

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Dust Bunnies & Soap Scum & Wackos...Oh, My! During Spring Cleaning This Year, Toss out the Wackos That Clutter Your Life**

*Wacko expert and author Christina Eckert says it's time to take out the trash!  
That is—get ready to send the toxic people in your world on their not-so-merry way.*

**N. Potomac, MD** (March 2008)—It's that time again. Soon we'll all be resetting our clocks, airing out our homes, cleaning out our closets and scrubbing our floors. As you tackle your yearly "spring cleaning" ritual, take a moment to ask yourself, *Is my home the only part of my life that needs serious detox?* Chances are your personal life has become a little cluttered as well. Think about it: Isn't there someone whose name on your caller ID evokes a cringe of dread, someone who adds unnecessary stress to your life? According to Christina Eckert, most of us can think of at least one person we would like to throw out with the bathwater—and she calls these people "Wackos."

"We all know someone who regularly gives us a sick feeling in the pit of our stomachs," 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, 2007, ISBN-10: 0-97768958-1, ISBN-13: 978-0-97768958-3, \$14.95). "This person 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 who 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 an absolute displeasure 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 simply too polite or passive to stand up to Wackos who dole out daily abuse to anyone in their path. Instead, they actually host this behavior by failing to

shut it down immediately. 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 for a moment. 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. There is no better time than spring—the season of fresh new beginnings—to tell the Wackos in your life *exactly* where they can put their attitudes! Here’s how:

**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*.

“The best way to work on your self-esteem every day is to learn what characteristics to look for in a Wacko,” says Eckert. “Once you have this knowledge, your power comes in giving the parasites who thrive on destroying your confidence, the boot! If you are one of the good guys out there wearing your heart on your sleeve, it’s important to take a good look at what’s in front of you when meeting new people. This way when you run across a Wacko you’ll know they don’t fit into your relationship criteria. Your self-esteem can remain intact, and you won’t be pulling the knife out of your back!”

**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 spring fling, 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. It wipes away any *excess-stress residue* and helps clear the lenses through which you view the world. And 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 a big ‘spring forward’ on the road to happiness and contentment.”

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### **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 currently working on a new book that will focus on helping teenagers lead

Wacko-free lives, 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:**

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**For more information, please visit [www.winningagainstthewackos.com](http://www.winningagainstthewackos.com).**