**A Microcosm of Micro-aggression And Shaming**

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Most of us have experienced shaming as children. When we “did something wrong”, we were admonished - harshly at times - reminded that we were no more special than anyone else and that we should not repeat whatever it was that had gotten us into trouble. And because of the intense reactions of those we cared about, we (sometimes. . .?) felt ashamed for what we had done or said.

In most healthy parent-child relationships, shame is more the consequence of a child’s realization of wrong doing than it is an attack on their person. Experiencing it is not harmful unless it is an overpowering constant in their souls. And unless shaming was the tool of choice of a sadistic parent or teacher, as children we more often than not integrated the lessons learned, outgrew the shame “felt” - and moved on.

That was then. . . This is now.

Dreads Of Our Times

“Now” is an era in which we adhere to a contemporary self-esteem notion best known as : victimhood. Anything and everything perceived negative (under contemporary political correctness standards) falls into the category of emotional-assault-pain-integration. In essence we, as “moderns”, are prone to suffering irreparable emotional damage due to the dreaded consequences of micro-aggression attacks (i.e. : things said or done which hurt our feelings). Are there any prescriptions which alleviate such dastardly assaults on our persons? Though not a medical practitioner, I do highly recommend a decaf, double soy latté with an extra shot of cream. . .

Sarcasm aside,“real” aggression does occur everyday. And though oft ignored, the old-fashioned blunt edged sword called shaming is the actual, not the virtual micro-aggression danger to our psyches. As a fundamental zero tolerance rooted-in-history phenomenon, it is nothing less than a reborn-from-another-era product. Used mainly on teens and adults by other teens and adults, shaming - as in the past - pretends at acceptability - promotes itself as “righteous”. This claim not withstanding, its goals have not changed. It seeks to subjugate, to destroy an “other” through humiliation, disgracing and embarrassment (among a long list of other “public” belittlements - both great and small).

But what makes shaming ever more shameful is that it is more often than not exercised without due process or “innocent until proven guilty” procedural considerations. It is a personal belief attack on another person. In essence, it is a mob-mentality aggression with a tacit goal of incising a forever (teach them a lesson) scar on another’s soul.

As for our micro-aggression obsessions, those are kid game tactics best played by those who know what they’re doing : kids.

Over-sensitivity vs Hyper-sensitivity

When young children express over the top upset at being taunted, teased or “pointed at”, their reaction is generally perceived to be a “within the boundaries” manipulation tool. Why? (1) The protagonists are children. (2) The “victim”, all participants being equal, is not really a victim and (3) based on a “kid yardstick”, allowances must be made for the limited social experience displayed through the whiny childhood reverberations.

But then. . . Everyone knows that in such kid-on-kid moments, spontaneous emotional outbursts have but one goal : to prove to any adult within earshot that “the pounced upon victim” is the oh-so innocent party in whatever behind the scenes dust-up has just recently occurred.

Encountering this self-same behaviour in adults, on the other hand, is to witness a rather disturbing display of hypersensitivity. When adults react extremely to a purported emotional menace we can assume, more often than not, that there are exaggerated sensitivity issues at play. And when groups of individuals throughout the land “join in” - i.e. : adhere to a mass tantrum of emotional reaction hysteria, the situation becomes somewhat troublesome at best and immensely dangerous at worst. Why? Because it is more likely than not that the individuals involved are collectively aping an environment’s viral unhealthiness more than their own “thought out” expressions of legitimate dismay.

To the aforementioned sensitivity issues, mix the contemporary concept of self esteem (i.e. : our century’s obsession with self-love) and what we get is a serious expression of something socially if not psychologically awry.

Basically, a significant sign that not all is well in our times is when more and more of us fail to differentiate between that self-esteem ( how we feel about ourselves, based on consumer and/or “clique” perceptions and dictates) and self-respect which is a measure of how we see ourselves moving forward comfortably, once armed with objective knowledge of both our strengths and weaknesses.

