

Getting it together Winning by losing—doormat strategies

Self-improvement books often tell us to take a stand for ourselves. Tell us you when you mean do they advise. After all, if you don't stand up for yourself, others will exploit you. You will be nothing but a doormat and never get your way.

While I agree that we should all directly express our needs, I can't but the premise that doormats never get their way. In fact, acting like a doormat, going in to the demands of others, is one of the most common and most powerful of all manipulative strategies.

Contrary to views held by proponents of assertiveness training, nice people are not always the passive victims of our world. Some really appear to be.

Actually when we practice the art of one-downmanship we are using the automatic guilt feelings of others to our advantage. By keeping a self-righteous in ourselves and appearing to be victims, we are playing on the strong tendencies of most humans to feel sorry for and protect the weak and innocent. If we play our doormat strategy well, we actually win by losing.

I discussed one of the main techniques of the doormat strategy, the free-lunch play, generously with a hidden price tag. There are others all based on suppressing

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selfish needs, appearing like a victim and relying on the guilt of other people.

ONE OF MY favorites is the "Don't hurt me, I'm fragile" play. It might also be called "You wouldn't hit a kid with glasses, would you?" It is founded on our tendency to hold back our aggressiveness when dealing with very vulnerable opponents. The opponent, "I'm fragile" practitioner is able to look emotionally devastated at a moment's notice.

Instant tears and catastrophizing come easily. The expert is able to look breakable even before he is confronted, appearing like a little kid all hunched down in anticipation of being hit by an angry parent.

A related play for fending off aggression is copying a plea. It involves quick self-condemnation and extremely thorough apology as a means of protection from impending criticism. When confronted by an expert apologist, you will find yourself compelled to reassure him when you would have normally felt angry.

A common cry of the coping plea manipulator is "I'm right! All right! I've said I'm sorry. What more do you want from me?" And that's the whole point. The apologist tries to substitute a dramatic apology and self-condemnation for real retribution or even listening to the other person's point of view.

A FREQUENT companion to the apologizing play is "Yes, I won't." It involves outward acquiescence while inwardly resisting, saying yes and doing no. By convincing others that he intends to do exactly what they ask, the "Yes-I-won't" player gets people off his back. Then he is free to do just as he pleases. When that is done well, it appears as though he really tried to meet your demands, but regrettably says, "I didn't have enough time," or "I didn't know at the moment you wanted it done this way."

Then comes the profuse apology and the solemn assurance that he is really going to do it right this time. Even if you don't be-

lieve him, what can you say after he so dramatically promises satisfaction next time if you don't want to seem unreasonable or untrusting of you? Gotcha.

Finally, there is the nice-matter-what play of the doormat strategy. Also known as the other cheek play and the sunbath game, this one is used to inflict great pain on others by continuing to do the right, decent, loving thing, even when you have been obviously wronged. Disputed as politeness, it is actually a very effective way to attack those who have hurt you, while making it extremely hard for them to counter-attack. It is the perfect revenge, especially when used on people who are subject to a lot of guilt about being a bad guy.

WHAT ALL OF these plays have in common is that they seem like non-aggressive, victimized postures, but they are all very aggressive indirectly. Each play in the doormat strategy allows the manipulator to impose his needs on others. Each play, when successful, enables the user to be aggressive without making retaliation.

Once you realize how effective these manipulations are, it is easier to understand how difficult it is for people to stop using them, even when they really want to quit. Next week, I'll suggest some ways you can break the doormat habit.

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Archeology, meditation, crewel in OU courses

Evening non-degree courses in varied areas will be offered in May by Oakland University's Division of Continuing Education.

A new course in archeology is scheduled with additional courses in meditation techniques, history and design of early American crewel and legal and financial information every woman should know.

All except the archeology course are five-week courses. The archeology course, "Do You Dig?" will consist of four Tuesday evening classes beginning May 4 and two Saturday sessions in field work, May 22 and 29.

Participants will find out what archeology is, how it works and how to interpret it. The instructor is Richard B. Slomps, assistant professor of sociology and anthropology.

Advanced meditation techniques, an intensive course with emphasis on group relationships, meditation, energy flow tech-

niques and increased awareness is scheduled Thursday evenings beginning May 13. History and design of early American crewel will offer an experience in the free and beautiful development of early American crewel in the form of a sampler of motifs and stitches utilized by embroiderers of that era. Pamela Labe of Lake Union, a member of the Embroiderers Guild of America, Inc., will instruct the course. Wednesday evenings beginning May 12.

The course legal and financial information every woman should know prepares women alone to handle their own personal business. Attorney Evelyn F. Forrest of Farmington and Young, Inc., will instruct the course. Tuesday evenings beginning May 11. Topics covered will include real estate, insurance, social security benefits, debts, income taxes, name change, divorce and separation, adoption, antenuptial agreements, wills, trusts and probate.

To obtain course details and to register call the OU Continuing Education office.

Volunteers

This column describing volunteer needs in Oakland County is co-sponsored by the Junior League of Birmingham and the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau.

Inquiry regarding volunteer needs listed here should be made to the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau at 647-7272. Regularly scheduled volunteer listings should also be made through the volunteer bureau.

