

COMMENT: ABUSE - it's NOT OK

Written by Sandy Gorst

Saturday, 10 September 2016 14:25 - Last Updated Sunday, 02 October 2016 17:44

This comment is solely the opinion of writer Sandy Gorst to the PAG Public Meeting 05.09.16 - "ABUSE - it's NOT OK".

The title holds nothing to disagree with, no one in their right mind could argue with it. What I question is definition.

The definition of abuse, as used by the speaker, does not tally with the definition which I am familiar with. The word abuse is a combination of two other words those being 'ab' which is used normally as a prefix meaning 'off', 'away from' as in words such as 'abduct, abnormal, abuse'. The remainder is the word use meaning, as we all know, how something is employed as in 'use a hammer', 'use a shopping basket' the use of a word or words. In this discourse however the word abuse was used in a very narrow context, or so it seemed.

Here it appeared that the word abuse implied the presence of violent undertones, both in language and also physical behaviour, this to the exclusion of any possible acceptability of the language or physical action under consideration.

An example of the totally wrong use of the word 'abuse' occurred when the speaker mentioned overhearing someone in a store saying to her child 'you are stupid'. My initial response to the speaker is 'How do you know that this particular child is not stupid?' and what exactly is wrong with telling someone that they are behaving stupidly when that is what is happening?

The discourse went on to discuss the level / amount of 'abuse' which is claimed to be taking place in society generally. Along with others in the audience, I was appalled at the magnitude of the problem as it was outlined to us, the impression given was that things were / are at epidemic proportions. On reflection and given the wide definition of the word 'abuse', the speaker was basically labelling everything that was not all 'sweetness and light', as either abuse or as potential abuse. Under these circumstances, Yes, 'abuse' is at epidemic levels.

Something that struck me very early on in the presentation was the description given to the actions of an abuser. Without any doubt whatsoever, the description of this unnamed abuser was the perfect description of a pure psychopath. Now, society does have it's fair share of psychopaths, to be precise there are, it is claimed, between two and four psychopaths for every one hundred people in the population and the ratio of men to women psychopaths is 3 : 1. That is, three men to every one woman. Taking this a step further. Let us suppose that the figure of four in a hundred people are psychopaths is correct, then what should be abundantly clear is that for every fifty people coupling together, that is getting married or just living together, there will be four psychopaths amongst them. Consider that psychopaths never prey on each other then of our fifty couples, four will be headed into misery at the hands of their psychopathic partner. That gives each individual, that partners with someone else, a one in twelve chance of entering a doomed partnership. If the estimate of the psychopath population is more accurate at two in every hundred, then each individual still has a one in twenty five chance of that doomed relationship. Maybe there is something in arranged marriages after all?

On a brighter note, it is probably the case that yes, people in relationships do occasionally have difficulties and yes, things can become a bit fraught on times and yes, these situations could be labelled 'Abuse', but should they? If it's a one-off, well maybe not. If, on the other hand it is a regular street fight and damage is being done, then it does qualify as abuse and intervention is justified, but by whom?

It used to be intervention by the family, but now that the 'family' is pretty much a defunct historic relic, we get the nations 'do-gooders' and quango's intervening to the detriment of us all. It would seem to me that everyone becoming involved in this 'spot the abuser' game should first of all be checked themselves for psychopathic tendencies and secondly they should be provided with a comprehensive education on the subject of the psychopath at work and play.

For anyone who is not too familiar with an accepted ABUSE - it's NOT OK description / definition of a psychopath. A

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psychopath is a person 'Without a Conscience' and an excellent treatise on the subject can be found in Dr Robert Hare's book titled 'Without Conscience'. To become involved in other peoples personal relationships, one really should have total knowledge of the whole relationship before becoming judgemental.

My own opinion, shared with many others, is that humanity is blighted not only by our own human failings but also by the constant interference in our private lives by those who think that they know better.

Think about it, if those who think that they know better really did know better, how is it that society is 'falling apart at the seams' faster today than ever before? I rest my case, pen, word processor and my mind.

I hope that I have provoked your thoughts and I look forward to some criticism.