

River Of Cruelty—Information

The “River of Cruelty” is a metaphor describing how cruel behaviors move freely from person-to-person and through generations. It is well described as a “river,” as it flows from parent to child, impacting each generation. We did not have a choice when we landed in the “river.” We were “thrown in” before we were old enough or big enough to prevent it.

Once in the “River”, we are often resourceful and develop skills that help us to survive. These skills might include becoming self-centered or self-less, or isolating ourselves, or seeking attention. Other strategies include repressing emotions or becoming rebellious and angry. While these and many other skills are obviously problematic, they also serve the purpose of helping people survive the “River”. Problems often show up later as we find the very skills that helped us survive now serve to sabotage our quest for healthy relationships and a more meaningful existence. These survival tools, while valuable in helping us exist in the “river”, actually create a path for the “river” to continue flowing to future generations. Understanding how we entered the river in the first place is crucial for understanding the process of getting out.

