

Toxic People: The Bad Hair Day

Most people are good. Uncle Adrian would say that, if you give them a chance in life, they will *show* you their goodness. However, he would also tell you that “every now and then you will meet a mean, nasty, ugly person. Of course, the problem with mean, nasty, ugly people is that they move around a lot, and you keep bumping into them!”

I call them “toxic people.” They poison life for everyone they meet. *You* know who they are. They are the people who make you miserable, and you keep bumping into them!

Lots of times these people appear to be congenial and sincerely interested in you, but when you scratch the surface, you will discover that they are toxic. That is why Uncle Adrian would always tell the story about the bad hair day...

A woman was at her hairdresser's getting her hair styled for a trip to Rome that she would soon be making with her husband. When she mentioned her plans her hairdresser asked, "Rome? Why would anyone want to go there? It is crowded and dirty. You are crazy to go to Rome! How on earth are you getting there?"

"We are flying," the woman replied. "We got a great rate!"

"What airline?" asked the hairdresser. "That is a terrible choice," he said when she told him. "Their planes are old, their flight attendants are ugly, and they are always late. So where are you staying in Rome?"

"We will be at this exclusive little place right on the Tiber River. It is called Teste."

"Do not go any further. I *know* the Teste! Everybody thinks it is going to be something special and exclusive, but it is really a dump -- the worst hotel in the city! The rooms are small, the staff is surly, and the

place is overpriced. So what are you planning to do once you get there?"

"We are going to the Vatican, and we are really hoping to see the Pope."

"That is rich!" laughed the hairdresser. "You and a million other people will be trying to see him. He will look the size of an ant! So good luck on this lousy trip of yours, you are going to need it!"

A month later when the woman came in again to have her hair done, the hairdresser asked about her trip to Rome.

"It was wonderful!" exclaimed the woman. "Not only was our flight on time it was in one of their brand new planes! Because the main cabin had been overbooked, we were bumped up to First Class. The food and wine were spectacular, and I had a handsome twenty-eight-year-old steward who waited on me hand and foot."

"The hotel was perfect! The owners had just finished a five-million-dollar remodeling job, and now the place is a jewel -- the finest establishment in the city. The hotel was overbooked too, so the Manager apologized and gave us the owner's suite at no extra charge!"

"Well," muttered the hairdresser, "that is all well and good, but I know you did not get to see the Pope."

"Actually, we were quite lucky about that too! As we were touring the Vatican, a Swiss Guard tapped me on the shoulder. When I turned around, he explained that since the Pope likes to meet some of his visitors personally, my husband and I were being invited to step into his office for a private audience. Sure enough, in walked the Pope five minutes later and shook my hand! Even though I was in a state of utter shock, I knelt down before him, and he spoke a few words to me."

"Oh, really? What did he say?"

He said, "Where did you get that awful hairdo?"

If you read Scott Peck's book People of the Lie, you will learn that toxic people are just hiding from themselves. Since they are not happy in their own lives, they are always trying to stop everybody *e/se* from being happy. Their only joy comes from ruining someone else's chances for happiness.

You should remove toxic people from your life. Toxic people are like poison in your food. In any contest between food and poison, the poison will always win. Make a list of the people in your life who are toxic for you. Include everybody who makes you feel sad or confused when you are around them. Now work to remove these people from your life.

Then create a second list. This is a list of all the people who add value to your life *just by being in it*. Include everyone who has helped you achieve your goals. Work hard to keep the good people in your life. Life is too short to be spent around people who do not enhance the adventure for you.

Besides, you can always get somebody else to do your hair!