

Stop the Escalator!

No, we are not talking about the mechanical stairs that take us to another floor. We are talking about someone you know, or perhaps you might be that person who quickly escalates discussions and differences into heated arguments and dirty fighting exchanges. The "escalator" is someone who quickly inflames situations and who makes it very difficult to have a healthy and rational conversation with them when they are in that state.

So just what exactly does the escalator do? He/she quickly raises their voice, interrupts when you speak, twists and distorts what's being discussed, accuses others of evil or negative intentions, discounts your loyalty and love, over-generalizes comments or situations (ie you never, you always) and often acts like a total victim.

If you know someone like this or you yourself are an escalator, please get some assistance and stop this behaviour that makes life much more difficult than it needs to be. Call us today and get the support and assistance you need.

New office in Niagara Falls

Our new office in Niagara Falls is located at 6746 Morrison Street. It is located in a small mall across the street from Zehrs and Zellers on Morrison Street. The name over the door is The Wellness Institute of Niagara (Unit #2).

Welcome

We welcome Don Campbell as our newest counselling associate. Don has 15 years of experience and has a Master's degree in Psychology. Call today to book an appointment with him.

Goodbye

We are saying goodbye to Michele McPherson who is moving with her family to the "West".
Goodbye also to Mary Gostlow who is no longer an associate with us.
Best Wishes to Mary and Michele.

Transitions can be tough

What is a transition? A transition is the psychological and emotional process we go through to come to terms with evolving and/or new situations. Transitions can include a grieving process as we grow to accept changing circumstances. What are some of the experiences we may experience in life? They may include transitions: to high school, college or university, in family circumstances: marriage, divorce, remarriage, birth of children, children leaving home; changes in work: job roles, locations, expectations, layoffs, etc.

So how do we cope with change and transition? Accept change as part of life. Allow yourself to grieve the changes but don't get stuck in the grief stage. Set realistic short-term goals. Explore your options and opportunities. Develop a transition plan. Choose a positive attitude. Get good support from others. Obtain professional support when necessary.

Farewell to Sue



On January 1, 2008, our friend and colleague Sue Mahaffey passed away at the age of 50. Sue was employed as a counselling associate with Lidkea, Stob, Venema & Associates and as a counsellor in the Personal Counselling Centre at Brock University from 2001-2006. She also taught at Ryerson University in Toronto.

We remember Sue as a woman of courage and determination, who believed very deeply in good self-care. Many of us at Lidkea, Stob, Venema & Associates maintained close friendships with Sue throughout her illness and we will miss her very much. Our deepest sympathy to all her family, friends and clients.

"Be kinder than necessary today, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle. You never know how you can bless someone else with just a smile, kind words, or a hug."

Unknown

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.

Sherry Campbell MA RSW
Ruth Beekhuis MSW RSW
Catherine Doan MSW RSW

Diane Keenan MSW RSW
Geoff Harvey MSW RSW

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

Anne Kennedy
Debbie Ecker
Kim Penwarden

* 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.



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Branch Offices: St. Catharines, Welland, Niagara Falls, Beamsville, Ridgeway

Telephone: 905.684.5050 1-866-684-5050 Fax: 905.684.5232 www.familycounselling.com

Check out our new Website!

Our new website has been updated and revived. We have moved into the 21st century! Please take some time to check it out. We are very pleased with our natural landscape look which we believe symbolizes and closely resembles the lives we live; hills to climb, valleys to wander, paths that twist and turn, trees that sway but yet have strong roots and provide protection from sun and rain and other elements.

You can check out our overview of services, read about our change and growth in our twenty-nine year history, discover what's happening in our News, Events and Activities section, and now read our newsletters on our website. View our website at www.familycounselling.com Give us your feedback. We'd love to hear from you.

