know, who knows what he means. I don't know. Yeah.

Andrea: That's a good next question. "What the heck are you talking about here?!" Yeah, it's probably - maybe there-

Lee: I sort of know what he meant. "You know who you are, you know you're difficult, you're not trying to be anything else. You're not trying to be easy. You're not trying to make life easy for..."

Andrea: (laughs) Exactly. You're not trying to be easy. No, I don't see that as a positive thing. For anybody. The easy way out is usually gonna lead to more trouble in the long run. You've got somebody else coming here.

Lee: Usually, usually.

Andrea: Hey, I'm going to pause.

[tape ends]