

The “G” Word...

by: Gene Simmons OK – so there are lots of “G” words, however for today we’ll focus on one particular word that has created (I would have used the word “wreaked”, but I personally think it’s a silly word that always seems to have an umbilical connection to the word “havoc”) a bunch of havoc and confusion in our lives – and has been responsible for severely damping our ability to really enjoy life. The word? GUILT! Here’s Gene’s definition...Guilt: Our personal ability to feel badly about something that did or did not happen – and to punish ourselves accordingly for the dastardly deed(s). We are cads, inconsiderate slobs, unthinking bastards, inattentive morons, uncaring imbeciles to be forever damned to a self-imposed sentence of remorse and mental anguish! If that won’t take the fun out of a hog calling contest, I don’t know what will. So where’s all this guilt coming from? Maybe Mom? She’s always been an expert at laying the guilt trip on us. How about our spouse or significant other? Oh man, forget one little ol’ anniversary and we’re toast forever. Maybe from our children? “We never played catch in the back yard and that’s why I took drugs and went to prison!” “You always liked Petey best!” “You kicked me out of the house when I was only 37 and because of that, I can never buy a new car!” Or maybe we managed to do something really stupid that got ourselves – and other people in a heap of trouble. What’s the common thread in all of these situations – and in every other guilt-related event that we could ever think of? These incidents all happened in the past! OK – maybe that’s not much of a revelation, but it’s the primary factor in our feelings (anguish, remorse, etc.) that we keep ignoring. The past is gone, done, history, bye-bye, hasta luego, and kaput! Unfortunately, we have a tendency to exert entirely too much effort dragging an event from the past back into our wee little brains where we can examine it under a microscope to reinforce once again, how absolutely dumb and unthoughtful we’ve been. Sometimes we’ll even go to the trouble to contemplate a future situation and decide a course of action based on how guilty we may or may not feel depending on our actions. Eeeeeewww! From here, it looks like we need to take care of a couple of things. First, we need to get rid of all the guilt garbage that’s piled up in our heads. And second, we need to keep from throwing any more garbage on the pile. Hmmm, only two things. We can handle that. I’m pretty sure that at this point, we all honestly know where our guilt is coming from. Yep – from right inside our devious little minds. It’s all a personal response to a given situation. A response that depends almost entirely on our past experiences – our mental/emotional programming. So let’s take a look at our guilt generator to see if there are at least a couple of switches we can flip. First – the past. We can’t change it so we’ll just have to deal with it – either by taking action to rectify a situation (if appropriate) or by changing the way we’re thinking about it. Sometimes, we really do need to do something. If we’ve called our best friend a butt-head and are now feeling guilty about it, we probably need to re-establish contact and make our apologies. What he or she then does with that apology is up to him/her but at least we will have made a good effort to do the right thing. If our past actions have caused major, major problems for someone, we may need to put extra, extra effort into our attempts to rectify the situation. The main thing here is doing something to make things better. One word (OK – more than one) of caution. We probably shouldn’t be doing “things” to make amends for our perceived transgressions strictly in an attempt to make others think better of us. It ain’t gonna work. Even though we may desperately want other people to have a good opinion of us, what they think is completely beyond our control. Yes, we can influence the opinions of others, but we can never control it. And – it really is a waste of effort and emotion to even try. Too often, I think we may work for these approvals to try to reinforce or even build up our own feelings of self-worth. Pats on the back are nice and approval is good, however they are meaningful only when they are given spontaneously. Picture yourself trying really hard and doing everything you can possibly think of to snag some praise from a close friend. Picture yourself not getting one smidgeon of acclaim. Picture yourself getting royally ticked off at the stupidity of your friend. It can be a vicious, demoralizing cycle. Doing “things” to rectify misunderstandings or hardships we may have imposed upon someone is logical and will likely be beneficial to everyone – ourselves included. And, once we’ve done what we think we need to do, we need to let it go! We have done all that we can do and no matter what the outcome is, it’s over. Let’s get on with life. If we’re feeling guilty about something that happened that we have no way of ever doing anything to repair the situation, all we can do is let it go. Remember, the past is the past – and it’s gone forever. All we can do is admit that we screwed up (if we really did), learn whatever it is we need to learn from our mistake and press on. We’ll just try to do better from now on. Maybe we’ve already been doing better. Looks like good progress to me! Now the future. Guilt very often, is the result of our granting others permission to control our thoughts, feelings and perhaps even our actions. No one can control us in any way without our consent. Folks, we have enough trouble controlling our own thoughts and emotions. It just doesn’t make sense to grant anyone else the privilege of doing that. Flip the guilt consent switch to the off position. If this is a drastic change from your usual approach, you can about bet that sooner or later, somebody is going to be very, very unhappy. That’s the chance we take. Of course, other folks have a right to feel any way they want about anything, don’t they? It’s beyond our control. Guilt can be good in that it can give us an incentive to do things better. It can on the other hand, be really oppressive and can severely limit our ability to enjoy life and do those things we really want to do. All we can do is the best we can do. If we screw something up – and we will – we can learn from it and then do even better. Life’s like that. Cool!

About the Author

Gene, through NuPathz.com, provides an easy reading self-help blog along with affordable books and materials written to help folks find the road to a more enjoyable lifestyle, to pass on some of life’s “secrets for survival” in a chaotic world & offer a few smiles along the way. It’s a down-to-earth, simple approach to discovering a better life. You can visit Gene at <http://www.nupathz.com/> gene@nupathz.com