Grudges and Resentments: Letting Go

Life has its ups. Life has its downs. Some people disappoint us and others hurt us. Sometimes our disappointments and hurts can begin to weigh us down and we can become angry, bitter, and resentful not just to the person(s) who hurt and disappointed us but also to others including ourselves. You can free yourself of grudges and resentments. Here are some points for you to consider on your freedom journey:

- Setting yourself free does not mean you condone or agree with what has happened to you. You set yourself free to move on, to grow, and to have a good life.
- Setting yourself free allows you to take back your own life rather than letting the people who disappointed and hurt you continue to have negative power and influence over your life.
- Setting yourself free means to learn things from disappointment and hurts but not to sentence yourself to more bitterness and unhappiness. "Enough is enough" is your new belief.

- Setting yourself free allows you to not become physically or emotionally unhealthy from carrying grudges and resentments but allows you to live life more fully and completely.
- Setting yourself free from grudges and resentments allows you to stop getting secondary benefits from being a victim, helpless, or from getting close to other people.

Setting yourself free allows you to end that chapter in your life and start a new fresh one.

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"The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago, but the second best time is today." Chinese Proverb

Did You Know?

- That Excessive Daytime Sleepiness (E.D.S.) can be a symptom of a serious sleep disorder? E.D.S manifests itself as excessive sleepiness, ongoing tiredness, lack of energy, and an unusual susceptibility to drowsiness. Although E.D.S. may be present everyday the intensity varies throughout the day. E.D.S. may also seriously impact your emotional and social health and wellness as well as your work performance. See your physician immediately if you have these symptoms.
- That in relationships people often view differences as negative where in fact differences can be viewed as very natural, normal, and healthy? In healthy relationships differences are to be appreciated and accepted. It is our variety, uniqueness and distinctions that make our relationships fresh, stimulating, and interesting. Try viewing differences "differently". View differences in a more positive light and notice the deeper connections to others.
- That a very helpful technique that counsellors often use with their clients is the "therapeutic letter". The client writes a letter with the

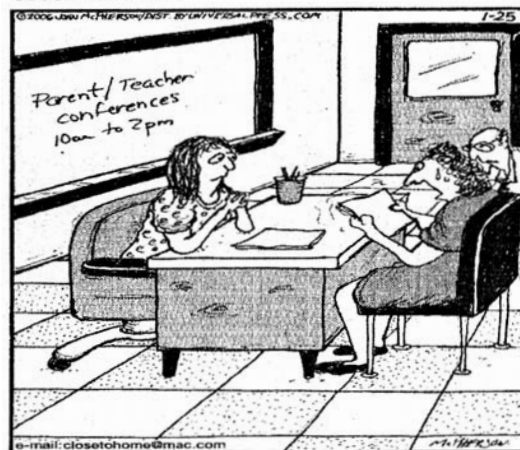
assistance and support from the counsellor to a person from their past or to someone in their life today. The person that you are writing may be a relationship that is positive, negative or something in between. The purpose in writing this therapeutic letter is to help the client deal with their issues, concerns, thought and feelings. This letter may never be sent but has been shown to help many people move forward in their lives.

- That by setting small achievable goals when you are trying to make changes in your life (ie lose weight, stop smoking, stop drinking or using marijuana, stop being depressed or anxious, etc.) increases the likelihood of success? Set small realistic obtainable goals on the road to your success. Pace yourself; enjoy the small successes and slowly integrate your new way of thinking and behaving into your life. Taking small steps decreases the likelihood of setbacks and reduces the chances of negative self-talk such as "why bother?" "who cares", "I can't do it."

Start with a Smile

Are you shy? Do you find it difficult to meet new people? Does it take you a while to warm up to people? If you are looking to change then as your first step when connecting with others start with a smile. Most of us are attracted to people who smile; a smile makes us appear more approachable, friendly engaging and attractive. Start smiling more and note the positive difference in your life.

CLOSE TO HOME



"What do you mean he got a C-minus on his report? I was up all night writing that thing!"

Maturity

Maturity is the ability to control anger and settle differences without verbal or physical aggression.

