

# Messes

Tennessee Williams wrote a brilliant essay on the evils of creating messes and expecting someone else to clean 'em up. He was referring to physical messes - slopping up hotel rooms, letting the checker bag all your groceries, leaving your wife or mom to do the grunt work. He stressed that this thoughtlessness diminished our 'selves' in some core way.

What other types of messes do we leave? How about emotional ones? Each time we hurt a person's feelings and don't make it right, each time our feelings are trampled, emotional mess has been created. So what do we do about it?

Clearly, some situations are easier than others to mop up. We're quick to exclaim 'SORRY!' when we step on a toe or inadvertently hang up a phone conversation, because these messes were unintentional. Our own 'stuff' not involved, apologies come easily. But how bout those times when we're knowingly hurtful?

'Well, the other person hurt me first!' Sound familiar? Does to me. I use this justification. In fact, I have a million of 'em. I excuse myself 'cuz I'm in a bad mood, cuz someone else was mean to me and I'm taking it out on another.... It's all hooey, tho, isn't it? Because every time we speak, we do so with choice and freedom.

Truth is, we're never very comfortable with our own excuses, even when we rehearse them over and over inside our own heads. They ring hollow. Because we have known ever since we were little - if you hurt someone's feelings, say you're sorry. Anything short of that diminishes us.

Fact - every sound we make will travel through space for 1000 light years. So next time you are about to produce criticism, or sarcasm, or harsh tones - next time your words might make another cry - stop and think...

'Is discordance my chosen legacy to the universe? And if not, how do I instead produce a melody?' The neat thing is, that if you make it sweet enough - maybe we will all sing along!