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## **Disinhibited Thoughts #7**

This article and the one that follows it next time will focus on the question of TS in the workplace. One of the biggest conundrums that we TS'ers face is: should I tell or shouldn't I? The fears and issues we agonize over are not that unlike those that children and adolescents with TS face when grappling over whether or not to divulge "the big secret" in their classroom: rejection, being socially ostracized. In either environment it is an individual choice to be sure, but here's some of Dunc's disinhibited thoughts on the matter.....

One thing I often tell TS adolescents that I work with is: "If you tell people about your TS and they continue to mistreat you, and to perceive you and your abilities poorly, that is their problem. BUT, if you DON'T tell people about your TS, how it affects you, and what they can expect from you, and these people treat you poorly due to misperceptions, that is YOUR ownership and YOUR problem."

I would suggest that by not disclosing your TS in the workplace you as a TS'er are not giving your employer a CHANCE to show understanding OR intolerance. You don't know how your employer or fellow employees will react to the disorder, because you never gave them any information about it in the first place. This can set up a self-fulfilling cycle of paranoia, since any negative treatment borne of ignorance to what you are going through and dealing with can then be automatically viewed as rejection of your disorder.

To be fired in this scenario, for example, isn't a reflection of mistreatment in a discriminatory world. It's a reflection on the ignorance you have perpetuated – others in the workplace saw difficulties in certain situations, eccentric behaviour, etc. and in the absence of the true explanation saw it as purposeful, as manipulative, as immaturity, as ill will and a "bad attitude", etc. We are of a different breed, and while we have no boundaries on the successes that we can achieve, we DO sometimes need to go about things in a different way from others. If employers don't know this and haven't the chance to give us what we need then they are fully justified in being dissatisfied with substandard work.

I will stress as well that of course discriminations do indeed occur. If a person fires you because of your TS then this is discrimination, and this should be fought passionately and to the last man. But if a person fires you because you did not inform people of your symptoms and your particular requirements so that you can do the job expected of you, then you are not taking responsibility for your disorder and you earned what you received.

Until next time, my friends!

Duncan

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