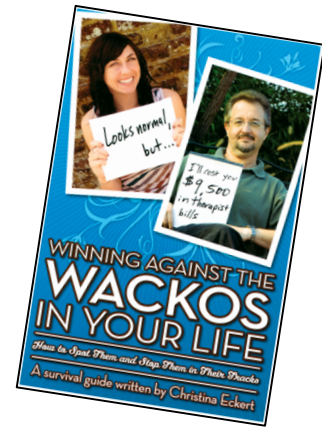


For Immediate Release

For a review copy of the book or an interview with the author, please contact Dottie DeHart, DeHart & Company Public Relations, at (828) 325-4966 or DSDeHart@aol.com.



Wacko Detox 2008:

Six Ways to Remove Problematic People from Your Life This Year

Are the Wackos in your life bringing you down? Why not make this the year you get rid of them once and for all? Author Christina Eckert explains how ridding yourself of toxic acquaintances is your smartest goal yet.

N. Potomac, MD (January 2008)—It's now mid-January. Surely by this point the luster has worn off your ambition to follow through on those old standby New Year's resolutions. (Remember, you're supposed to be losing ten pounds or going to the gym or paying off that credit card debt!) Now is the time to ask yourself what might improve your life even more dramatically than these lofty goals. Christina Eckert has a suggestion. She says most people unknowingly have one particular bad habit that is piling tons of excess anxiety on top of already stressful lives. If you're one of them, you're allowing the "Wackos" you know to drive you crazy...now is the time to finally break free.

"Think about someone who regularly gives you a sick feeling in the pit of your stomach," says Eckert, author of the laugh-out-loud new self-help book *Winning Against the Wackos in Your Life: How to spot them and stop them in their tracks* (Larstan Publishing, May 2007, ISBN-10: 0-97768958-1, ISBN-13: 978-0-97768958-3, \$14.95). "It could be a coworker or a so-called 'friend' or even a family member who is nothing more than an emotional vampire draining the life out of you. You know who your Wacko is—and you know your life would be far better off without him in it."

Wacko is the catch-all moniker Eckert uses to label the unbalanced, self-centered, and sometimes just plain mean individuals that walk among us in society. They are wolves in sheep's clothing and use hatefulness, deceit, and rage to manipulate the people around them. "Wackos are absolute displeasures to be around," she asserts. "They latch onto you like parasites and feed off of your weaknesses as long as you allow it." (**Note to Editor: Please see attached tipsheet for information on how to recognize Wackos.**)

Eckert adds that many people are too polite or passive to stand up to the many Wackos who dole out daily abuse to anyone in their path. Instead, they actually *host* the Wacko behavior by failing to immediately shut it down. Problem is, once the precedent is set, Wackos will continue to abuse a host until he or she stands up and refuses to be attacked.

Think about the Wackos in your own life. If you could snap your fingers and make them disappear, you would in a moment. Cutting them out of your sphere of influence is nearly that simple. Don't you think now is the time to tell the Wackos in your life *exactly* where they can put their attitudes?

Christina's book provides (often hilarious) advice to help you do exactly that. Packed with personal stories about the unstable individuals the author has encountered on her own path, it's one self-help book that won't put you to sleep. It's truly a breath of fresh air for anyone seeking refuge from a world of Wackos *anytime* of the year.

Read on to learn how to stop hosting Wackos and start hoisting them out of your life for good this New Year.

Find Some Self-Worth.

Wackos are bullies. They prey upon people they believe are weaker than them. If you want a higher spot on the totem pole, you are going to have to climb up there and take it. Think about how much you have suffered at the hands of the Wackos in your life—say the sarcastic girlfriend or controlling romantic partner. Now ask yourself, “Do I honestly believe that another person has the right to make me feel badly about myself?” Your answer should be a resounding NO! Realize that if another person intentionally tries to make you feel smaller, it is *their* problem, not *yours*.

“Work on your self-esteem every day,” says Eckert. “Try journaling or another wellness activity such as meditation. Or simply set goals for yourself and work toward them. Soon you will feel like an immensely powerful person. Harness that power deep within you and even the most cunning Wacko will not be able to shake your sense of self-worth. He or she will fall away like a stifling cocoon that you've outgrown.”

Learn to Say “No.”

Wackos will take what you allow them to take. They have a knack for recognizing a pushover, and once they mark you as vulnerable, you will never be free from their requests. This situation can be especially unfortunate at work, says Eckert.

“Wackos in the office will take advantage of you anytime you let them,” she insists. “They have no qualms about passing off their responsibility and will go to great lengths to deflect negative attention from themselves and onto you. You have to be very tough

with Wackos and refuse their requests. Otherwise, you will find yourself forever put upon. *No* is one of the most powerful words in the English vocabulary. If a Wacko asks you to do something unreasonable, say no *and mean it* every time.”

Hide Out.

Remember that most of the time Wackos operate under a pretense of friendship. If you have a friend who demonstrates Wacko behavior, remember that no one is forcing you to spend time with him or her. You can always hide behind the pretense of being busy and limit your contact to friendly e-mails. This way you can maintain civil ties, but don't actually have to serve face-to-face time with a Wacko.

“You wouldn't hesitate to avoid someone you feared might pose a physical threat,” Eckert points out. “Have the same regard for your *emotional* well-being. You have a right to avoid any person at any time.”

Keep Your Personal Life Private.

