

This Week in Kailua-Kona: micro-aggressions

I took a continuing ed class this week:
 “Unmasking Micro-aggression in the Clinical Setting.”
 What’s a micro-aggression?

Micro-aggressions are everyday slights or insults by what we do and say, or don’t do and don’t say.

The youthful-looking black psychologist educator often heard “you don’t look like a psychologist.”



From my Zoom classroom I spent the rest of my day working with clients.

My ears and eyes and heart recalibrated to the micro-cues:

raised eyebrows, rolled eyes,

a “heh-heh” laugh signaling a lie was on the lips,

The “platonic” affair that drained energy from the marriage,

a racist thought tucked way down deep—racism in need of gracism.

Then, from me as well—

The assumption that I knew better what to do,

I missed a moment to praise when the other could have used a lift
 instead of plumbing for greater insight.

The absence of a verbal fence when my friend was self-loathing,

Critiquing myself at day’s end as “not good enough.”

And the failure to listen (FTL) to my body speaking to me
 through pain or sleeplessness.



And what of my micro-aggressions to God?

When we think of slander, perhaps we think false speech, or hurtful words, that harms a person’s reputation. To slander someone in ancient Israel had more to do with your foot than with your mouth!

Psalm 15:2 reads a person who “walks with integrity” but contrasts it with one who uses the micro-aggression of slander. The slanderer in Hebrew is one who walks over someone’s reputation with their tongue, the one who stomps on another’s personhood.

The denials of the Spirit’s prompting within me are also “micro-aggressions.” Spirit stompings.



Stinginess, when I could have given time or money or good-will in Jesus’ name to another person—and chose not to.

Loving our neighbor as ourselves is not optional. It’s a command.

“Do it to the least of these, and you do it for Me.”

“If you quit gossiping about other people’s sins... and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out, Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight.”
 Isaiah 58: 9

The Master Teacher does not corral my hidden faults into the light to humiliate, but so I become the beautiful person He created me to be.

