

Feelings: The ship is safest when it is in port but that's not what ships were built for

In an effort to inform and assist the community at large, Smoke Signals is publishing a monthly article addressing various mental health issues written by a member of the Behavioral Health Department at Health & Wellness. They welcome e-mails, letters and questions from people with mental health-related questions at tom.bender@grandronde.org.

By Tom Bender

Tribal Mental Health counselor

A number of years ago I was at a workshop on family counseling. Attending were five women, a female instructor and myself.

There was much talk about the role of feelings in the family — knowing what we're feeling, communicating our feelings, *feeling* our feelings.

As I listened, I became aware of a question bubbling from within, which I asked: "What makes feeling our feelings so important?"

My fellow students laughed at what seemed like an obvious question for budding counselors, but the teacher stopped to give it some thought before offering an answer, which has stuck with me to this day.

"It's important to feel our emotions because we can't leapfrog them and still develop into happy, spiritual beings. It's part of our evolution," she said.

In general, we like to embrace the so-called "good" emotions (e.g. happiness, joyful, content, loving and peaceful), but try to push away the "negative" emotions (anger, sadness, hurt, loneliness and jealousy).

A clip from the famous poem about love from Kahlil Gibran's book, "The Prophet," says:

*"... but if in your fear you would seek only love's peace and love's pleasure,
Then it is better for you that you cover your nakedness and pass out of love's
threshing-floor,*

*Into the seasonless world where you shall laugh, but not all of your laughter,
and weep, but not all of your tears."*

It's not as dour as it sounds. The poem is telling us that to love — to *feel* in this world, is to have one's heart broken and "to know the pain of too much tenderness." Loving another being is a risky thing, because to say yes to love means saying yes to the full range of emotions that comes along with it.

Much "safer" to "stay in port" and wall up one's heart so one doesn't have to feel hurt or sad or scared again, but at what cost?

We cannot cherry pick our emotions, saying, "I'll take these, but those over there — well, no thank you." Having the full spectrum of emotions is what makes us uniquely human.

When we refuse to feel the more challenging emotions, we dilute our emotional pool, as it were, and are unable to feel as much (or as deep) as we might.

Much of what we do in counseling is invite people to breathe in and feel their emotions, to welcome their feelings — no matter which ones they may be — like old friends.

It takes an enormous amount of energy to hold the challenging emotions at bay, but some people spend their entire lives doing just that.

What if all one needed to do to be happier in one's life was to stop the inner struggle, just for a moment, and simply breathe and feel? ■

Grand Ronde Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

The Grand Ronde Tribe is operating its own Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to assist Grand Ronde Tribal member households with energy payments (utility bills, firewood, etc.), energy emergencies and weatherization (e.g. furnace repairs). Income eligible households within Polk, Yamhill, Marion, Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas counties with a Grand Ronde Tribal member are eligible to apply. CTGR members in these counties need to contact Grand Ronde to receive assistance instead of from the community action agency in their area. Grand Ronde's program enables more CTGR members to be served than would otherwise have been possible.

If you are interested in obtaining services contact Social Services at 1-800-242-8196 for energy assistance and the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority at 503-879-2405 for weatherization. The Tribe's LIHEAP program also serves all income eligible Indians on Grand Ronde Reservation or trust land.



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For sale in Sheridan

28 X 48 Fleetwood manufactured home on a city lot in Sheridan. 2 bedroom, 2 bath home plus den. Oak cabinets in kitchen. Large pantry. Attached garage. Underground sprinkler system programmable. Fenced yard. Apple tree and peach tree. \$105,000 FIRM. Contact Lucy Hebert at West Valley Realty, 249 S. Bridge St., Sheridan. Phone: 503-843-5031. For more information about house, contact Cassandra Scott at 503-879-2080.



For sale in Grand Meadows



There's more than 1,700 square feet of room to spread out in this 4 bedroom, 2 bath home. Plus many upgrades: Jacuzzi tub, skylights, upgraded cabinetry woodwork, carport and lots more. You could possibly have payments less than rent; be building equity and have your payments going toward home ownership! Also there is no paying the State Income Tax, so long as you also work on Tribal land (the casino or the Tribal Governance Center).

Call 503-879-4029 (evenings) to come see for yourself this good homeownership neighborhood and great place to raise children.

2010 Tribal Marketplace dates

■ Jan. 1-2, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Jan. 3, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Dates subject to change due to conflicting Tribal or SMC events. Located across from Cedar Plank Buffet. For more information, contact Buzz Simmons at 971-226-9799.

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE TRIBAL COURT

PEACEMAKER PROGRAM

BRING PEACE OUT OF CONFLICT

The purpose of the Peacemaker Program is to provide a non-adversarial way to resolve disputes. The Peacemaker Program is intended to reflect the Tribe's tradition of using respected members of the community to heal conflicts among its members.

Trained Peacemakers facilitate the peacemaking process to guide the parties in coming to a mutually agreeable resolution to their conflict.

For more information about this Program, please contact the Tribal Court Program Specialist at the address listed below.

*Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it.
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound
together. All things connect.*

Chief Seattle, 1854

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