That being said, our societies appear to be either ignoring or tacitly, if not actually, playing a part in real aggressions. Though the surreptitious goal of shaming is to attack an individual’s self-respect, collectively we tend to play the hear no evil, speak no evil, see no evil game in its regard. Why? Much of today’s shaming is, as in the past, exercised by those who are in authority or purport to be experts in the area of the authority they exercise over groups of more submissive “others”. And so, we the intimidated shy away - and do nothing.

Is our silence this “loud” because those being shamed are not us? Or those who resemble us? Or is it that we fear reprisal from the powers that be?

What’s what?

Shaming was once a questionable tool of religious authority. Founded on an institutional moral imperative, it was used to render submissive recalcitrant individuals within a perceived ignorant (therefore domination prone) mass. But is this not all passé? Hasn’t the practice of shaming fallen by the wayside?

Why talk about it now?

Possibly, because in a “must be happy” society like ours we tend to ignore (1) what is “too disturbingly” real and (2) the very “tools” being used to render us both submissive and thus less actively involved in determining how things should or could better be.

Generically, the taking in of a micro-aggression is a decision made by a virtually aggressed individual. Shaming, on the other hand, is an actual unexpected assault on a “target”. Yet, in a state of sane mental health parameters, to survive such attacks we must remember that being shamed is not the same as being “ashamed”. The latter is not necessarily the consequence of the former unless the shamer has every intention of exercising undue power over the so-called “to be shamed” AND the being shamed accepts an unwarranted attack on their integrity as a “due”.

The Securalization of Shaming

As stated previously, despite its lesser presence in today’s organized religions, shaming has nonetheless made a fundamentally secular comeback. Re-emerging with a vengeance, its reincarnation is now more a tool of individual self-righteousness than one based on formalized doctrine.

Contemporary politics is possibly the most evident group-adherent to this “new and improved” comeback. For nearly two decades now, political life has increasingly integrated shaming into its modus operandi - and this, with our collective blessing. The practice is evident in its geared-to-get-the-attention-of-the-public voice. Engagedly strident, it is a truth and facts be damned operation which often dupes the media into propagating its populist point of view.

The root of shaming is what needs recognition. It is an open attack on individual “persons” rather than their policies - an attack which focuses on “who someone is” rather than on what they do or say, have done or said which “is” or “purportedly” is shameful. Why? It’s simple. . . “The to be shamed people” have a “mind”. And that thinking power gets in the way of “THE” way being pushed forward by those who would rule rather than lead. And therefore, any way to “get them” (those who do not submit), is “THE” way to do it. Morals be damned.

But what is more devastating than merely interesting in this matter is the evident rebirth of a concomitant “schadenfreude” - the feeling of enjoyment that comes from seeing, hearing about but mostly inflicting pain on others. In our new and improved era, that now means finding pleasure in the crushing and smearing into the sidewalk of those deemed, (by a subjugated and thus agreeing mass) to be detritus.

Reality-TVs Church of Shaming Cornerstone

News and entertainment are ironically at the root of contemporary shaming. Much like Pavlovian dogs, in the fifties, we were taught to react on cue to sitcom antics. Back then, audiences were live and did not always react based on a comedic writer’s sense of funny. This, for advertisers was problematic. It was therefore not long into television programming that we were introduced to laugh-tracks. They basically told us (and still do) when to, how much to and for how long we should laugh - or even if we should laugh at all.

Candid Camera (born from previous radio antics in 1948) opened the door to today’s concept of reality-TV - i.e. : the “looking into”, the peering into and the eventual ogling of the lives of others. At first, it offered up amusing fare, then dramatic, then the shock of the different. At first, we laughed and even cried “with” those portrayed. Then, slowly, we began to laugh “at” them. And with that, a new entertainment era was initiated. . .

Candid Camera evolved into reality-TV. The cheaper to produce and greater in income aspect of it made it a production goldmine. Even its mandate was a no-brainer : present “realistically created” virtual situations from which an audience can vie to berate the weakest amongst an array of targeted dupes. Nothing more complicated than that since we live in a time where laughing at is more highly rated than laughing with. Actually, our era’s Facebook is possibly the only thing left we have which comes nearest to the original concept of “friendliness and good vibes” à la Candid Camera. But for how long? More and more, the likes of Youtube and other online video venues are emulating reality-TV programming in a race to attract greater eyeball participation.

