

Human Wreckage

by Michele Venne

“Introduction to the Exceptional Child” was heavily tipped towards those whose emphasis was Mental Retardation, leaving those few who chose Learning Disabled to be the buffer between those who preferred to change diapers and tie shoes from the two of us who would rather deal with, “Fuck you, I’m not doing this,” as a kid throws a chair across the room. Those MR pre-teachers look at us as if we are crazy, and perhaps we are. Was there not some quotable historical figure that proclaimed, “We are attracted to what we see in ourselves”?

Many people become outraged when they see animal abuse reported by the nightly news. Maybe because pictures are shown during the broadcast of the kitten recovering from being set on fire, the hundreds of dogs living in a single-wide trailer where feces is a foot deep and disease has killed or mutilated some, or the beating and drugging of race horses. The station, flooded with calls to adopt or send money to pay for vet bills, always plays to the public’s general concern for the welfare of those beings that are placed in human care. Where are the pictures and the outrage and the offers of adoption for the same treatment of children?

“To prove to them that not all adults are assholes,” is my standard answer should anyone care to ask why I subject myself to the bureaucratic bullshit that surrounds offering assistance to those who bear the label of Emotionally Disturbed, in the public schools, mental health facilities, or

juvenile detention centers. I don't particularly like children, but there is a passionate purpose to my life that calls to me to stand beside those who are misused.

Most who know me and what I do are shocked by the side of society I see on a daily basis. Despite my degrees in education and counseling, my experience in several programs and a stint in a halfway house, I don't have an understanding of why the abuse must happen. There are the usual excuses of generational addictions, or the rage and pain over real and perceived wrongs and injustices. That is just a convoluted cycle of finger pointing.

However the abuse shows up, I deal with the fallout. Prescriptions of Aderall, Ritalin, Lithium, doesn't offer the same solace of self-medicating that most prefer, as scripts aren't the type of anesthetizers that effectively dull the hurt and anger. The abuse leads to conflict fought on a massive scale, and the results are the War on Drugs, the War on Gangs, the War on Prostitution. Risking sounding too clichéd, it is past time to apply the proverb, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".

Until such time the misuse of innocence ceases, I wish for more survivors like me, who have grown through their own turbulent coaster ride to come to a place, a rather solid ledge on the slope of self-actualization, where myriad of methods and people, and finally 12-steps have granted me a sometimes slippery grasp on recovery. I will extend my hand out to those who choose to see through tears of confusion and grief and sorrow and rage, to make a step towards emotional sobriety.

