

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak
COLUMNIST (www.AdviceChief.com)

Other than air, water, and food, the world owes you nothing. Some people feel the world owes them something (or everything) because of who they are or what they’ve been through. But that expectation of the world is not realistic or healthy.

We’re all inclined to want our fair share in life, but unfortunately, the world doesn’t really care much about being fair. Maybe sometimes it grants us some of what we want or expect or maybe it ignores us. Or maybe it tosses a plague down on us to thin our forces. Regardless, the world is not fair and we’re not entitled to anything or everything we want.

We live in a world where rights and privileges frequently get confused. Often, people think they have a “right to be happy” or a “right to be treated respectfully,” even if it means they have to infringe on others’ rights to get what they want. Sure we all deserve to be happy, but not by causing harm to others. And we all deserve respect only if respect is given. And many people, instead of trying to earn privileges, behave as if society is somehow indebted to them (that they, in some way, are superior to others and deserve more regardless of the effort they give or the price they paid).

A feeling that the world owes you something isn’t always about a sense of superiority, though. Sometimes it is about a sense of injustice. People who have had a difficult childhood, for example, may max out their credit cards, buying things they never had as a kid. They may think the world owes them the opportunity to have nice things, since they missed out as a youngster.

Jean Twenge, a psychologist and author of *Generation Me* and *The Narcissism Epidemic*, has conducted many studies on narcissism and entitlement. Her studies have found that younger generations have an increased desire for material wealth and a decreased desire to work. She suggests several possible reasons for this disconnect including:

* *The focus on helping kids develop self-esteem has gone overboard.* School programs aimed at improving self-esteem teach kids that they’re all special. Always telling kids they’re the best or that everything they do is great only inflates beliefs about self-importance.

* *Overindulgent parenting prevents children from learning how to accept responsibility for their behavior.* When kids are given whatever they want and they don’t have to experience consequences for misbehavior, they don’t learn the value of earning things. Instead, they’re given an overabundance of material possessions and accolades regardless of their behavior.

* *Social media fuels mistaken beliefs about self-importance.* Young people can’t imagine a world without “selfies” and self-promotional posts. It’s unclear if social media actually fuels narcissism or if it simply serves as an outlet for people to announce their underlying beliefs of superiority. But there is evidence that suggests people turn to social media to boost their self-esteem.

When people don’t get everything they want with their sense of entitlement, it can lead to feelings of bitterness as they’ll think they were somehow victimized. Instead of enjoying all that they have and all that they’re free to do, they’ll focus on all that they don’t have and all the things they can’t do. They’ll

likely miss out on some of the best things in life.

Most people who feel a sense of entitlement lack self-awareness. They think everyone else perceives them the same way they perceive themselves. We all should pay attention to our thoughts and keep these truths in mind:

* *Life isn’t meant to be fair.* There isn’t a higher power or any person on Earth who ensures that all humans are dealt a fair or equal hand. Some people have more positive experiences than others. That’s life but it doesn’t mean we’re owed anything if we were dealt a bad hand.

* *Our problems aren’t unique.* Although no one else’s life is exactly like mine or yours, other people experience the same types of problems, sorrows, and tragedies as we do. There are likely many people on the planet who have overcome worse. No one promised life would be easy.

* *We have choices in how we respond to disappointments.* Even if we can’t change the situation we can choose how to respond. We can decide to deal with problems, circumstances, or tragedies that come our way without developing a victim mentality.

* *You and I aren’t more deserving.* Although we’re different from everyone else, there’s nothing about us that makes us better than other people. There’s no reason that we should inherently have good things happen to us or that we shouldn’t have to put in the time and effort to reap the benefits.

So if you’re feeling victimized by the world, it’s time to change your thinking and make the kind of effort that increases your chances of getting what you want. Seize the day and be happy!

~ The End ~