In essence, whatever the network or site, “deceptive laugh (sneer?) tracks” are unashamedly at play. Today, we simply take in variances on a theme via concocted-for-viewing-pleasure pseudo-realities whose combined intents are the titillation of viewers and the disintegration of the egos of those whose only sins are a need to be noticed and a desperate craving to wallow in their own self-inflicted fifteen minutes of destructive fame.

And So We’ve Changed With The Times?

Curiosity is what elevates our humanity to levels of great creativity. Yet, titillation is also the offspring of curiosity - be it the devil-child of it. Once we looked and even stared - interested and at times in awe of difference. Today, our tendency is to suspect difference if not immediately fear it. “Other” today is something we ogle and leer at more than appreciated or respect. And in our entertainment that means we not only want see into our neighbours’ homes we demand to pry open their locked closet doors. Titillation is a forceful master which craves ever newer and darker “realities” in the side-show freak broadcast episodes in the tent we have been lured into. Where we once joined in to celebrate the incredibleness of difference, today we see it as lesser and risible. Somehow our emotional reactions make “it” less threatening.

And so, from warm and fuzzy puppy dog and bunny cuteness afficionados, we’ve become starers and pointers of fingers whose quest for “humour” is increasingly controlled by programmed sadistic overtones rather than guided by personal empathy.

Has it really gone that far?

Well, we now cyber tune-in to repeatedly watch self-choreographed families in crisis cruelly taunt (bully?) their kids into 3-stooges comedic submission - and this we do without thinking. . . We watch parents, on a quest for viral recognition, video-taping their kids reactions to anaesthetics after a medical appointment - all for the status that millions of “recognition” views afford us. Where once how children said things was amusing, (see :Art Linkletter’s Kids Say The Strangest Things). Now they are lesser apples of our eye - perceived as weakest links in our clan chain - those we can easily punk. . . Funny, eh? Must be. . . We’re watching these “antics” by the multi millions. . .

A relative of the “priming” concept, the repeated intake of aggression towards others as entertainment, gradually decreases our capacity to feel, to empathize, to care, to give a damn. This is not only a growing affliction among participants in such sadistic activities. It equally affects those who consider themselves innocent because all they’re (we’re?) doing is “watching”.

Come-On! It’s just fun!

Shaming, assimilated as entertainment is shaming democratized. And with repetition we formulate both a perception and a precedence : i.e. : shaming becomes “through tacit approval ” OK. And if and when we begin accepting it as a legitimate “fun” or entertainment tool. . . it is not rare to hear excuses akin to : Well. . . (whoever the being shamed are) they probably “must be deserving” of it (whatever it is that they are deserving of. . .) Right? And. . . anyway. . . we’re not the ones “actually” doing the shaming. We’re just ogling and giggling from the sidelines. . . It’s just fun!

At this stage, how far are we from transforming the normalization of psychological deterioration of another’s soul as comedy to a normalization of psychological deterioration as a “serious tool” of control?

Unintended Consequences

There is an additional nefarious side-effect to shaming become common practice and micro–aggressions perceived as more than they are. Both, in their own way, eventually dull the senses in regards to larger than life evils being increasingly perpetrated on individuals and collectives - both within our societies and around the world. As diversionary tactics of the power hungry in our midst, both phenomena are not only considered necessary tools for growth and control - they are deemed crucial. How is this so? It is both lucrative and “power”ful. Billions are spent annually to encourage such behaviour. If profits were not there and power not available, billions would not be spent on advertising, promoting and producing such fare. How so? (1) personal, local, regional, national and international political and commercial stakes are extremely high these days. And (2), hiding what is really going on in the achievement of intended goals (no matter what those goals are - or. . . especially because they are what they are. . . ) becomes part of the don’t get caught “redaction” mentality of our times. And so. . . apparent petty shaming practices are not only entertainment tactics. They are as much brilliant sadistic techniques geared to make us look away from things going on as much as they are tactics to get us to stare at. . . But at who?

The hierarchy of degradation

If Joe Ordinary were shamed by Joe Important, the overall impact of the act would not be stunning enough for the masses which have been led from a world of benign “smiling with” to one of salivating for more. In essence. . . We need “meat”!

