

Work in Progress

Published monthly by Michele Crawford
Work in Progress is an electronic newsletter intended to assist individuals seeking optimum well-being.

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Work in Progress February 2009 Volume IV Issue II  
Feature Article: To swear or not to swear: Why would that be a question?

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1) Note from Michele

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Dear Reader

When I was six years old, a Sunday school teacher told our class the difference between swearing and cussing. Swearing is blasphemous: it is using religion-based terms in a sacrilegious way. Cussing includes all other profane language. This article takes account of both modes.

Swearing, like smoking, is a rite of passage: an unsubtle technique to demonstrate you are growing up. It makes a statement of breaking with the establishment; of flouting the older generation's perceived rules. It is the middle finger to conformity.

At the same time, swearing helps you to fold into your cohort group for a sense of belonging. It is part of a phenomenon called group-think.

Of course the problem is that shocking words used by teenagers in the sixties are considered tame by the next generation. That precedent has continued until the present with increasingly acute fallout. Words coming out of the mouths of individual's to-day would melt the paint off the walls of a typical family room back then.

In my Grade 12 English class, we read a short story that included one four letter swear word. Apparently a nun was required to read the passage out loud in her class and registered a complaint in protest. The controversy almost led to deleting the entire book from the curriculum. Given our current social norms for speech, can you believe that happened not so long ago?

The constant use of profanity becomes a habit: searing programmed neuro-pathways in your brain and reinforcing the auto-pilot of swearing. It comes from your primitive brain. It becomes mindless.

What all this translates to is demonstrating uniqueness now would mean not swearing. Breaking away from the herd and being strong in your independence is simply a profanity-free vocabulary.

Imagine someone reading this article, finding some merit in it and posting it on the bulletin board of his or her worksite. Others read it. It is easy to visualize many, maybe most or even all, dismissing it with a few choice words of vulgarity. Nothing changes.

What does it mean to seriously question an accepted practice of your culture? To sit still for a moment and genuinely ask "Is this behaviour actually working for me?" "Is this word choice serving my best interests?" "Is this a healthy option for me?" "Am I contributing or contaminating the universe?"

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2) Feature Article: To swear or not to swear: Why would that be a question?

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Poison out – poison in

Studies in the eighties in New York City linked graffiti to property crime as well as personal assaults and a climate supportive of violence and addictions. The city immediately made it a priority to enforce a policy of discouraging and erasing all graffiti. Crime immediately plummeted. The atmosphere changed.

Graffiti is similar to swearing for many reasons. They both show a lack of respect for self and others, they are acts of aggression, they portray negativity and they both convey grave energy.

Swearing permeates our culture. Perhaps this is because you have not considered the repercussions.

Many studies over recent years have documented that whenever you swear there is a firestorm of nasty stress hormones and neuro-peptides that explode in your emotional brain. They then travel through your body and leave a toxic trail of damage!

Quantum physics has established your Qi (which is the electric-magnetic system that courses through your entire body), vibrates at a lower frequency when you speak negative words; higher when you speak neutral and positive words. It's uncomplicated to envisage what profane words decree to your energy systems.

While intellects also swear, this habit denotes a sad lack of vocabulary skills. You lose your ability to voice creative descriptive language when you reduce your vocabulary to primitive expletives.

Some people who habitually swear have the ability to monitor when or where you swear; avoiding bad language in front of children, on the job, on public transportation, in classrooms, on TV and so on. Many people do not. That's unfortunate for the rest of us.

Swearing can be the need to let people know you are angry or alienated or hostile in an indirect way; usually because you cannot articulate your emotions or risk being different from your peers. People who cannot verbally express a range of emotions fall back on swearing to convey anger at an immature level.

Swearing actually camouflages your authentic identity and vulnerability by presenting false bravado. It is the teenage boy's burning rubber in a screeching of tires (they used to do that a lot more often years ago); thinking it looks cool. But to more experienced onlookers, it's revealing the opposite: insecurity and childishness.

If you are known as someone who avoids swear words and lets slip a particularly powerful cuss word when you are really ticked, people will notice and pay close attention. If you swear all the time, your range of upsetness levels out into one bland endless mess. It's boring.

Swearing clearly indicates disrespect for spirituality, humanity and sexuality. Swearing binds spirituality, humanity and sexuality to contempt and scorn. Do Buddhist monks swear? Do spiritual leaders?

Is it realistic to not swear at all? Probably not. That wouldn't be the goal. The objective of this article is to encourage introspection of a mindless habit that hurts more than cures, that reduces more than maximizes, that demeans more than honours, that represses more than empowers.

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3) About Michele  
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Michele Crawford is a therapist who assists individuals who are struggling with trauma, anxiety or depression. Her passion for her work remains embedded in being able to connect with you in your suffering, helping you find real solutions no matter how complex the issue may be.

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4) Counselling Services  
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Are you prepared to live with more happiness, optimism, confidence, self-worth and hope? If your answer is "yes," then your next step is to contact me for a free 20-minute phone consultation. We can then discuss how I might best help you resolve your problems of Trauma, Depression and Anxiety.

The benefits of counselling with Michele include: significantly reduced stress levels, an optimistic outlook in life, increased confidence and hope.

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I want to reassure you that your e-mail address will never be shared or sold to anyone else.

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**Pass It Along**

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