

OP ED

"Op Ed" — old time newspaper term meaning the page opposite the editorial page. This page has traditionally been held open for opinion pieces, letters, and comment from various sources.

Family Violence

Guilt and "born pleasers"

By Jacie B. Palmer

Women who are born pleasers have a significant problem dealing with guilt. Why?

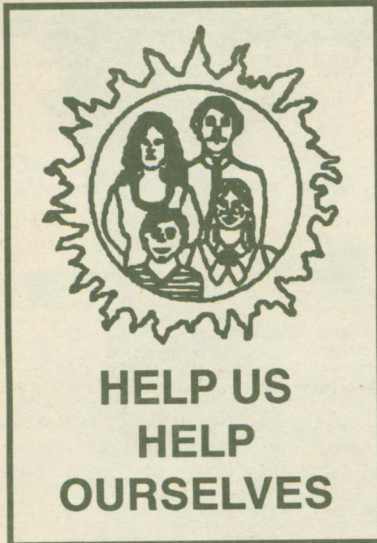
Firstly, they carry around loads of guilt about mistakes they have made in the past. They often bear a burden for guilt which is misplaced. In fact, they blame themselves for circumstances that were totally outside of their control.

They need to be reminded to take a look at their motives and assess them. If their motive was pure and the mistake was an innocent one, then there is no reason for guilt.

For example, if you tried to help someone or were kind to someone and it backfired, if you did it in complete innocence and naiveté, then you have no reason to feel guilty. The problem is that pleasers can often become conditioned to feeling bad about themselves. That leads to internalizing the belief that they are bad people. Once that occurs, the pleaser decides she deserves to be treated badly — and hence, the cycle of abuse rears its ugly head.

Secondly, pleasers have a tendency to use others' expectations as their life's guideposts. How often do we do things because we feel it is right, that we're the only one who can do it or that we believe we have an obligation which must be upheld? How often are deeds done because of others' expectations of us?

Pleasers have to stop allowing others' game plans and agendas to count more than their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, needs and wants.



Thirdly, a lot of pleasers are self-blamers. Do you ever say to yourself: "It's all my fault! I'm always wrong!"

I have one son, in particular, who happens to subscribe to the theory that his opinions are not as valid as others and that he is incapable of some things. He can become very negative and is always hard on himself.

Sometimes, he reverts to tears. I have to continually encourage him and help him with the decision-making to reassure him of his intelligence and goodness.

In part, he gets the self-recrimination from me. I often feel discouraged at my performance in certain situations which come my way. Deep down, I know I'm OK but I have to be reminded once in a while. We are all like that to a certain extent, aren't we? We can all use more positive reinforcement.

Fourthly, it is easier for most of

us, pleasers included, to suffer in silence rather than to change our outlook. Making a choice to live differently is difficult. It takes hard work to change beliefs which may have been ingrained since childhood! How many of us will offer to make those kinds of changes without some incentives - or circumstance - to initiate it?

I guess the big questions for all of us to ask ourselves is: "Are our mistakes real ones or imagined ones?"

A year ago, I was working for a client and I kept telling him I was sorry about the problems we were having. Finally, he said: "Jacie, stop saying you're sorry! You have nothing to be sorry for. This is not your fault!"

He was totally correct. The problems were not of my making but I was certainly taking all the responsibility — and blame — for them. He told me that I had to stop telling people that I was sorry so often and I was conscious in my efforts to change. For the next six months, I watched myself and I don't fall into that trap anymore.

He was right. None of us needs to carry around the false burdens of guilt for things which didn't happen, are not our fault or responsibility. Realistically, there are relatively few issues directly and totally within our control. Those are the only situations we need to feel guilty about when we screw up.

Pleasers must recognize their own vulnerability and be aware of their weaknesses in this area. Don't let garbage guilt clutter up your present.

Readers' writes

What were they thinking?

Dear Editor,

First I'd like to thank our Regional councillors for their fine decision to scrap the Leferink Waste Transfer Site because it costs too much money. I'd especially like to thank Marilyn Serjeantson who I understand heads the regional committee that made that enlightened decision. I can't tell you how grand it is having urban councillors (with the exception of councillor Robson; God knows what he was thinking) making decisions that will radically affect rural residents without those residents' input. No, I guess that's too cynical, eh? My apologies.