For shaming to lure in the crowds, it must point a finger at a deemed to be “important” figure or figures which then becomes “breaking news” of culpability, stupidity, or something else - or not even. But who cares! We’ve been programmed to “share”, “like” and “love”. . . this true - or not, validated - or not, crass, vile - or not content. And that hunger is stoked via a 24 hour a day media which has less and less upon which to validate the existence of its time slots. And so that means repeating “breaking news” (?) for all its worth, for every hour of every day, until we are no longer listening, looking or mesmerized. And so, to “enhance our viewing pleasure”, old fashioned TV land (for the older and less connected) reaches out to the new and improved social media for the younger set(s) who are.

Revisionistic Befuddlements

But in this era of never-ending digital wizardry, the true nature of the indecency of shaming remains befuddling. As stated, shaming is often “first applied” to public figures : Hollywood types, sports “names”, politicians and even news casters. (Who would have thunk!?) Basically, the worthy of being shamed have to have something to lose. First, they must be perceived to be privileged, entitled, well to do, recognized as winners in one forum or another - i.e. : they are those deemed to be more famous, more important - for all intents and purposes. . . “just more” than we are. Secondly, they must have been attractive to many of us - making the attack that much more tantalizing.

Whether they are legitimately, legally or truthfully being called out doesn’t really matter since they are deemed to be both “other” and “above” the rest of us. And in the entertainment arena, this has always been the stock and trade of populist tabloids and now (more and more) of the desperate for content (read survival funds) “legitimate” media.

In essence, what matters in an “accepting of shaming” era is the same thing which has been inferred throughout this essay : that “the” often “born covert” rigid-parameters-finger-of-black-and-white (whether official or subjectively personal) should not be seen to be pointing at “us”. But then, as life has been increasingly geared to “a work is bad fun is good mode” an increasingly regulated and rigid world is not totally about obedience. It does have a compensatory “fun and easy” component. It provides us with an excuse to not have to think. In essence we are increasingly being made to feel less and less obligated to establish whether something said or done is real or not, good or not, correct or not. So what’s to worry about? When someone else decides for us, we don’t have to.

Virtually Going Nuts

Actually, when life “determined for us” is made “easier to take” there is a lot to worry about. At such times, the difference between real and virtual is more “easily” blurred. And in a “no brainer” world, virtual illusions come to more easily and attractively define and re-invent reality than reality can seem to do that for itself. And when a rabidly paced era of change in our perceptions occurs, it does not often leave room for a much required comfortable human adaptation period. And without this. . . we begin to immerse ourselves in an “uncomfortable comfortable place” where we no longer know how to see and feel and act upon the ever changing (anxiety provoking) “what is” in our times.

And with that, ignorance as bliss takes on a life of its own with its nebulous meanings and incomprehensible beliefs. And this, in turn, makes us ever more jittery. And when reality is no longer “tangibly tangible” - and facts seemingly impossible to measure. . . we begin to crave; to want to “create” impossible visions of impossible solutions in our minds. . . such as some kind of life without this uncontrollable or impossible to understand “Nervous Nelly uncertainty” within us.

When we lose our capacity to analyse and determine through our own thoughts and decision-making, processes there is only one outcome : from such psychological turmoil DNA, unattainable goals and uncontrollable consequences are born.

Pandorra’s Box of “Happiness”

As much as contemporary life craves and in many circumstances achieves a level of great comfort for many, an equal and opposite level of discomfort remains in other segments of a population. And a concomitant anxiety invades us because of the tensions created. . .

Though rarely recognized by those in a “consumer generated comfort zone” this asymmetry is what exacerbates the inevitable volatility which eventually rises to an explosive level. Oddly, the reality within such a paradigm can always be more accurately associated with the not haves than with those whose lives more and more embrace a world constructed of “virtual” happiness.

In a realm where lattés have more alluring formulae than the latest national and international issues and crises, we tend to seek out more comfortable, more malleable visions of the “happy” we are forever being sold - since the equal and opposite side-effects of our happiness dose are often more devastating than the pill is sedative.

