



HERS

OPINION

HIS



Letting Go of Guilt and Blame

BY C.M. BROOKS

Before we say Auld Lang Syne to the past year and herald in the new, it is important to lay a solid foundation for a healthier and happier life by finally letting go of guilt and blame.

What a guilt-ridden society we live in. In a way, it is like a double-edged sword. On one side you have a society that reinforces guilt and blame to maintain order and to keep chaos at a minimum level. And on the opposite side of the blade you have guilt in the form of a self-inflicted, self-punishing state of mind. The combination makes for a lethal weapon.

This metaphor holds true for many, but especially for women. Women suffer from external and internal guilt and blame because of the role(s) we play in this society. Circumstances and situations are placed at the feet of women more often because we openly express our feelings, making for an easy target for retaliation or rebuttal from others. And since women bear more responsibilities in American culture, it is no wonder why we then succumb so easily to self-guilt.

Rape is an excellent example of the dual-edged effect of guilt and blame. If a woman is raped in this country she is treated as if she somehow "asked for it". For those of us who are more sensitive to this issue and understand the dynamics of rape, we know that the victim is in no way to blame for the perpetrator's violent action. But nevertheless, she is held liable because somehow she must have done something to provoke him. Her morality is questioned as well as her style of dress. Her past sexual life is brought up as a point of reference as to define her standards of morality and her quality of life. Questions like "was anything said that

could have been perceived as suggestive that might have enticed her assailant?" or "how short was the dress she was wearing on the date?" are inevitable, as if these questions might give some type of insight to the situation or to the reasons why she was raped. Not only is the victim somehow responsible for the action taken against her, but with so many people pointing finger, it is only natural for the victim to point accusingly at herself as well.

Women are their children's first and foremost instructors in life. Although I can only imagine that this is a desired and rewarding position, I cannot help to think it is also a heavy load to carry. If that child reveals that he/she is homosexual, society wants to know what

short dress or a habit/religious garment and still be raped. You cannot control another person's life, only your own.

There is a notable difference between feeling bad and feeling guilty which should be discussed. Feeling bad is a temporary feeling. As my cousin likes to put it, "you are dealing with a here-and-now situation. You deal with it and then it's in the gone." Feeling guilty is an ongoing state of mind. It is a long-term condition that has its roots in the past. The situation may be resolved anywhere between a year or longer, sometimes never.

Letting go of guilt and blame is such an important step for a better life because both have a way of crippling you from doing the things that will move you forward. The affect causes you to live in the past and this can only bring you down. You wind up subconsciously sabotaging your career and family success by hanging on to it.

The best way to let go of guilt and blame is to make changes in your life. Change is the first step to a brighter future because it allows for you to control the outcome. Whether it's making amends for a wrongdoing or seeking professional support to aid you through a tough crisis, a positive change can help build a stronger and better you while re-establishing control.

Personally, I think that it is extremely easy to place blame upon others and upon the self. Judgements and superior attitudes are readily available by most and require no forethought or solutions to whatever prevailing ailments. Letting go of guilt and blame requires the courage to forgive, especially the self, and to seek answers for the future. Not always an easy task, but it is necessary in order to heal, and more importantly, it is possible!

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

Many people would be shocked, more than likely, at the amount of time they spend on being angry, feeling guilty, blaming others for their shortcomings, or fears. If people are ever going to learn how to love, it is imperative that they learn to let go of these negative emotions and feelings. The guilt premise is based on a fictional belief that either you or another individual deserve to be punished. It has been suggested by some scholars that the ego's need for punishment is so great that people become so preoccupied with all the things they have done wrong. A part of people tells them that they or others deserve to be punished and to suffer because of the wrongdoings perpetrated. Blame is the essential reason for this guilt. People attempt to change others by blaming them or making them feel guilty, while denying their own guilt in the process.

As an insecure youngster, I blamed myself for the death of my mother, who died of cancer. I blamed myself because other people in my family suggested that my criminal behavior led to her demise. This was a heavy burden to carry around, emotionally, because it was consistently being reinforced by the people I cared about the most, my family. Sure, I was a terrible kid, but I didn't stop my mother from going to treatment when she was supposed to or force her to maintain a lifestyle that did not enhance her physical condition. She, along with my father, went to their graves with a negative perception of me. My mind was an emotional wasteland and the high levels of guilt eroded what little self-esteem I had. From about seventh grade until my senior year of high school, I had a "big chip" on my shoulder and owned a terrible attitude. How could I

eradicate this guilt or change my parents' perception about me when they were already gone? Though they were deceased, I decided that it was now time to make them proud of me with my actions and behavior. I graduated from high school, attended college, secured three degrees in Communications, and put myself in an economic position to help other family members interested in helping themselves. Today, they would have to be proud of my achievements and accomplishments. They would be proud of my community involvement and values. I can live with myself, now. I can look up in the sky today and smile because I believe in my heart that they have changed their perception about me. I do not blame myself anymore.

me awhile to learn that it was not always about me being the problem. Today, if I do not secure the type of positions I attempted to earlier in my corporate life, it's no big deal because I know that I have a sound education, excellent skills in many areas of my profession, and more importantly, I'm most qualified. If I do not get the job, it's not because of my shortcomings or lack of ability. It's usually because of factors that are out of my control or realm of influence. Again, I do not blame myself anymore or feel guilty.

