

CELEBRATING

By Marlene and Bob Neufeld

On Oct. 9, we are celebrating 40 years of marriage. In fact, we have been celebrating for the last month and a half and plan to continue celebrating into November. We recently read an article in the Globe and Mail called “How do you celebrate 40 years of marriage?” by Elda Hauschildt. In this article she asks, “How do you celebrate 40 years together without rubbing the fact of your longevity as a couple into the faces of those around you who are divorced, who live common-law with a second or third partner, who are widowed, who are dealing with serious illness or who are coming to grips with some other dissimilar place in life?”

We laughed at the belief that celebrating rubs something into the face of others. This belief is related to what we call the Upper Limit Pattern – that somehow our success takes away from other people. It is connected to a scarcity belief, that there is only so much success to go around.

Fortunately we are not alone. Of the 51 people who responded to the Globe and Mail article online, almost all of them agreed with us that we don’t need to stop ourselves from celebrating because we might make others feel bad.

Suze H commented “If your logic holds true then job-seekers would not be able to celebrate with their friends who get a great job, or those who are overweight could not congratulate friends who have worked hard to get trim and fit. Just because someone is in their third major relationship, or is single after an unsuccessful partnering, does not mean they cannot be happy for you! Geeze, you need new friends.”

Even if the writer of the article didn’t really mean that and was just trying to be funny, it is still a sad statement about what she thinks other people think. We have heard similar comments among our clients.

Many of us don’t let ourselves enjoy happiness, love, creativity, or reach our full potential because of unconscious barriers we create based on false beliefs from the past. We think we’re guilty of an imaginary crime somebody convicted us of in the past. Here are some examples of common imaginary crimes that we accuse ourselves of.

Which of these are holding you back?

1. **Out-doing or out-shining others** I’m afraid that if I am happy, I will outdo someone and make him or her look or feel bad.
2. **Burden** I’m afraid that if I am happy, my happiness will be a burden for someone else; I can’t expand to my highest potential because I’d be an even bigger burden than I am now; my success or happiness will cause hardship to someone else.
3. **Love Theft** This imaginary crime is based on a scarcity model - I’m afraid to let myself shine in my happiness, because it might take love from someone who needs it more; if I’m happy somebody else has to be unhappy; my happiness won’t last.

4. **Disloyalty & Abandonment** I'm afraid I will leave someone behind if I allow full happiness in my life; I will end up all alone, be disloyal to my roots or to someone; the people I love will turn away from me.
5. **Fundamentally flawed** Deep down, I'm afraid there's something fundamentally wrong with me from the start – so I can never be happy.
6. **Happiness is Bad** Deep down I believe that it's just bad to be happy and have fun; I need to suffer. Suffering is humanity's natural state, not happiness.

Do you notice a sinking feeling in your body just reading these crimes?

We started our celebrating by renting a retreat centre for a whole weekend and inviting friends to join us in celebrating all weekend. We celebrated with great food, amazing conversation, lots of dancing, laughter and swimming. So delicious!

We invite you to notice your own (possibly unconscious) beliefs that stop you from celebrating your successes and joys. We invite you to make a commitment to celebrate in a way that allows others to celebrate with you.

Marlene & Bob Neufeld practice body-centered Coaching and Psychotherapy. They are a couple who help couples learn life-changing skills and create closer, more loving relationships with one another. To learn more, see www.marleneandbob.com or call 613-594-9248 to arrange a complimentary 1-hour introductory session.