Hurt, worry, anxiety, exhaustion, stress, failure and “things being difficult” just cannot be part of our “new and improved” and “want it to be fun and easy” lives. And so, being repeatedly subliminally encouraged to “just let go a bit; just let be a little” just might be the antidote. . . Authorities, or so it is oft implied, are the experts in. . . well, authority. We on the other hand have other, better things to reach for : i.e. : a good life, a life without stress. . .

Whatever!

In a revisionist world wishing itself utopian there is but one truth. . . “Truth” no longer needs to be truth. Through new and improved principles of revised democratic principles, truth can now be (and has already begun to be) “my truth”, “your truth”, “our truths”, “their truths”. Words, once associated with deeper (and more factual) meanings, can now take on more flexible (?) lowest common denominator (less demanding?) determinants. For all intents and purposes, homogenization can now be globalization (and vice versa), licence can be the same as “freedom” - if not “rights”. With perfection now a synonym of excellence, self esteem can pretend at self-respect. And with the blessings of time and a gradual numbing of our senses, any or all of this can “sedatively” become well. . . (swoon). . . OK.

All in all, it is increasingly possible to infer that lowering our standards is not really lowering them. In a new world order of words, this could be seen to be “democratizing” that which once was (is?) considered elitist. In essence, when we no longer recognize the importance of our role and the efforts required to maintain a secure environment, we can begin to seek out and accept that which demands less of us : (i.e. : by simplifying everything to the lowest common denominator - by rendering more palatable whatever is seen to be too difficult to comprehend or take in as (ugh!) logical, we can simply wish it away - say that all of that no longer applies to anything. In a world determined to not only see itself but actually be a new and improved “happy”, it becomes possible, if not (again) logical, to no longer abide any other consideration than a “without consequence” world view.

In essence, objective learning, thought-out or logical considerations are more and more seen to be aggressively anti-feelings (as micro-aggressions are wont to be?). And as self esteem parades itself as the new and improved self respect, why shouldn’t feelings become the new thinking? Hasn’t it become common (normal?) Even now? In the past decade, how many times have reporters asked interviewed citizens what they think? And compare that to how many times reporters routinely ask “how does that make you feel?”

And So Fires Become Fading Embers

If normal is what there is the most of on a euphemistic Bell Curve, sanity can no longer be deemed “normal”. In essence, our advertised, promoted and sold concepts of an inconsequential happy life are already in play. For all intents and purposes, we’ve already begun manipulating the what is of real mental health “norms”. And oddly, the powers that be are not determining that we are more and more healthy but rather strongly implying that we are more and more afflicted by the world around us. . . Normal (what there is the most of) is gradually becoming a garden of sanctioned if not purposefully induced disturbances; abnormalities where a “hyper-fertilization” of our “weeds” may soon be the prescription of choice as a collective “maintenance” antidote. In essence, our quest for an unencumbered happy has become (or has been programmed to become) our downfall rather than our “uplift”.

Sound crazy?

Following such aggressive comments re our collective sanity, due diligence is required. I recommend reading through (or as much as we can stomach) the contents of the latest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of mental disorders put out by the American Psychiatric Association in 2013. This revision (DSM-5) includes an important increase in the numbers of a specific (read : new and exploitable) demographic : i.e. : toddlers. As newly initiated full-fledged members of our dystopian collective, they too have now been listed, along with their newly codified (“medicable”) abnormalities - just like the rest of us.

As Dr Allen Frances, Professor Emeritus at Duke University and former Chair of the task force that developed the earlier DSM-4, writes: ‘If people make the mistake of following DSM-5, pretty soon all of us may be labelled mad.’ ( This is a quote from a Psychology Today article entitled : DSM-5: A Disaster for Children - "A legal document facilitating the medication of millions") written by Dr. Helene Guldberg Ph.D. and dated Jun 14, 2013).

Basically, the new DSM says little about how crazy the world is (you can’t really medicate a thing called “society”, now can you?) - So. . . I guess. . . crazy is “us”, crazy are our kids. . . We’re the nuts without bolts - and the “individual upsets” in need of sedating.

So where is all of this heading? You thought we were talking micro-aggression and shaming dynamics? What does all of this have to do with these? Well. . .

