

## Meet the Minimizer

Just what is a minimizer? A minimizer is someone who consistently shrinks and reduces the importance of something or someone in your life. A minimizer throws 'cold water' on your excitement, goals, opinions, thoughts, friends, dreams and ideas etc. This person is someone who has a very difficult time being happy or excited for you, and must minimize you and perhaps other people to make themselves feel good.

Do you have a minimizer in your life? Perhaps it's a sibling, parent, supervisor, friend or coworker or perhaps its your spouse or partner. If so, learn to recognize that minimizing is indeed occurring in your relationship(s). Consider your choices and options as to what to do about this situation. Be aware that often when challenged, minimizers often increase their minimizing of you even more intently. Understand that the minimizer's self-esteem and ego is very fragile and guarded, although at the surface the minimizer appears to be very assured and confident. An emotionally healthy person does not need to minimize others to feel good about themselves. Always remember to keep yourself safe.

If you are in a relationship like this at work or at home, or you recognize that you minimize others, consider obtaining counseling support and assistance. Call us today.

## Quick Stress Tip!

Let go of perfectionism. It's true; your stress will reduce when you lighten up on yourself and on family members, friends, co-workers, clients/customers and others. We often stress ourselves out by setting up perfectionist attitudes and beliefs about ourselves and others. We often set the bar so high no one or nothing is good enough for us. The result is frustration, anger, disappointment and increased stress. Drop the perfectionistic attitudes and live life better.

**Goodbye...** and best wishes to Sherry Campbell

**Hello...** and a warm welcome to Bettie Dyck our new administrative assistant/receptionist at our main office in St. Catharines and to Lorraine Arbuckle MSW RSW who has joined us as our new counselling associate. Call today to book an appointment with Lorraine.

## The Lidkea, Stob, Venema & Associates' Family Counselling Team

Partners: John Stob, MSW RSW and Thomas Venema, MSW RSW. Our retired partner: William Lidkea, MSW RSW

### Our Associates:

Alice Carter BA MSW  
Len Dykstra MSW RSW  
George Nicolaidi BA MEd

Kimberley Gunning BSW MSW  
Diana Cunningham BA MA  
Don Campbell BA MA Psych.

Lorraine Arbuckle MSW RSW  
Catherine Doan MSW RSW  
Ruth Beekhuis MSW RSW (Brock University only)

Diane Keenan MSW RSW  
Geoff Harvey MSW RSW

Our secretary/receptionist:  
Our office manager:  
Our statistician:  
Administrative Asst./Receptionist

Anne Kennedy  
Debbie Ecker  
Kim Penwarden  
Bettie Dyck

\* RSW indicates Registered Social Worker with the Ontario College of Social Service Workers and Social Workers. All associates are registered with a professional organization assuring a Code of Ethics is in place.

## Laughter, Levity and Lightheartedness

These three attitudes/activities are good for you and may be absolutely essential for you both at work and at home and here's why. They:

- build relationships and connectedness
- reduce stress
- promote positive moods and attitudes
- energize
- are natural pain relievers
- promote attention and focus
- make people more attractive and interesting
- allow you to not take yourself and everything else way too seriously
- provide perspective
- let people live life happier (and maybe longer)
- they act as a cushion and defense during tough times

These benefits are pretty hard to resist. Make the decision to have more laughter, levity and lightheartedness in your life and notice the positive differences.

## Time Tips

- Do your most challenging activities when you are the freshest and at your best performance.
- Delegate tasks and responsibilities that you are currently doing that can be completed by others.
- Do your work when there are few interruptions or distractions, ie. children, coworkers, television, phone calls etc.
- Divide your tasks into small, manageable steps. Stick with one task at a time.

"Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows."

Helen Keller



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## Ruminating, Stewing, Brewing & Over Analyzing

All these behaviours refer to people who over think. People who over think replay scenarios and situations in their thoughts over and over again. They revisit these scenarios and situations from many different angles and perspectives, usually negative and pessimistic, and then cannot "let them go". Sometimes they review situations that have already occurred and at other times they anticipate future situations, usually from a very negative and pessimistic perspective. These behaviours can seriously impact a person's quality of life including their sleep, their emotional, social and physical health and well being, as well as their relationships at work and at home. For many people who engage in over thinking, life can be very difficult. Depression, anxiety, anger and low self-esteem and low confidence often accompany these behaviours.