It is okay to have a friendship with a Wacko as long as you maintain boundaries. When you run into your catty sorority sister at your alumni holiday mixer, beware of how much information you divulge. If you look closely, you may see that she is already flexing her claws and waiting to pounce on a disclosure that could become the grapevine's juiciest gossip. Keep conversation light and casual.

“Wackos thrive on knowing and spreading dirt, so unless you don't mind one airing your dirty laundry, just keep it to yourself,” advises Eckert. “For some reason, women in particular feel the need to disclose the fact that they're separated from their husband, for instance, or that they may lose their job when the company is reorganized next month. Don't succumb. It's okay not to tell everything you know.”

Learn to Diffuse Ugly Scenes with Few Words.

If a Wacko begins to heckle you, silence her by using very few words yourself. If she says something like, “Wow, you would think by your age that acne would have cleared up!” all you need to say is, “You think so? Excuse me.” Don't give her any ammunition to use against you later. Eckert insists that five words or so is all anyone needs to diffuse an attack from a Wacko. Anything more and the Wacko feels like you are trying to justify yourself, which means that he or she has gotten to you. Don't give anyone the satisfaction of ruining your day.

“It may make you cringe to be so passive when you want to fight back, but the silence will get under your Wacko's skin like nothing else!” says Eckert. “Other great replies to an unexpected attack are, ‘Too bad you feel that way,’ ‘Oh, really? Interesting,’ and ‘I should get back to work.’”

Be Honest.

If a Wacko is making your life miserable and you have tried kinder approaches to no avail, it may be time to put on the gloves and come out swinging. Confront the Wacko in your life honestly, calmly, and, above all, firmly. Explain that you see no point in

continuing the relationship and be ready to cite examples that explain why you feel you have been mistreated.

“Be polite if you can, but don’t hesitate to be direct, either,” says Eckert. “Wackos have never been great at detecting subtleties. In the end, no one can blame you for doing what is personally right for you. Likewise, you can’t blame anyone but yourself if you fail to do so.”

While she is quick to clarify that she does not advocate cruelty to Wackos—many of whom really do need professional help—Eckert says allowing yourself to be victimized does them no favors either. In fact, by serving as their personal punching bag, you’re delaying the day that they overcome their Wacko ways once and for all.

Mostly, though, getting rid of your Wackos is all about freeing yourself to live the kind of life you deserve. And don’t forget: When you make the choice to participate only in healthy relationships, you’ll be better equipped to care for the friends and family members who *also* deserve better.

“When you remove toxic individuals from your social circle, you are actually empowering yourself to find peace and happiness,” Eckert observes. “You should settle for nothing less than a joyful life. Cut out the Wackos and you take another big step on the road to contentment.”

###

About the Author:

Christina Eckert has been a student of human behavior, self-analysis, and self-improvement for over twenty years. She began her study at Wheelock College in Boston, one of the most renowned colleges for child life education and teaching, where she earned two degrees. Being a keen observer of the human experience, and having spent half a lifetime being taken advantage of by what she calls *Wackos*, Christina Eckert, a self-described “Mother Teresa,” decided she had had enough and was ready to give all the Wackos in her life the old “heave-ho” once and for all.

Christina’s first observations of Wackos began as a young child and continued until she found herself involved in a business venture with a self-absorbed, egocentric, “friend,” who fancied herself a businesswoman, but in fact had no formal business training, had failed in seemingly every endeavor she had ever undertaken, both personal and professional, and had the most unbelievable habit of blaming everyone in her life for her own failings. Despite the obvious Wacko warning signs, Eckert gave her new partner the “benefit of the doubt,” and, as she puts it, “welcomed the new business proposition like

an ice-cold Boodles martini with Santa Barbara olives.” A short time later, the enterprise failed, and Eckert found herself “pulling the knife out of her back and wiping the blood off her face” from being “hit on the head with a two-by-four.” The experience so deeply affected Eckert, she decided to write a book about her lifetime of experiences with Wackos so that others would not have to endure the same emotional pain and frustration when they run across Wackos in their lives.

Her new book, *Winning Against the Wackos in Your Life: How to spot them and stop them in their tracks* (© 2007, Larstan Publishing), is written for the good guys out there: those of us who wear our hearts on our sleeves and are constantly pulling the knives out of our backs. While the subject of dealing with Wackos is serious, Christina laces her real-life Wacko experiences with a sensational sense of humor and a well-deserved dose of wry cynicism to keep you laughing—uncontrollably at times—while learning to identify and rate Wacko characteristics. As she translates Wacko behavior into four categories—the relatively benign Level 1 to the very dangerous Level 4—she describes in plain terms how Wackos integrate themselves into our lives for their own benefit, only to pull a double cross when the timing suits them. Then, and most importantly, Eckert tells us how to protect ourselves from the Wackos in *our* lives. The book is available now at Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Borders, and Target.

Christina Eckert lives with her husband of over twenty years and their three children in the Desert Southwest. She is working on her next book, *Winning Against the Wackos in Your Life for Teenagers*, and her new comedic screenplay about a weekend with old friends that is so hilarious you can’t believe it’s taken from real life.

About the Book:

Winning Against the Wackos in Your Life: How to spot them and stop them in their tracks (Larstan Publishing, May 2007, ISBN-10: 0-97768958-1, ISBN-13: 978-0-97768958-3, \$14.95) is available at bookstores nationwide and from major online booksellers.

For more information, please visit www.winningagainsthewackos.com.