The normalization of abnormal

Integrating, if not inculcating a younger and younger cohort into a cult of victimhood, is simply a rendering flexible of an element within an erroneous standard - one which considers individual variants (behavioural grey zones) as anomalies rather than as natural “normal” or obvious variances of sanity. And so, what our world is doing to us is rendering enough of us malleable enough to move things forward in directions in which fewer of us will object to being led.

So?

Well, we’ve been dealt a bad hand through the introduction of micro-aggressions as a "weakener" and the imposition of shaming as a "submission-stabilizer" in a realm from which it is literally impossible to extricate ourselves - or those being shamed. And thus, the "abnormalization" of the normal begins to take its toll.

So Mental Health Issues Are A Hoax?

Though my focus is on contemporary communal life as eerily defective, be assured that I am not denying, nor belittling, REAL mental health issues in need of caring and professional concern. On the contrary. I am highlighting the fact that real individual mental health issues are being sabotaged, swamped - drowned in a sea of “homogenization of self” - via the self-aggrandizing of a whole through a belittlement of the fewer (different). Through a new and improved process, an environment of all-inclusiveness is being created - one which promotes a concept of “genericism” of anything and everything as the one and only to be "dealt with (sold to) reality" - negating all else as unacceptably anomalous.

My concern is that we are in such a hurry to equalize (capitalize on?) everything and everyone that we are failing (refusing?) to see the reality of what “actually” is. Treating serious mental health issues as “just as” or “nothing more than” universal problems is (pun intended) insane. By appropriating illness as a norm we are pooh-poohing real pain and suffering. By rendering generic, i.e. : equating emotional pain caused by (let us say) toenail fungus with that of a traumatic dissonance is both incomprehensible to the specific individuals concerned and unwelcome at worst in a world which is fast becoming unable to “see” or “feel” : i.e. : empathize with real suffering.

The problem in our societies is not that too many are taking too many pills for too few real problems (though this is a fact borne out by studies) but that the distributors of those “feel better potions” have rendered generic everything - and through this ploy have caused us all to literally consider and define real pain as nothing more than just another’s solvable (read : sedatable) “ache”.

Am I luring you away from the main topic? No. I wouldn’t do that. But read on. . . The foundation for a change in societal structure in our world is sometimes, if not all the time, more complex than the resulting rot created to lead us astray.

Depression and DEPRESSION

In light of the above description of the homogenization of us all as a purported greater inclusevity, let’s take a closer look at the screwed-up perceptions and manipulations of truth and fact which cause more harm than good to those truly afflicted. Let’s for a minute focus on the contemporary parameters of depression - both, as “we play with it” and as it factually is.

Within our first world environments - real depression has taken on “depression-light” standards. The word “depression” itself is now commonly used by all and sundry as an “in” definer of fluctuating societally defined moods rather than as a descriptor of a serious enigmatic problem riddled with complex overtones.

So true is this assumption, that the “reality of” depression has had to take on descriptives in order to give it back its initial credibility as a serious illness. Today, we (are forced to?) add “chronic”, “serious”, “manic” or “major” (amongst other terms) to mean DEPRESSION. And, as expected, “real” sufferers of “real” depression get seriously lost in a maze of “our” appropriated and “normalized” cosmetic afflictions.

Rather than be in our minds what it truly is: i.e. : a very difficult and REAL (not virtual) mental health issue, depression has become democratized. . . i.e. : It’s OK to admit to it as long as it is “all-inclusive” of “us” who are. . . “well, depressed, but not really”. . . feeling just kinda “whiny” or “down” today. . . y’a know?

References in relation to the above :

In a National Post article by Sharon Kirkey dated May 13, 2015 it is stated that :

in Canada, 47.1 million prescriptions for antidepressants alone were filled by retail drugstores in 2014, representing sales totalling $1.91-billion” (IMS Brogan).

Psychiatry professor Dr. Joel Paris of Montreal says that “11 per cent of the population is on antidepressants, but ‘‘the prevalence of severe mood disorders is nowhere near that high …. It’s the old thing of, if you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail.” The problem, he says, isn’t that the drugs are not effective for very sick people — “they clearly are” — but rather that they are over-prescribed for people whose problems “are closer to normal.”

