

CHAPTER 21

“I Hate You”

*“What the heart gives away is never lost because it stays
in the hearts of others.”*

-David Lam

Finally I’m lying on the couch. Dr. Shoemaker sits in a big soft chair behind my head for the first time. I can’t see him.

What do I say, Dr. Shoemaker?

Say whatever comes to your mind.

What do you mean by that?

Just say whatever you want to say, Lou.

I don’t know what you mean. I don’t want to say the wrong thing.

You *can’t* say the wrong thing. Just say whatever you want to say.

But I’m afraid to do that.

Why?

Because I’ll most likely say something that isn’t appropriate and you’ll get mad at me.

Everything you say is appropriate, Lou.

I’m scared.

Scared of what?

I’m scared that you will yell at me.

Why would I yell at you?

Because I'll say the wrong things and you'll feel like I'm wasting your time and then you'll get mad at me.

He doesn't respond.

Please give me an idea what to talk about.

He doesn't respond.

I don't want to talk if I don't know what the ground rules are.

There are no ground rules, Lou. You need to talk about ninety percent of the time. I'm just here to help you along.

But what if I get off on a tangent that you don't like?

No response.

I already know what's going to happen.

No response.

You're going to criticize me for talking about the wrong stuff and wasting your time.

No response.

Now I've asked you very nicely to help me with the ground rules so that I don't waste your valuable time. But you won't help me understand how this is supposed to work.

No response.

Why won't you help me?

He talks in a very soft voice.

Just say whatever comes to your mind, Lou.

I already know exactly what is going to happen here.

No response.

Here's what will happen. I'm going to do as you say and start talking about whatever comes to my mind and you're going to yell at me and say, "Don't talk about *THAT STUFF*; talk about *THIS STUFF*." Let me tell you something, IF YOU DO THAT, I'M GOING TO GET OFF THIS FUCKING COUCH AND COME BACK THERE AND PUNCH YOU RIGHT IN THE MOUTH. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT?

No response.

I KNOW ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE YOU. DEEP DOWN, YOU'RE A PIECE OF SHIT. GO AHEAD, SAY SOMETHING TO ME LIKE THAT. I DARE YOU. IF YOU DO, YOU MOTHER FUCKER, I'LL GRAB YOU BY THE FUCKING NECK AND THROW YOU OUT THE FUCKING WINDOW. YOU FAT MOTHER FUCKER. I HATE YOU, YOU PIECE OF SHIT. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT, YOU MOTHER FUCKER?

Before I know it, Dr. Shoemaker interrupts my tirade. My forty-five minutes are up.

I'll see you tomorrow at nine-thirty in the morning.

Dr. Shoemaker's words break me out of my trancelike state.

What?

I'll see you tomorrow at nine-thirty.

It takes me a minute to get out of my trance. I need to sit up and put my feet on the floor. Finally I turn to Dr. Shoemaker. He's getting up from his chair as though nothing happened at all.

Dr. Shoemaker, I'm so sorry I said those things to you.

I'll see you tomorrow, Lou.

I show myself to the door and let myself out. What just happened in there?