



The Fine Line Between People Respecting and People Pleasing

During a trip to the mall a few years ago I was looking for a parking space and spotted someone getting into her car. I pulled behind her and flipped on my blinker. Instead of backing out, she began adjusting her seat, played with the stereo, put on some lipstick and even made a cell phone call. I probably waited a full five minutes before giving up. I huffed and puffed my way to another space, fuming at her lack of consideration. How could someone keep me waiting like that? Whenever people were waiting for my space, I'd always pull out ASAP. How rude she was!

But there was something wrong with my parking lot habits, too. When I rushed to free up my space for others, I would often drive off without putting on sunglasses or fastening my seatbelt. My shopping bags were strewn about the car and there'd be a sense of disorganization. I was very flustered, all to make room for the other car. A minute or two to get myself together might have been nice to make sure I was safe, comfortable and prepared to drive. Instead I worried about the other driver; what they wanted was more important than what I needed.

It's easy to neglect oneself to please others. We think that if we attend to our own needs first, we're being disrespectful. So we become "people pleasers." We live to accommodate others, even at our own expense. We keep our feelings to ourselves for fear of hurting someone. We apologize when we've done nothing wrong. We constantly offer to do more than our share of the work. And we justify this behavior by calling it "kindness."

It's OK to put others first sometimes, but that doesn't mean you always have to come in last. We're taught that it's good to be selfless. But if we do it too much, we wind up with *less self*.

It's critical that we find balance. We need to show respect to others without allowing them to walk all over us. It's not reasonable to spend ten minutes fooling around in the car when you know someone is waiting. It is reasonable to take a few minutes (or let the person waiting know you need more time) and expect the other driver to be patient.

Being rude to ourselves is just as bad as being rude to others. We are all equally entitled to live comfortably and safely. Be mindful of your own sacrifices. Show respect to others, but make sure you're getting respect too -- especially from yourself.

Motivational speaker Scott Greenberg gives live presentations and workshops all over America. For more information on his programs or leadership books, call 1-800-450-0432 or visit www.scottgreenberg.com.