In a 2012 Psychology Today article entitled : Is Our Society Manufacturing Depressed People? - Are people dysfunctional or is it the society in which they live? Mel Schwartz, L.C.S.W. a Connecticut psychotherapist states the following :

(personally selected indices) :

 Our pursuit of happiness and well-being (has) become terribly misdirected. . .

 The cultural paradigm . . . leaves us disconnected, disenchanted and isolated. . . we tend to seek material acquisitions. . .

 Our disconnection and folly pursuits of happiness may have much to do with this.

 Is Our Society Manufacturing Depressed People?

 the indiscriminate manner in which diagnoses are meted out to people without proper discrimination is grossly absurd.

 many depressed people are merely mirroring the affects of a somewhat incongruous, if not insane way of living, fostered by the society itself.

 A society that produces such staggering rates of depression is dysfunctional. Our culture has created this epidemic.

The Kiss Of Death Of Micro-aggression Obsessions

And so, because of this need to live a perfection defined existence (rather than a healthy modulated life) we have given ourselves the go-ahead to “cleanse our environment” of that which does not contribute to the “happy” in our happy. And this we do by tensing up at every turn, taking in as soul assaults anything we “feel” is an attack on our freedoms, integrity and illusions. And so, we compensate for these “unwarranted” assaults by (1) roaring to the high heavens the presence of these self-inflicted “booboos” and/or (2) sedating our resulting upsets.

With feelings hurt at the slightest comments or actions, differences of opinion become micro-aggressions. Not being warned first hand of such “devastations being forthcoming” is even now cause for lawsuits. In essence we are normalizing abnormality. We are rendering virtual real by abandoning our capacities for responsibility, individual analysis; dealing with and decision-making. We are submitting ourselves, if not upcoming generations, to a life of victim-based subjugation - to a life ripe for the picking by those who would rather rule than lead us.

Submission Is A Choice Made - A Choice Passed Down. . .

Apparently, even on fact based considerations and summations, emotional reactions have become more important than taking action. Feeling hurt is increasingly more important than being strong, brave and daring.

So. . . does that mean we are also raising our children to be as weak and frightened as we seem to be? Are thinking, being forward looking, being creative or spiritually and mentally sure-footed now flaws to not be encouraged? Are we so afraid our children will be hurt that making sure they are awarded for simply “being alive and safe” has become a valid parental procedure? Have we so little confidence in our children that we can’t see them (us?) as other than frail and incapable? Why are protection, safety, childhood trauma, “being” rather than “doing”, self-esteem, failure, fear, anxiety and hovering more common in child-rearing discussions than are encouragement, daring, trying, curiosity, “freedom”, creativity, self-expression and bold determination? Is being the best they (we?) can be now a frightening concept? How has giving our children opportunities to strive “despite” succumbed to our walling them up in (our?) induced fears?

Safety vs Security

Oddly, our quest for an unreal and “overly safe” environment of numbed undulating contentment not only contaminates our true freedoms, it corrupts them. By associating only happy with being alive and well, we determine all other healthy human emotions as being lesser. Once rocked in the cradle of safety (an unnatural feeling we are given that nothing can “ever” harm us) we become imprisoned by a contemporary need to integrate with victimhood, not only as a component of modernity - but as our only psychological tool of defence against pain and sorrow (whether real or virtual).

And why not?. . . Aren’t we all being advertised to (programmed into believing) that anything uncomfortable can “easily” be medicated away - bringing on our precious unfettered “happy” whenever we choose to have it back. In essence, our status as a wanna-be contented victim has even come to replace the“gift of self” as a true measure of heroism. And that pretty well defines a personal gradual loss; a conscious belittling of a 21st century “me” as worthy.

Things Happy, Easy And Fun. . . Not!

Today’s driving force forever molded by “become rich” motivational speakers has rendered us the opposite of their promises - as these eerily become our greatest weaknesses. The happy they inflicted upon us (for a price) as nirvana (a state promising a total happy) is nothing more than a smiley faced numbness masquerading as euphoria, masquerading itself as inner peace, masquerading as the feverishly sought after serenity that can never be, masquerading as the antidote - the virtual “not having to deal with” solution to the realities of reality which, ironically, never go away and, for all intents and purposes, are actually the one source of our survival as a species. . .