The good news is that people can learn to not over think. Start by recognizing that this is indeed a problem. Second, make a conscious decision to be open to new ways of thinking which includes: recognizing and changing negative self talk; challenging and changing core beliefs, attitudes and habits and by learning new coping and stress management strategies and skills. Be committed to practicing these new ways of letting go. Give yourself permission to change, grow and to have a fresh new beginning.

Personal counselling is a very beneficial way for people to overcome ruminating, stewing, brewing and over analyzing. Seriously consider this an option.

## Affirming Others

When we connect more deeply with others we tend to feel more contentment, peace and happiness in our lives. Affirming others whether they are our children, spouse, friends, coworkers or others is a great way to live life more fully and richly.

The following are some examples of affirming others:

- "You are such a great person to work with"
- "I'm so proud that you are my daughter"
- "You are such an inspiration to me"
- "You are the best friend a person can have"
- "You have made this very difficult experience so much easier"
- "I'm so impressed with how you are raising your children"
- "I really enjoyed our evening together"
- "You are the best listener ever"
- "You did such a great job on this project"

...and sometimes all you need to say more often is "Thank you"

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"Doing the right thing is always more important than being right, and when you've made a mistake, the right thing to do is admit it." Lou Tice

## Did You Know?

- That people who constantly compare themselves with others often struggle with anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and anger. Comparisons are often common features of these emotional difficulties. Catch yourself comparing yourself and begin to let go of this behaviour that can make life very painful and difficult.
- That many people can become addicted to their work. This may be applicable to people who work for companies and organizations, but may also apply to those who manage their own business. Healthy work is in balance with the other areas of our lives; family, emotional, social, recreational and spiritual. People who become addicted to work, (those who become workaholics) have a compulsive need to work; to perform, to produce, to be busy, and to have power, prestige and success. Their lives are often very out of balance.
- That a good way to manage family stress during a busy week or busy period is to have "fun suppers or fun snacks" (healthy of course). In the business of multiple and crazy schedules consider having a 'fun supper' or 'fun snack' in the family room, the garage,

the front steps, the car, soccer field etc. While eating meals together as a family at the dinner table is good practice, its just not always possible. Lighten up, drop the guilt and enjoy your supper or snacks wherever. Make it fun and silly and watch your stress and your family's stress disappear.

- That many people in the fall and winter months experience a significant drop in their mood and energy. That's because as we experience less sunlight our brain produces less serotonin, the hormone responsible for our positive mood states. The brain then produces more melatonin, the hormone responsible for making us drowsy and sleepy. If you are vulnerable to seasonal depression see your physician and/or counselor for assistance.
- That according to the Canada Safety Council, workplace bullying is four times more common than sexual harassment or workplace discrimination. In 2000 a Canadian poll of labor unions revealed more than 75% of those surveyed reported incidents of harassment and bullying at work.

## Oh No, The Holidays!

Not looking forward to the upcoming holidays and gatherings because someone close to you drinks too much? Are many of these special occasions spoiled because of this person's excessive drinking? Has this become a predictable pattern over the last number of years? Have you and/or close family members felt angry, confused, sad, depressed before, during and after the holidays and/ or gatherings?

Seriously consider making an appointment with an experienced counselor to help you discuss your situation. In counselling you will obtain professional support as well as assistance in strategizing your options and choices. We can also assist you with appropriate referrals to helpful supports and services. Call today and plan to do the holidays differently this year.

## When Someone You Love ...takes their own life

The grief after the suicide of someone you love can be absolutely unbearable and overwhelming. Often there is a wide range of roller coaster emotions that family members experience and feel during the grieving process. Each family member may also be experiencing their own separate and individual feelings and emotions. Often the grieving process can be a very confusing and very lonely experience. If you or someone you know has had a loved one take their own life encourage them to see an experienced counselor to assist them on this difficult journey.

