

Lifestyles

I've learned to beware of the nice ones

You know that person you think is just the nicest you have ever met?

Well, guess what? They aren't all that nice -- at least according to my theory.

It states that being nice all the time goes against the laws of human behaviour. It can't be done. Things need to balance out. The person who appears to be extra special spicy-nicey needs an outlet for their not-so-nice side for the proper equilibrium to be maintained.

I don't think it's something we learn as we go along, either. It starts right from babies. They're cute and all, but they're not particularly nice, especially when they want something. Later they bite and then they become teenagers.

Some time in between they discover they don't have to worry about Santa's list of naughty-and-nice kids in order to get presents at Christmas.

Every parent with teenagers has wondered at times why their kids are so nice to their friends, and then bites your head off because you blocked their vision of the television when you walked by.

Among grown-ups, the balance often has a direct correlation to their occupation.

Some jobs have the equilibrium built in. Take dentists, for example. They're all smiles and friendly when you sit down in the chair, and then they inflict horrible pain on you. They enjoy that, which is why they're acting so nice just before they get to do it. So, they're nice, and not-so nice.

Certain jobs depend on the person being nice, which is a dangerous thing. Sales people, real estate agents, counter people and customer sales reps are included in that group.

Outside of work, these people just go nuts. They stomp on ants for fun, drive through puddles to splash pedestrians and are the ones urging people to jump when they're on window ledges of tall buildings. But, because we only see them in their work environment, we tend to think of them as the nicest of all.



On the loose

with MURRAY TONWSEND

Some occupations don't have to be nice all the time, so they're able to balance it out during the day.

Teachers, policemen, and nurses, for example, are sometimes very nice, and sometimes very nasty. You can't blame them, either, because of the people they have to deal with. If they had to constantly be nice, they would go insane. But, these are also the same people who are nicest outside of work.

Some people don't have to be nice at all. Famous actors, top athletes, filthy rich people, supermodels, and CEOs. That shows the principle at work, because people inherently aren't nice, and when they're in a position that they don't have to be, they aren't. Because everybody has to be nice to them, they balance it out by not being nice to others.

The best place to see the principle at work is in the work place. The nicety balance is passed along by each boss. A boss has to be nice to his boss, but he doesn't have to be to people who are under them. The poor guy at the very bottom bosses his dog around when he gets home.

Almost everybody has heard it said about them that they're a nice person. Even me, although I don't think Jennifer Smith said it. But, I'm not always a nice person. Just the other day the dog was sleeping on the chestfield and I wanted to sit down. So, I just shooed him away.

When I'm trying to quit smoking, I hate everybody on the planet and treat them accordingly, but that's a special circumstance. We all have periods when we're not in the mood to be nice. I was invited to an NHL all-star bash recently by somebody I work for with free booze and food. Normally, I'd be lined up at the door the night before, but I told them I didn't feel like being nice and wasn't going. Mind you, I was feeling some guilt at the time about bossing the dog around.

Another good example of the niceness balance is seen when we're driving. We do something that isn't nice such as cutting somebody off. The offended party beeps and gives us the finger. What do we do? We give them the finger back. So, basically, we're not nice to them because they weren't nice to us after we weren't nice in the first place.

Sometimes, being nice is a bad thing. For example, when a woman is breaking up with a man. "You're a nice guy, but we're just not right for each other."

It would have been easier for everyone if he wasn't such a nice guy. In fact, the reason he's not right for her is because he is such a nice guy. Women tend to be nicer than men, or so they say, so they prefer guys who aren't so nice so they can balance out their own niceness.

We all like people who aren't particularly nice. Why do you think hockey fans like the enforcers such as Tie Domi so much? Yeah, that's it. Go bash his face, and don't be nice about it. It makes us feel good when he's not being nice.

Here's a fun thing we all can try. A sort of niceness test. Go up to that person you think is so nice and whisper this in their ear: "I think you're a stupidhead."

Then see how they react. If they get upset and mad about it, then you know my theory is correct. If they reply, "Well, I think you're wonderful," get out of the dentist chair and make a run for it.

Lots of action

• from ALONE on page 16 in a way that's actually meaningful." Trouble is, the approach of Valentine's Day often feels like the advance of a smart bomb to men.

"Men are very action-oriented. They want to do it right," said Ms Grall.

According to Carlton Cards, men buy more expensive gifts and shop at more exclusive stores on the big day than women do. And though 62 per cent of male partners buy presents for their loved one, only 44 per cent of women respond in kind.

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