The same thing holds true with relationships. Over the years, I've had some good and bad ones. All people make mistakes and the biggest one that I ever made was blaming myself for them not working. No one person blows a marriage or relationship. Letting go of guilt and anger can really change a person's attitude, judgement, relationship with others, and put them on the road to happiness. I can speak from firsthand experience. If people choose to love instead of automatically blaming themselves or others, they will be much happier and open to receive what we all desire/need: love. Keep peace in your heart and love on your mind. Remember, past experiences should be a guide post, not a hitching post for guilt and blame.

Letting go of guilt and blame requires the courage to forgive, especially the self, and to seek answers for the future.

People attempt to change others by blaming them or making them feel guilty, while denying their own guilt in the process.

Furthermore, I use to blame myself for not obtaining certain jobs with major corporations or institutions. I used to think that I did not get the job because of something I said, did not say, or how I dressed, perhaps. Why blame myself? Again, my self-esteem was to the point where I had to be the blame or it had to be my fault, it always was. As noted last week, self-esteem is very important and essential to eliminating the feelings of guilt and blame. It took

Wigland

One of the Northwest Largest Wig Displays
Wigs and Hairpieces For all Nationalities

EVA GABOR
NAOMI SIMS
RENEE OF PARIS

Synthetic & Human Hair
For Braiding & Weaving

Mon - Fr. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Saturday 10 - 5:30 pm

Near Lloyd Center
282-1664
1105
N.E. Broadway



Ride Tri-Met Free

All Tri-Met rides are free after 6 p.m. on New Year's Eve as a reminder that Tri-Met is a safe alternative to drinking and driving all year long. In addition, extra late-night service will be added to several major bus lines and MAX, in hopes that even more people will celebrate safely.

Those celebrating the new year should note that the last buses of the night will leave the Portland Mall at 2:32 a.m. The last MAX train will leave Pioneer Courthouse Square at 2:36 a.m. Special, late-night buses will be added on these Tri-Met lines:

- 5-Hawthorne, to Foster and 96th
- 5-Interstate, to Vancouver
- 9-Broadway, to Saratoga and 27th
- 9-Powell, to Powell and 98th Avenue

12-Barbur Blvd., to Tigard Transit Center

12-Sandy Blvd., to Sandy and 95th

15-Mt. Tabor, to Gateway Transit Center

15-N.W. 23rd Avenue, to Montgomery Park

57-Forest Grove, to Forest Grove
Most Tri-Met lines usually make their last trips at 11:32 p.m. or 12:32 a.m. on weekday nights. The later bus trips amount to more than 30 hours of extra Tri-Met service. But, as Tri-Met General Manager James E. Cowen said, "It's a small price to pay if we save some lives that night."

The 60 Tri-Met drivers who spend New Year's on the road will be wearing "No Thanks, I'm Driving" buttons to signify drug- and alcohol-free celebrations. And throughout the holidays, all Tri-Met buses will sport red ribbons as part of Mothers Against Drunk Driving's "Tie One On For Safety" campaign.



RIB EYE STEAK DINNER.....\$9.95
Friday, Saturday, & Sunday Only

This dinner includes USDA Choice Rib Eye Steak, Choice Of Salad, Fresh Garlic Bread, Baked Potato, Seasonal Vegetables, and a delicious choice from our tempting dessert tray.

7101 NE 82nd Ave. Portland 255-6722

Coupon Expires 2/28/91
Limit 2 dinners per coupon

FREE BROCHURE

Oregon Mountain Wreaths

Door swags, Centerpieces, Garlands or other fine gifts. Corporate or Personal.

5613 Nashville Road
Eddyville, OR 97343
(503) 875-2158

KEY LARGO

31 NW FIRST 223.9919

December
Wed. 19
LIP TO LIP
Thurs. 20
SHELLY AND THE FIREWORKS
Fri. 21 & Sat. 22
CRAZY 8s
Sun. 23
JESSIE MAE HEMPHILL
PROF. EDDIE LUSH
SARAH BAKER
Mon. 24 & Tues. 25
(Merry Christmas!)

Broadway Hair Weavers and Designers

will be offering X-Mas Specials Starting
Dec. 1, 1990 thru Jan. 1, 1991



- Curls \$50.00 Reg. \$65-\$75
- Relaxers \$35.00 Reg. \$45 & Up
- 10% off on partial weaves
- 15% off on full weaves
- Free condition or hair trim on press and curls
- Nails Full Set \$35.00 Reg. \$45.00
- Manicure \$8.00 Reg. \$12.00

So stop by 5852 N.E. 42nd Ave. and celebrate the Holidays with

Hattie Porter
Flenard Grisby
Carolyn Stoudamire
Ethel Bates-Bailey
Karol Davidson



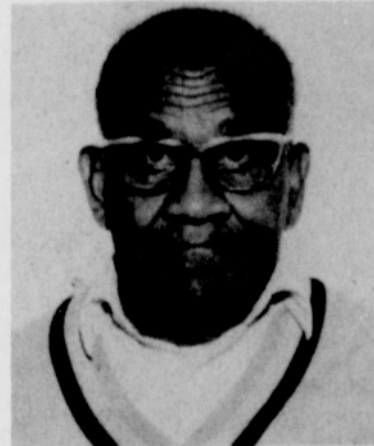
"A good product is your best advertisement"

Rene's Exotic Seasonings

236 S.W. Salmon
Suite A
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 240-5323



SEASON'S GREETINGS



Protect yourself
against **BIG LOSSES** and
COSTLY REPAIRS.
Call Levi Russell
289-3648

My name is Levi Russell. I am an experienced housing rehabilitation specialist and home remodeling inspector. I advise homeowners in making improvements to their homes, correcting code violations, selection and quality of materials, selection of contractors, and estimating cost of improvements. I also perform house inspections for home buyers. For more information, call 289-3648.