

Hypocrisy: 3 Telltale Signs of it

Hosting the Academy Awards Jimmy Kimmel found time for [these conciliatory words](#):

“There are millions and millions of people watching right now and if every one of you took a minute to reach out to the person you disagree with, someone you like, and have one positive, considerate conversation, not as liberals or conservatives, but as Americans, if we could all do that we could make America great again. It starts with us.”

The problem? “Considerate conversation” is reserved only for people that Kimmel already “likes.” Kimmel felt a need to appear virtuous, but he seemed to enjoy his hypocritical and [merciless bashing of President Trump](#).

Here are three ways to spot a hypocrite (and three ways one can reduce the level of hypocrisy in their own lives):

1. They play the part of the innocent victim.

In his book [*Real Love and Freedom For the Soul*](#), Dr. Greg Baer, explains how when we play the part of victims we “blame everyone but ourselves for our own mistakes and unhappiness.” In victim mode, we’ll hear ourselves saying “It’s not my fault” or “It’s not fair.”

Listening to Kimmel and other entertainers, you would think that their own actions have never contributed to the problems they perceive. How likely is that?

Do entertainers complain about damage to the biosphere while flying private jets all over the world? Do they have strong opinions about healthcare while engaging in drug and alcohol abuse that drives up healthcare costs?

Do they fail to recognize their willingness to embrace the concentration of power in the hands of politicians with whom they approve is a major cause of the problems we face today?

Consider Gwyneth Paltrow’s [*cultish fawning over Obama*](#) at a 2014 fundraiser: “It would be wonderful if we were able to give this man all of the power that he needs to pass the things that he needs to pass.”

Dr. Baer writes that victims aren’t bothered by their hypocrisy. “In their world, the only thing that matters is their pain, their needs, and their beliefs.” As victims, we aim “to convince the people around us to believe as we do.”

When we stop trying so hard to convince others of the righteousness our position, we see more clearly what changes we can make to improve the situation.

1. They fail to recognize their moral outrage is often self-serving and self-defeating.

Self-righteousness is based on believing we are better than

other people; we see the “truth” and “they” don’t. A recent [essay](#) reports on research by professors Zachary Rothschild and Lucas A. Keefer. “Moral outrage,” rather than being based on altruism, “is often a function of self-interest, wielded to assuage feelings of personal culpability for societal harms or reinforce (to the self and others) one’s own status as a Very Good Person.”

Can we really get rid of our guilt by dumping it on others? A parent who feels he has underachieved in life might feel temporary relief from his own sense of failure by getting angry at his child’s poor performance in school. Long-term, though, the parent’s sense of failure remains and guilt increases for having attacked their child.

Our outrage doesn’t license bad behavior. When we lash out we are often saying someone else is responsible for our failures.

1. They Don’t Lead By Going First

There is this basic principle of leadership, whether we are talking about home life or work life: your job is to lead by going first. Don’t expect your children to eat broccoli if ketchup is your idea of a vegetable. Don’t expect your employees to respect the ability and intelligence of others, if you don’t exemplify respect for others. Don’t expect to convince others of your views, if you treat them with disrespect.

“Do what I say and not what I do” is a mode of behavior that destroys trust and creates resentment.

Where do you think your happiness lies? If you think your happiness is dependent, for example, on power, your “need” for power may override what you might like to believe is your value of respecting others.

Reflecting on our values is essential to personal and professional fulfillment. When we examine and remove our

internal barriers that stop us from acting from our values, only then will our behavior change.

If we are willing to learn, awareness of our own hypocrisy can be a great teacher. The cutting-edge of our own possibilities for personal development is often where we are most hypocritical.

When we stop justifying our hypocrisy, we might see the change we, not others, need to make.

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[Image Credit: ABC-Youtube]