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Behavior? Manners are lost in a new dimension

Sometimes, I wish my arms were like a whirly bird's propellers and I could walk down the street keeping all the rude and obnoxious people out of my way.

I know that's a bit extreme, but give me a break; at my age, I need more than huff and gruff and muscles going south to deal with this in-your-face rudeness that's becoming more normal by the day.

My readers may find the opening of this column suspiciously familiar — and they would be right.

Those are pretty much the same words I wrote in October of 2017 in my column, "SOS? Whatever happened to Miss Manners?"

I sent out the SOS asking her where her lessons had gone — and asking her to return and guide us back to civility.

Sometimes, you have to take a look at the past of a situation to find out if the needle has progressed forward.

Nearly three years later, I find that SOS did not bring a rescue squad as rude behavior has become the norm — and it is becoming more obnoxious and graphic with each passing day.

I won't go into the disgusting things people are now doing with their urine to show their displeasure. But if you are in a position of authority or a public figure, be prepared to be spit at, cursed out and have your property defecated on by the disenchanteds.

And it doesn't matter how minute the situation is. You might say that people appear intent on being bullies, but these are rebels without a cause.

How else can you explain the conduct of a passenger reading the riot act to a bus driver because the driver refused to open the doors in the middle of a three-lane street to let her off.

According to the passenger, "it don't make sense because there are no cars coming."

And what about the guy who refused to pay for the drinks and snacks he drank and ate as he waited to buy lottery tickets. He was mad the merchant wouldn't hand him the tickets until he paid for them.

"Then, I won't pay for anything," he shouted and stormed out the store.

But that is the way things are going; defiance and disrespect are the coats people put on when things are not going their way or there is some perceived wrong.

I was on the New Haven Green earlier this week watching and listening as a woman stood about 4 feet from a police officer giving him hell.

Let's face it, cops are not the flavor of the month and she appeared to be taking full advantage of that sentiment.

"Do your #\$%% job," she screamed at the officer over and over as she spit out a stream of profanities while pointing in his face.

I don't know what caused her outrage but I do know her behavior was off the charts — and nobody, cops included, should have to put up with that in-your-face aggression that can only lead to a predictable outcome.

The cop remained calm but I really felt bad for him. I know any action by him to get this woman out of his personal space would have brought in the Black Lives Matter movement, even though it would not have been warranted in this case.

Bad behavior is nothing new but the type of behavior being exhibited these days seems to have shifted into a new dimension.

As with many of my opinions, it was a single incident that drew my attention back to my SOS column.

It was during the summer of 2019 that I stood in line along with other frustrated customers at a then-named Dunkin' Donuts in Danbury.

And I could not believe what I was witnessing.

A customer had ordered a dozen doughnuts. There is nothing unusual in that but the customer proceeded to make the worker pull out the rack of each type of doughnut he was choosing to search for the largest doughnut in each flavor.

And he became agitated when the worker chose a doughnut that didn't meet his demand.

“No, not that one, the other one,” he shouted.

Sensing our frustration, the customer turned to us, shrugged his shoulders and nonchalantly said, “Why should I pay the same price for the smaller doughnut?”

I guess the look of disbelief on our faces went over his head, or maybe he just didn’t care.

I know there is no one reading this column who hasn’t seen or experienced this same type of obnoxious behavior, and wonders where we go from here.

For me, the question becomes, how much of this bad behavior are we expected to put up with when the rallying cry of those pushing the boundaries is, “I have the right?”

Every day, it seems we are dealing with people drowning in self indulgences that go unchecked because so many other issues are taking precedence .

But how in the world do you govern bad behavior?

I don't know; I'm just a guy sick of this ridiculous behavior. Maybe we need to add sedatives to the water supply or spray a calming agent on the food we eat.

Or better yet, maybe we need to power-up some long dormant laws or come up with some new ones that would put a check on this type of behavior.

But I know — as you know — that will never happen.

So that leaves me wondering if the true meaning of “freedom” is getting lost in the fog of “I have the right.”

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