Well then, let's look at the impact of such a decision on rural dwellers. One, I now must drive 65 kilometers round trip to the Milton site burning hydrocarbons all the way. Many people drive even farther. Wasn't that an environmentally wise thing to ask us to do. Not only that, it makes for a great family outing on the weekend. Councillors, with working commitments, I have precious little time to spend with my family as it is, especially if I am to meet my ever increasing municipal tax obligations.

Secondly, one week after the Jan. 1 changeover of the Leferink site to a supposedly user-pay facility (if urban dwellers were charged a \$1.50 per bag at the curb there'd

be a tax revolt soon enough), a television, two tires and a couple of bags of garbage appeared on the tenth line. I promptly phoned the Region and a staff member there told me to phone the municipal offices. "They have to pick it up," she said. "If they don't, can I dump it on a councillor's lawn?" I asked. "I don't think that's a very good alternative sir," she countered, and quite rightly so. At any rate, I phoned the town and the works department (which is probably understaffed and spread rather thin like everyone else in these recessionary times) assured me they would pick the garbage up. Well, it's been four weeks and not only is the garbage still there, but another television has joined it just around the corner on 20 Sideroad. Isn't that wonderful!

I find it increasingly strange that our town council fights so vigorously (and expensively) to prevent dumps within our boundaries and on our borders (and quite rightly), yet has allowed our regional councillors to implement a decision which is responsible for the proliferation of garbage in our rural ditches. A tad ironic, wouldn't you say?

On a final note, I have always considered garbage disposal a basic necessity unlike sidewalks or street lighting which I've obviously chosen to do without by choosing to live in a rural area. By providing rural residents with a convenient site to dispose of their garbage the region and municipality was furnishing us with the most basic form of garbage disposal. Now we don't even have access to that. It's time for a solution to be found that addresses this problem, which is fair and equitable to all the residents of Halton Hills. Let's hope our town council is on the right track.

Steve Frost

NELC battles for self interests

Dear Editor:

The Truth Comes Out!

I have felt uneasy about the future of the Niagara Escarpment ever since the Niagara Escarpment Landowners' Coalition (NELC) started asking for the abolition of the Niagara Escarpment Commission and suspension of the U.N.'s "World Biosphere Reserve" designation.

Now, the truth of the matter has finally come out! In her recent column in the Toronto Star (Does coalition have interests of escarpment at heart?; Sat., Jan. 30, 1993; page H1), Michele Landsberg explains the forces behind the NELC. The landowners' group includes an aggregate company, golf course owners, land developers and real estate interests.

These groups have had most, but

not all, of their plans for development approved by the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Naturally, if there were no NEC it would be easier to get approvals since they would have to deal only with local governments. However, in some areas along the escarpment, the local governments seem to have very little interest in protecting our natural heritage.

Preservation of the escarpment for ourselves and future generations is worth fighting for. Development will continue, but it must be properly controlled. Let us urge our representatives, in local and provincial government, to fight for the continued protection of the Niagara Escarpment so that it remains "Ours to Enjoy".

Yours truly,
Read Whatmough

Sauve leaves "rich legacy" to Canadians

Dear Editor:

Re: Death of Jeanne Sauve

Canadians are saddened to learn of the death of former Governor-General Jeanne Sauve. She was 70 years old.

Mrs. Sauve was a dynamic person who did not shy away from taking action where she felt it was necessary. Eyebrows were raised and Canadians were surprised to see her taking sides in the Meech Lake Accord — (Governor-General must be impartial in matters of politics), and the closing of the gates leading to the grounds of Rideau Hall (a safety precaution).

She served Canada as the first woman cabinet minister from Quebec, the first woman as Speaker of the House of Commons

and the first woman Governor-General.

Jeanne Sauve was a remarkable woman who served Canada with charm, dignity and a conscience. She has left us a rich legacy.

Tom Ramautarsingh

Halton Hills THIS WEEK

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