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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

What Your Parents Said Can Hurt Your Career



Let's be fair and let's be kind. Most parents truly want the best for their children. They do the best they can with the knowledge they have in the moment. If you're willing to think about it, though, most mothers and fathers parent like they were parented. Often to a large extent...Believe me: A lot of limitations can be embedded in that.

Parental messaging to children and youth carries great weight. I know. Even in my sixties I remember much of what they said. Some of those messages, stifling, hindering, and unwise, stuck to me like tar baby syndrome. Thankfully, with conscious effort, I shook many of them off. The ones that simply didn't serve me or other people. But there's one I still carry around: "Remember where you came from (meaning an ordinary middle class family putting one foot in front of the other in a very small town). No matter what you end up doing, don't get too

big for your britches”. Eventually, as I spread my wings and actually flew, I sometimes felt guilty about it. And occasionally even now.

Recently three private clients indicated during coaching sessions that they continue to allow themselves to be governed by negative parental messages issued decades ago. For me, calling attention to the obvious downsides is sticky business. Nobody wants to hear a third party imply that their parents were wrong. Yet I’d be remiss to stay silent. Clinging to old, tired declarations which have little or no value keeps clients stuck. I need to show them how.

My feature article below highlights seven potentially crippling parental messages. Do any of them resonate with YOU? If so, how have those pieces of so-called advice interfered with your job performance and overall career success?

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FEATURE ARTICLE

7 Professional-Crippling Parental Messages

While most parents mean well, many repeat a couple of handicapping messages (frequently rooted in generational history and local culture) like mantras. Over and over their children hear this misguided advice, and more and more that messaging gets absorbed in the fiber of their being. Somewhere along the line they decide it must be true—only to find out the hard way, of course, that it isn’t. Take a look at the following examples:

If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all.

Supervisors: Be wary. You can’t facilitate the growth and development of your employees by only singing their praises. There are times when you must point out errors in performance and behavior. You want to do it with civility and care, but you have to do it.

Don’t make waves.

Waves represent energy and motion. Waves, created for right reasons, can be necessary and good. You are not on the planet to remain stagnant. You are not on the payroll to stay still. You are meant to move the work forward—your individual work as well as the higher level work of the organization.

Always remember there are people a lot smarter than you.

Though perhaps not intended as such, this form of parental message is belittling. Considering the huge number of people on Earth, certainly millions will be more intelligent than you and millions will be less intelligent than you. It depends on what type of intelligence we're talking about. Wherever you fall on a particular "smarts scale", just be sure to use and maximize what you've got. Regardless of your fixed IQ or current EQ, KQ, LQ, MQ, SQ, etc., you can make a significant difference at work. Don't ever forget that.

Walk away from conflict.

You can do that, but don't be surprised when it bites you in the backside again and again and again. Nothing gets resolved by pretending it doesn't exist or isn't as bad as it really is. Your parents may have told you to turn your back on conflict, but the best advice is to learn to deal with it. Straight up. Disagreement is part of life and work. It isn't going away.

Don't take any crap.

Anybody over twenty has figured out that you have to take SOME crap anywhere you work if you want to keep your job. There is no perfect employer. However, you are wise to identify and assess what you privately label as "the crap". Determine which items on that list you can tolerate and which ones must be addressed. Using diplomacy, skill, and tact, tackle those non negotiables. It's a matter of self respect.

You'd better not make a mistake.

This is an unrealistic, nonsensical statement. As a human being, you are going to make mistakes in judgment, in decisions, in choices, in relationships, in language. Count on it. Do not live in fear of the future mistakes you will make. If you do, you are never going to accomplish much in this life. You won't do what you must do, and you won't go after what you want.

Our family doesn't X, Y, or Z.

This parental message may refer to things like going to college, pursuing a graduate degree, getting additional certification, seeking a promotion, becoming a manager, moving out of state. Know that when parents deliver this sort of communicate, they are really asking you to stay within the established family fold. They prefer that you remain on their level educationally and professionally. They want you to keep them emotionally comfortable. They make it all about them.

To move forward in the ways you are expected to perform or advance (or want to perform or advance), you need to shake off whatever negative parental

messaging is holding you back. Pure and simple. No matter how much you love your mom or dad, sooner or later you've got to give it up. All of it.

What Clients Say

Once I finally made up my mind that I wanted to leave my current job and change careers, I contacted Sylvia. It took me quite a while to reach this decision because I didn't think I was smart enough to do anything other than what I'm doing now. I'm embarrassed to say that I was 42 years old and still was playing the old "you'll never amount to much" tapes that I inherited from my father. After a few months of sessions with Sylvia, I started to see myself in a whole new light! She pointed out my personal and professional strengths in a way that gave me more confidence than I'd ever had before. She showed me how to leverage those strengths so that I could market myself for the first time in ten years. I don't have my new career yet, but I'm working on it. And I'm happy.

- John J., York County, PA

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Offers and Opportunities

One Slot Left for 2016

Sylvia can accommodate only one more private client in this calendar year. If you know you could benefit from some focused individual, confidential attention from a career specialist who has worked with scores and scores of professionals in 25 different industries over the last 8 ½ years, now is your chance. Simply send an email to sylvia@launchinglives.biz requesting a FREE 30 minute phone discovery/strategy session to find out if the two of you are a good fit. Don't allow yourself to stay stuck. Your professional reputation and career trajectory can't afford it. Deep down inside, you know that.

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RESOURCES

How to Overcome Negative Parental Messaging

Struggling with the fallout of negative parental messaging? Not sure how to get beyond it? Keep this 5 step list handy and refer to it every day until you succeed:

- Accept your parents' limitations.
- Allow yourself to feel your emotions (whatever they are).
- Forgive your parents for whatever they told you that isn't working.
- Be patient with and kind to yourself.
- Know that negative parental messaging does not define you.

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TIP

Get in touch with what you believe is THE single negative parental message from the past that holds you back at work the most. Precisely **how** is this message stymieing your job performance or career trajectory? How would your professional image shift or change if you diminished the power of this particular message? Who would you be able to become? What would you be able to do that you aren't doing now? If you became that person and/or did that one thing, you can bet you'd positively impact your life and work.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

An active volunteer in the community for many years, Sylvia currently serves in the following capacities (in case you've ever wondered):

President, Gannett Fleming Toastmasters Club (2nd round)

Executive Committee member and Grantmaker, Women's Fund affiliated with The Foundation for Enhancing Communities

Volunteer Co-Chair, Mentorship Program affiliated with the Harrisburg Regional Chamber of Commerce

Chair, Women in Business Round Table affiliated with the West Shore Chamber of Commerce

Program Committee member and Philanthropy Committee member, Harrisburg Chapter of Executive Women International

Women in Leadership member and Basic Needs Panel Grantmaker, United Way of the Capital Region

Program Planning Committee member, local Business Women's Forum
Community Advisory Board member, Harrisburg Academy

Note: Speaking of volunteering, Sylvia is busy developing a one hour webinar on this topic for the national headquarters of Executive Women International. This computer based event scheduled for December is entitled: The Value-Add in Volunteering: 5 Competencies You Can Take Anywhere.

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Join Sylvia on these social networks!

About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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Launching Lives Ezine is dedicated to “building people ... building businesses.” ©2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

For more information and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn

certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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