

The Ug and Angst of “You Should ...”

By Roy G. Miller

I’m flawed. I must be.

This weekend I sat in my church seat and found my posture turning stiff and defensive. Was I gritting my teeth?

The “should” message was being shared by the speaker, a good man who really does speak truth and wisdom. My bone-rattling spasms in the dark sanctuary had to do with the following:

- I should be positive
- I shouldn’t watch the news
- I shouldn’t watch those shows spewing sexual innuendos and crude jokes (Oh hell, there goes Seinfeld ...)

The “I should” and “should not” rest on the simple principle of “trash in, trash out,” and that each of us can take captive the thoughts roaring through our brains, mouths and actions. It’s reported that we have 60-80 thoughts per minute bouncing between our ears. Most of them are, well, negative.

The message was on point and didn’t come from a critical or harsh speaker. He admitted his own journey in trying to attract vs. detract – to see the best vs. the worst. Making matters worse, my 12-year-old son is sitting next to me, glaring and grinning at me. He knows. I have opinions—and share them freely *cough*. Let’s just say they’re often not aspiring and full of joy.

I know, I know. I believe, I believe. Positive energy and attitudes are more healthy, or is that healthful? We build more friends and relationships when we build up vs. tearing down.

Here’s The Big But ...

What’s the rub? I see “being positive” as “being [Pollyana](#).” *Let’s just all pretend everything’s great and perfect. Let’s all smile on the outside while we’re screaming on the inside.* Who likes these kind of people, be it at work, at home or at church? Nada.

I believe in “shoulds” and “should-nots,” rules and regs, and dos and don’ts. Any unit, group or society must have them to remain successful and civil. But ... Yes, I always find myself on the precipice of the big BUT. Regardless, I return to lessons I’ve learned before (and over and over and over). Going positive can start with these four things. I need to post these on my bathroom mirror (again).

1. **Don’t fret** over all the should and should-nots. Avoid a microscopic analysis of all things done wrong. That breeds indigestion and ulcers. Wake up wanting to be your best. And forgive yourself for screwing up. And others.
2. **Be real.** Don’t be who you are not. Be authentic and transparent. Think of others as you journey through authenticity. But be yourself. Too much conformity and Pollyana-type living are foolish and fruitless. Be kind.
3. **Be informed.** We can’t deny the bad stuff in our world and lives. Be aware and be active, even if that requires unpopular viewpoints and positions. Sometimes it requires watching TV or reading the news.
4. **Moderate your life.** No matter what you are, who you are and whether you’re positive or negative, virtually all things, actions and attitudes must operate within moderation. Extremes may lead to unnecessary troubles.

Sometimes it’s a matter of cleaning house and getting rid of the clutter inside our heads and hearts. A re-boot of sorts.

Maybe we can all do a little cleaning up inside.

Yes we should. Ug, there’s that word again.

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