Maturity is patience and the willingness to pass up immediate pleasure in favour of long term gain.

Maturity is perseverance; the ability to stick with a project or a situation in spite of opposition or disappointing setbacks.

Maturity is the capacity to face unpleasantness and frustration, discomfort and defeat with minimal complaint and negativity.

Maturity is the ability to be able to say "I was wrong" and, when right the mature person does not need to say, "I have told you so."

Maturity is the ability to make a decision and stand by it.

Maturity means dependability; keeping one's word and sticking by people through tough times.

Maturity is the art of living in peace with what we cannot change, the courage to change what can be changed and the wisdom to know the difference (Serenity Prayer).

Dear Counselor...

I am thirty years old and getting married this Fall to a man who has a 8 year old daughter from his first marriage. He has been divorced now for over 6 years and has visitation with his daughter every other weekend and on Wednesdays for a few hours. His daughter is very close to her mother and has only recently warmed up to me. Do you have any step parenting tips for me?

**Signed
New Step Mom**

Dear New Step Mom,

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage and also for the positive signs that the relationship between your fiancée's daughter and yourself is warming up. It's not always easy for children to attach to the new adults/partners in their parent's lives. Here are some helpful tips for step parenting:

1. Your fiancée's daughter has a close relationship with her mother. Don't even begin to try to replace that relationship. Support her closeness to her mother.
2. Continue to let the relationship naturally warm up as it already has. Let it take the time to grow and evolve.
3. Engage in activities with your fiancée and his daughter, but also encourage them to do things together without you as well. Encourage the father/daughter connection.
4. Plan with your fiancée and his daughter special unique routines and rituals that the three of you can do together.
5. Don't be overly excessive with trying to connect with your stepchild. Be sincere. Most step kids will catch on and resent that you are "trying too hard."
6. Figure out a name that your fiancée's daughter will call you that everyone is comfortable with.
7. Let your fiancée take the lead in parenting/discipline, etc. Take a more supporting role in this area.
8. Watch for signs that your new stepdaughter may have expected that her Mom & Dad would get back together.
9. Let your fiancée's daughter know that you are excited about her being a part of your life and family.
10. Your fiancée and you will need to check with each other regularly as to how the parenting/step parenting roles are working out for everyone.

I hope these tips will be helpful. It is great to see a step parent take such a proactive role. Best wishes to all of you.

**Sincerely,
Counselor**

Our Picks

Looking for some great summer reading and enriching your life at the same time? Three counsellors share with you their reading choices. Read one of our picks and/or read all three. Enjoy our selections and enjoy your summer.

Title of Book: Feel the Fear...and Do It Anyway
Dynamic techniques for turning fear, indecision and anger into power, action and love. (20th anniversary edition)
Author: Susan Jeffers P.H.D.
Publisher: Ballantine Books 1987-2007
ISBN: 0-345-48742-1
Recommended by John Stob MSW, RSW

Title of Book:
The Five Secrets You Must Discover Before You Die
Author: John Izzo P.H.D.
Publisher: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc. 2008
ISBN: 978-1-5765-475-7
Recommended by Len Dykstra MSW, RSW

Title of Book: Dr. Karyn's Guide to the Teen Years
Author: Karyn Gordon P.H.D.
Publisher: Harper Collins Canada 2008
ISBN: 10-000-200-8637
Recommended by Kimberley Gunning MSW, RSW

Better Sleep Tip

Do you want a better sleep? A good tip that will assist you in obtaining a better sleep is to avoid looking at your computer screen at least one hour before you go to bed. The light from your screen blocks the production of melatonin, the hormone responsible for making us drowsy and helping us sleep. Try this sleep tip and start counting sheep!

Dial 211

211 is an easy to remember three digit phone number providing free information about community, social, health and related government services. 211 is available 24 hours a day in Niagara.

"God doesn't always smooth the path but sometimes he puts springs in the wagon."

Marshall Lucas