

Oh, Stop Your Complaining! (i-mail article)

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By Doug C. Grant

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"So...what's it going to be today? Complain or contribute?"

I had not expected an i-mail from Other-Self so early in the morning. I was barely into my second cup of coffee.

But then I have no control over nagging i-mails. They arrive internally at unexpected times and demand an immediate answer. Unlike standard e-mails, they have no delete button and sit like a flashing banner ad on the monitor of my mind.

Warily I replied, "Couldn't you have at least waited until my brain booted up?"

"Nonsense. Now's the time to set your day. So I repeat. What's it going to be? Complain or contribute?"

"I don't have the slightest idea what you're talking about. I've got eight phone calls to make...an appointment with that idiot, Bernard...letters to write...forms to fill out...and a thousand other things to do. It's going to be another of those stupid crazy days. So I'm in no mood to answer your dumb questions."

"I see. Already it's a complaint day. Too bad. You've been having so many of them lately."

"You'd have complaint days too if you had to put up with my nowhere job."

"Nowhere jobs are generally nowhere because people don't look beyond nowhere to anywhere. Which brings me to a question. What do you really want to have happening in your life?"

I hate these kind of questions. "If this is going to be one of those what ever happened to your dream' lecture, stuff it. I'm too busy for a trip down fantasy lane."

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"Fantasy? Is that what you call your future? No wonder you have so many complaint days."

"Yeah...well dreams don't put food on the table. And I happen to know that if you don't get your daily fill you growl a lot."

"Please hear me. I'm not suggesting you cop out of the employment line. But making a few contributions toward your dreams couldn't hurt."

"Oh, that's really wonderful. I'm working my kazoo off to keep body and soul together. I come home at night with hardly enough energy to pick up the television remote and you want me to go out and be a world beater. Talk about fantasy, guy. You've got a first-class ticket on the trip."

"I don't recall mentioning anything about being a world beater. Just a contributor. After all, you did have dreams once."

"Sure I did. But I discovered I couldn't afford them."

"Too bad. Because you'll never be a contributor without them."

"Hey, listen! I'm a contributor. I go to work everyday. I go to church on Sunday. I pay my taxes."

"That's not contributing. That's coasting. Contributing is when you start giving a little more of yourself than duty demands."

"Like what, for instance?"

"Like for instance your talents, abilities and experiences. Where do you think dreams come from? When you're good at something you want to contribute that good. This becomes a dream. Deny the dream and you slouch into a bundle of complaints."

"That sounds very high-minded. It also sounds irresponsible. I may not like my life right now but it's the only one I've got. So unless I win the lottery, I just have to keep prodding the same road."

"Actually...you don't. You can change your life by simply making every day a contributing day. Do something...maybe several somethings...that make a contribution toward one or more dreams. These somethings don't have to be big or time consuming. But they will tend to change your focus from complaining to contributing.

"And I suppose you think the payoff will be a lot of big time answers to all my dreams."

"Maybe. Maybe not. It doesn't matter. The real payoff is feeling better about yourself and your future."

"And what will your contribution be?"

"Why I thought you had that figured out. I'm your friendly butt kicker."

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Doug C. Grant retired from a successful career as a nationally recognized business writer & marketing consultant. He now helps members of the Over-50', crowd live healthier, happier and more productive

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Addiction to Complaining

By Margaret Paul, Ph.D.

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Addiction to Complaining

By Margaret Paul, Ph.D.

Complaining is a way of life for some people. It was certainly a way of life for my mother. I don't remember a day going by without her complaining, endlessly. I don't think I ever heard a word of gratitude out of my mother's mouth. No matter how good things were, she would manage to find something wrong. No matter how perfect I was - and God knows I tried to be perfect! - she always found something wrong with me, as well as with my father.

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Over the years of counseling others, I've noticed that some people start every session with a complaint. They can't seem to help it. Like my mother, they are addicted to complaining.

Why do people complain? What is it they want or hope for when they complain?

People who complain are generally people who have not done the emotional and spiritual work of developing a loving, compassionate inner adult self. They are operating as a wounded child in need of love, attention and compassion. Because they have not learned to give themselves the attention and compassion they need, they seek to get these needs met by others. Complaining is a way they have learned to attempt to get this. They use complaining as a form of control, hoping to guilt others into giving them the attention, caring and compassion they seek.

Complaining is a "pull" on other people. Energetically, complainers are pulling on others for caring and understanding because they have emotionally abandoned themselves. They are like demanding little children. The problem is that most people dislike being pulled on and demanded of. Most people don't want emotional responsibility for another person and will withdraw in the face of another's complaints.

This is what my father did. He withdrew, shut down, was emotionally unavailable to my mother as a

way to protect himself from being controlled by her complaints. Of course, he didn't just do this in response to my mother. He had learned to withdraw as a child in response to his own mother's complaints and criticism. He entered the marriage ready to withdraw in the face of my mother's pull, while she entered the marriage ready to make my father emotionally responsible for her. A perfect match!

My father's withdrawal, of course, only served to exacerbate my mother's complaining, and she constantly complained about my father's lack of caring about her. Likewise, my mother's complaining served to exacerbate my father's already withdrawn way of being. This vicious circle started early and continued unabated for the 60 years of their marriage, until my mother died.

While my parents loved each other, their ability to express their love got buried beneath the dysfunctional system they created. Unfortunately, this is all too common in relationships. One person pulling - with complaints, anger, judgment, and other forms of control - and the other withdrawing, is the most common relationship system I work with.

A person addicted to complaining will not be able to stop complaining until he or she does the inner work of developing an adult part of themselves capable of giving themselves the love, caring, understanding and compassion they need. As long as they believe that it is another's responsibility to be the adult for them and fill them with love, they will not take on this responsibility for themselves.

Our inner child - the feeling part of us - needs attention, approval, caring. If we don't learn to give this to ourselves, then this wounded child part of ourselves will either seek to get it from others, or learn to numb out with substance and process addictions - food, alcohol, drugs, TV, work, gambling, and so on. If, as a child, a person saw others get attention through complaining - as my mother did with my grandmother - and if complaining worked for the child to get what he or she wanted, then it can

become an addiction. Like all addictions, it may work for the moment, but it will never fill the deep inner need for love. Only we can fill this need for ourselves, by opening our hearts to the Source of love. Only we can do the inner work of developing a loving adult capable of opening to the love of Spirit and bringing that love to the child within. People stop complaining when they learn to fill themselves with love.

Margaret Paul, Ph.D. is the best-selling author and co-author of eight books, including "Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By You?" and "Healing Your Aloneness." She is the co-creator of the powerful Inner Bonding healing process. Learn Inner Bonding now! Visit her web site for a FREE Inner Bonding course: <http://www.innerbonding.com> or <mailto:margaret@innerbonding.com>. Phone Sessions Available.



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