



Shield Bearer Counselors Corner

How Many Bags Did You Pick Up This Morning?

By Jayna Haney, MS, LPC-Intern

"Odds are, you did this morning. Somewhere between the first step on the floor and the last step out the door, you grabbed some luggage. You stepped over to the baggage carousel and loaded up. The carousel is not the one in the airport; it's the one in the mind. And the bags we grab are not made of leather; they're made of burdens. The suitcase of guilt. The trunk of discontent. A backpack of anxiety and a hanging bag of grief. Add on a briefcase of perfectionism, an overnight bag of loneliness, and a duffel bag of fear. No wonder we are so tired at the end of the day." Max Lucado in his book, "Traveling Light"

I got married the first time when I was 22 years old. Eleven years later when I divorced with two young children, I had a lot of "housekeeping" to do. And I'm not talking about my home; I'm talking about my mind.

I could feel all my angst, fear and grief surrounding my divorce coupled with my realization that I was far from the same person who married at 22, and had light years to go before I would be ready to have another relationship.

As single parents and in stepfamily life, **we have to find a way to start moving the luggage out of our head. After all, we don't want our kids to learn to fill up with these bags** or let the old luggage sabotage relationships with new partners.

As I began to work through and get rid of these mental burdens, I learned that it left lots of room in my mind and my heart that I could fill up with good things! *Where to start looking for bags you are picking up? Try these:*

Family- The family you grew up with stays with you. But now you are an adult. Mend these relationships as best you can. Creating acceptance about our relationships with our immediate family is a very large part of having healthy adult relationships and teaching our children how to have them.

Past relationships- Fear, distrust, guilt, anger, denying forgiveness and many other kinds of emotions show up here.

Forgiveness- Mending relationships with others often starts with forgiving ourselves. Have you forgiven yourself?

Negative thoughts in your head- What we think and what that unfiltered voiced in our head tells us can create anxiety, frustration, and overwhelm. You know what I'm talking about.

And please, tomorrow morning, **think ... before you pick up those bags... and then put them right back down** and into a closet in your mind where you can go through them when you are ready.

It's been my honor to work with others on how to get rid of their baggage, and I'd be happy to help you lighten your load for yourself, your children, and your future. Just let me know.