

# REWARDING BAD BEHAVIOR

by Donna Deos

**Why do we do this?** How come mean people always seem to get a pass on acting that way when the good people can have one off day and everyone lets them know it's not okay? When we let them get away with bad behavior, or we cave in to their meanness and comply, we are actually reinforcing that what they are doing is okay. How? Because it worked. Being the bully got them what they wanted. Being an adult sized baby got them what they wanted.



**NEED SOMEONE TO LISTEN?**  
If you need someone to truly listen and to help call Donna!  
Donna Deos, LLC ∞ Counseling, Coaching & Education  
603-224-4178 www.donnadeos.com 1-855-772-2622

But it cost them much more – the respect of others.

When I was in school, I was the good, rule following nice girl who tried to make everyone happy. There were other girls in school, you know who they are, the “mean girls.” The ones who were always rude, bossy, mean, put others down to make themselves feel better and so on. Especially to those they saw as inferior or less popular. I wasn't their target, but I saw them do it far too often. I would then go and try to make their victim feel better when they weren't around. Sadly, I did not stand up to them back then because I didn't want to go from non-target to target. That is not okay either. I was a child and it was the safe thing to do.

One day, I was grumpy and not overly happy or nice. Boy did I hear about that. Apparently, if you are nice by nature, the people who aren't don't want you treading on their turf. Likewise, the people who count on you bringing them up really rely on you to do that.

So, now here I am as an adult – many years later and I still see this happening around me – and to me, and to those I love. It simply isn't right. Why do we let this happen? How come some people get to be total jerks and nobody stands up to them? I think it is time we start letting people know what is acceptable and what is not.

For example, if someone asks you what they can bring to your party, and you say “your presence is all I require, please don't bring anything” they should be flattered and not bring anything. I literally had someone ask me three times if they could bring a specific item. I politely declined 3 times (because I was already making that item as it was a specific request by the person whom the party was for) and they still showed up with the item I asked them not to bring! I don't know about you, but to me that is completely, blatantly rude and disrespectful.

It is not okay to go ahead and do what you want anyway, especially when you asked and were given an answer not to do that. Where do people get off thinking this is okay? If you didn't ask and brought something I would get that. But 3 times?!?! This really did happen. I know it is quite unbelievable that anyone would be so bold, but it did happen – and yes, I was not surprised given the person who did it.

If you are having a bad day, I get it. We all do. Own it. When I come home after a stressful day (or, I should say, when I did work out in the world and came back home –lol, there is much less stress working from home for sure! Far less of these people to deal with), I would warn my family. “If I seem cranky, it's not you. My day was not a good one and I don't mean to take it out on you.” Everything went much smoother with that warning label. Nobody took anything I said or did personally. And, because I had put it out there I was aware of it and less likely to be crabby with them.

Wouldn't it be nice if people were generally nice instead of selfish and mean? Sure, we all tend to be selfish on occasion. “On occasion” being the preference instead of incessantly.

One more example of what is not acceptable: just because you really want something does not give you the right to be a complete jerk to someone else to get it. The more you push your agenda and treat that person meanly, in my book, means you are definitely not going to get your way. My friends told me the ability to say no and/or hold your ground is a thing that comes with age. Well, they were right and I am finally there! Thank you 50!

Sadly, not everyone else is there. They let people twist words, manipulate and downright verbally abuse them just to get their way. Let me say it again – this is NOT okay in any world. Please stop being that person if you are. (However, that person is not likely to read this

anyway. Let's be real, I tend to be a positive, upbeat person in life and in my writing, which means mean people aren't attracted to me.) So, for the people who are reading this, it is time to step up and let people know their actions are not okay.

You can even use an assertion statement like this: “when

you yell at me or use your guilt words to get your way, I feel disappointed in you and our relationship, and it makes me not want to give you what you are trying to get. If you approached this want/topic in a polite and positive way you would stand a much better chance of me considering it. Feel free to approach me again when you are able to do this.” End of discussion. Walk away, say goodbye, do whatever you want or need to do end the conversation. You have just let them know their actions are not acceptable and will not work. You did not reward the three year old for having the tantrum by giving them the candy or toy they threw the fit for.

Let's be real people, those of us who raised kids learned this. If you reward bad behavior you get more of it. (Sometimes you get more of it regardless, but that is a topic for another day: trying to deal rationally with an irrational person). If you let people know what is not acceptable, it is then up to them to decide to follow the rules – or not. If they do not. You know how much they value you – they don't. They are too selfish to value others. We all have people like this in our lives. What we can control is how much – or how little – interaction we have with them. You deserve to spend your precious time with those you value and who value you.

One more short story. I was watching my 3 year old grandson. He brought me to see the block tower he built. I praised him on his good work. He proceeded to knock it down. To which I showed an “on my goodness” reaction of surprise, which is what was desired. He then ordered me to sit down and build a new one. I told him no. He said “you have to.” I told him, “no, I don't. You're not the boss of me.” The look of surprise on his face was priceless! It was followed by confusion and disappointment. I then told him, if you had asked me nicely I would have gladly built one for you. He asked me nicely and we spent quite a while with me building towers for him to knock down. Guess who learned what works and what doesn't in a matter of seconds?! If only everyone were that easy.

Good luck on setting boundaries with those who need them. Next month we can talk about dealing with irrational people.

**I hope you enjoy the summer. – Donna**

“I fought the good fight, I finished the race,  
I have kept the faith.”

2 Timothy 4:7



**PROFESSIONAL RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL  
POWER WASHING, SOFT WASH & ROOF CLEANING**

**CONTACT US TODAY FOR A FREE CONSULTATION**

**603-715-6195 SPRAYFORCEPW.COM**

WALKWAYS | DECKS | PATIOS | DRIVEWAYS | STAIN & GRAFFITI REMOVAL & MORE...