## Creed For Optimists

Be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.  
Talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.  
Make all your friends feel there is something special in them.  
Look at the sunny side of everything.  
Think only of the best, work only for the best, and expect only the best.  
Be as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.  
Forget the mistakes of the past and press on to greater achievements of the future.  
Give everyone a smile.  
Spend so much time improving yourself that you have no time left to criticize others.  
Be too big for worry and too noble for anger.  
Author: Chris D. Larson

## Parenting Tip

Be an optimist. Encourage and model for your children a sense of hope and enthusiasm for the present and for the future. Encourage good problem solving and creativity rather than negative and pessimistic thinking, Optimism provides good immunity for anxiety and depression during childhood, the teen years and adulthood.

## Dear Counselor...

My eighteen-year-old son's behaviour has changed dramatically in the past year. He was a very happy, easygoing guy until about 1 year ago. Now his mood is all over the place; he's sullen and brooding at times, and then at other times is hostile and verbally abusive to me. Often he will come home in an angry mood, or be on his cell phone yelling both inside and outside our home. Many times he flies into a rage and then takes off in the car. I wonder if he is doing drugs or something like that. His father and I divorced 5 years ago and our son seemed to handle it quite fine. His father is not a regular part of his life right now. What should I do?

### Signed, Concerned Mom

#### Dear Concerned Mom,

It's good that you are seeking assistance regarding your son and it is understandable that you are worried. Trust the concerns and questions you have as there are many red flags present here. They include his dramatic change in the past year, his mood swings including anger outbursts and verbal abuse, suspected drug use, driving a vehicle while in a rage, and irregular contact with his father.

There is other important information that is required in order to best support you in assisting your son.

- 1) Is he in school- high school, college, university?
- 2) If yes – how are his grades, attendance, classmates? Fulltime? part time?
- 3) Is he working? Full time? Part time? Where? Attendance?
- 4) Have his friends or peer group changed in the last year?
- 5) Is he being bullied/harassed?
- 6) Is there a family or personal history of mood disorders .ie depression, anxiety, self esteem
- 7) Do you know who he is talking on the cell phone with?
- 8) What is/was your relationship with him?
- 9) Have you tried speaking with him about your concerns in the past?
- 10) Have you noticed signs of drug use (prescription, street, steroids)? ie. physical signs, drug paraphernalia, unexplained money expenditures or extra money?
- 11) Do you or his father have a new relationship?
- 12) Are there other siblings? If yes, what have they said about this situation?
- 13) Are there issues with a girlfriend or other close relationships?

Speak seriously with your son about your concerns and refer him to his physician to rule out medical concerns. Speak with his father and others you trust for their input. Attend counselling yourself and/or with your son to learn how to best communicate at this time.

In summary, your concerns are very valid. Now it's important for you and your son to get the help and support you need to determine what is going on and then to find appropriate solutions and strategies. Thank you for your inquiry and best wishes.

Sincerely, Counselor

## Our Picks

We have three new recommendations for you and your family and friends. This time however, two of our picks are workbooks that are easy to read, easy to work through and can be done on your own and in consultation and support from a counsellor. Both workbooks are excellent resources if you or someone you care about struggles with anxiety and personal stress.

The book "Forgive and Forget" is great reading for anyone looking for the miracle of forgiveness. Enjoy our picks!

Title of Book:

The Mindfulness and Acceptance Workbook for Anxiety

Authors: John P. Forsyth and George H. Eifert

Publisher: New Harbinger Publications 2007

ISBN: 10-57224-444-2

Recommended by: Don Campbell MA

Title of Book:

Forgive And Forget - Healing The Hurts We Don't Deserve

Author: Lewis R. Smedes

Publisher: Pocket Books 1984 (Original Pack date), 2007

ISBN: 0-671-67428-5

Recommended by: Thomas Venema MSW RSW

Title of Book: The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook

Authors: Martha Davis, Matthew McKay, Elizabeth Robbins,

E. Schelman

Publisher: New Harbinger Publications

ISBN: 10-1-57224-549-2

Recommended by: Diane Keenan MSW RSW



"Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future, but today is a GIFT. That's why it's called the present."