In essence, we are increasingly failing to see that our dependence on“wanting” the next new “thing” forever promoted to us as “needs” and the ever newer concomitantly promoted “life-remedies” revisioning the innards of who and what we are. . . are the reasons we are miserable, not our having problems to deal with. Dependence maintains us in, or returns us to, a state of neediness rather than “free range” daring; thus diminishing us as unique beings. It makes us sadder than we would be with “real” problems - more fearful of what is and increasingly anxious about what might be.

All of these are signs of an ever encroaching negative environment’s imposed effects - much like a cancerous cell attacking healthy “others”. And as more and more societal cells submit to the powers of a nebulous yet aggressive cancer, our feared tomorrows take over where our sought after “happies” fail. And this gives credence to the notion that to survive, every sadistic cell needs yet another masochist one to shame and subdue.

To Suffer Or Not To Suffer, That Is The Question

And so the difference between a micro-aggression mentality and one which so easily succumbs to shaming is simply a matter of time and infection. Victims of micro-aggression are self destructive - increasingly weakening themselves by their own hand; accepting to be vulnerable for an eventual mind and soul take-over.

Basically, an environment which treats life as an offshoot of, or mimics reality-TV, relinquishes its capacity to deal with attacks on the individual and collective integrities of that society. And so, false accusations, tormenting (real emotional abuse) and/or shaming are the first significant signs that things in our world are not only not well. . . but signs of other loose canon devastations to come.

In essence, such evidence of a terrorism from within reality should worry us more than any virtul foreign invasions we can make up. An invader never attacks until and unless the target is as weak as it is required to be to ascertain success.

Shaming’s Last Stand

And to that point, at its most magnificent horribleness the act of shaming (whether expressed by Joe Neighbour or an aspiring control freak) is a sociopaths, a fascist’s, a narcissist’s, an autocrat’s favourite tool. Why? Once a collective has been molded into an easily propagandized mass, that submissiveness “truly” and “factually” renders it (along with each of its individual elements) more easily (and truly) victimized.

But in reviewing history, let’s not kid ourselves. . . Though radically different in its latest reincarnation, shaming is no more a toy tactic now than it was in the past. At its most real and dangerous rigidity, it remains arrogant at best and evil at worst. Still black and white in construct, it leaves no room for grey areas. No individuality, no creativity, no thinking, no differences, no nuances, no “individual selves” are allowed. And at its most tangibly ensconced, it is exceedingly difficult to be got rid of or its long term consequences eradicated from our souls and the environments in which these souls reside.

For all intents and purposes, the ultimate goal of individual and collective shaming is to cause communal PTSD. And whether we like it or not, its subversive persistence and our bland reactions to it increasingly make it feel as if it has been legitimately invited for Thanksgiving dinner. . .

In The End. . .

If the protection of an envied and sought after way of life (democracy) is what we intend maintaining far into the next century, we cannot foist full responsibility for its ongoing health on our soldiers. Their role is to stand guard at the wall and, when necessary, defend that society - a society they believe is worthy of being protected. No. The true custodians of a sane and secure nation are “us”. Our job is to make our realm worthy of the protection offered us by our soldiers. . . Democracies all have their best before date and without our participation as full fledged "full minded and souled" members. . . it dies.

All societal structures, including democracies, have their best before date and without our participation as full fledged "full minded and souled" members. . . ours, our democracies, die. Without our individual strengths and determinations - our capacities to analyse, our abilities to consider, determine and THINK being at their peak or optimum strengths, the health of our systems can do no less than gradually weaken and erode - and. . . be less worthy of being saved.

All in all, the disintegration of what is deemed safe and secure has happened before on our little round planet. And the same consequences due to lethargy, complacency and navel-gazing is always waiting to happen again - lest we forget. And sadly we always do.

And so. . . if. . . or when chaos ever happens again. . . Then maybe, we should legitimately feel ashamed.