HENRY FORD HOSPITAL. Try, needs adult volunteers to assist in the hospital unit. Training will be provided under the supervision of the occupational therapist. Hours are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. A week commitment of four hours is requested.

EASTERN SEAL SOCIETY of Crippled Children and Adults of Oakland County. Needs case work volunteers to follow up by telephone and letter former

Eastern Seal clients to assist them with current needs in locating community resources. Duties entail in-person visits to clients. Orientation is provided. Public relations coordinators are also needed to initiate and maintain contacts with the media (newspaper, radio and TV). Volunteers will also develop a bi-monthly Eastern Seal Newsletter.

BIRMINGHAM-BLOOMFIELD ART ASSOCIATION needs volunteer teacher aides to help set up materials for class, clean up and help students with problems on assignments. Classes are held after school, Mondays through Thursday and Saturday mornings. Teenagers are preferred and a once a week commitment is requested. Volunteers are also needed in other areas including exhibition assistant, special hostesses, membership drive and office help.

College Week offers inexpensive vacation

If you'd like to take an inexpensive vacation where you'll meet new friends, get stimulated and really involved with today's crucial issues, come to Michigan State University June 21-24 for College Week.

During your four-day adventure at MSU, you'll live in a campus residence hall and attend your choice of classes. More than 45 classes are being offered, including marriage, divorce, child abuse, parenting, public speaking, consumer budgeting, weight control, media and its effect on children, medical ethics and patients' rights, retirement, house plants, Michigan Indian culture and history and dealing with stress.

Adult counselor Eleanor Driver will discuss how to reach your potential and en-

hance your future in your many varied roles.

Exciting evening programs include the play "Goodbye" films, swimming, tennis and more.

The total cost is \$55, including 10 meals, three nights lodging and activities. Commuters pay a \$15 fee that includes all classes and programs, but no meals or lodging. Those who can only attend one day may come June 22 for \$8 that includes that day's classes, activities and lunch.

The event is sponsored by the Family Living Education Program of the MSU Cooperative Extension Service. For specific information on classes and registration, contact your county Extension Service home economist or write 201 Wills House, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

WSU women to view careers in workshop

"Making Career Decisions," a one-day workshop for women will be offered at Stoddard's Northland Inn on Saturday, May 1 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The program is the first of a series of offered by Women of Wayne Alumni and is co-sponsored by the Wayne State University Commission on the Status of Women. Chairperson of the commission, Maria Kenney, will direct the workshop. Ms. Kenney is a consulting psychologist with the University's Division of Counseling and Psychological Services and has received her master's in many phases of a woman's career to work.

She has developed special occupational information materials for women, has done research on sex bias in tests to measure career interests and has counseled many women on an individual basis and has presented workshops on career planning and decision-making.

There will also be afternoon, "how to" seminars on resumes and job interviews.

THE FINAL program will be offered on Saturday, June 26, in McGregor Conference Center on the Wayne campus. Co-sponsored with the Wayne State University and the University of Michigan Institute of Gerontology, the program will deal with "Planning for Work After Retirement." Program participants include Harold Sheppard of Washington, D.C., a former faculty member at Wayne and a national authority on senior workers; Mrs. Anne Berkman of Wayne's "Best & Co." a nationally-known volunteer placement service in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Fran Harris, retired broadcaster, public relations consultant and chairperson of the Wayne County Commission on Aging.

THE MORNING program will deal with a number of factors women need to consider in making career decisions at various times of their lives.

A discussion starter film, "You Pack Your Own Future" will be followed by a presentation "Women and Work" by Dr. Kenney and a panel of alumnae: Margaret Hague, volunteer proprietor, Campus Treasury Shop, WSU; Jacqueline Stein, gold, probation officer, Wayne County Juvenile Court; and Dr. Marcelle Peterson, Oregon Assistant, Region 8, Detroit Public Schools.

Registration for the day is \$6 with a reduced rate of \$5 for Women of Wayne members. Lunches will be available at \$5.50 on an optional basis. Reservations should be addressed to Women of Wayne at Alumni House, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202.

WOMEN OF WAYNE has scheduled two other career programs for the month of June. On Saturday, June 5, at the Green Pointe War Memorial, the topic will be "Getting a Job in Today's Market." It will be co-sponsored by the Wayne State University's Placement Office and will feature a panel of employment counselors and roundtable discussions with women from a variety of fields.

M. Jane Kay, manager of employee relations at Detroit Edison, will deliver the keynote address "Women Power Pre-

Benefit brunch is scheduled for Sr. Arline

Sister Arline Schmeier, Dominican nun who directs research on anticancer agents of marine origin at the American Cancer Research Center in Denver, will be honored at a benefit brunch at noon Sunday, May 2, in the Fairlane Manor, 1900 Hubbard, Dearborn.

The nun, visiting in the area to press her campaign to raise research funds, will tell about her work at the brunch.

Michigan is one of three states in which fund raising chapters were formed to support Sr. Arline's research.

The project was funded for three years, but so far no funds to continue it have been granted by the National Institutes of Health.

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