



Margaret Lonsdale
Columnist

Confrontational exchanges---especially those involving pointed index fingers, twisted face making and loud, aggressive voices---repel me. That kind of communication signals the automatic drawing down of shades and engaging of deadbolts of my inner house. It might even bring on the shakes. Certainly, I'm not easily drawn into participating. Not a shouter. Nor a fighter. I have joked about the importance of wearing comfortable shoes. You know, in case circumstances make it necessary to run.

I've known people who thrive on expression through aggression. You don't have to get physical to throw a cloak of menace over a conversation. There

are those who wield power through the combination of harsh words and threatening body language. At least they seem to believe they wield power. He who shouts loudest and includes the most insulting expletives wins. Maybe. There must be something gained by that kind of behaviour or it wouldn't be repeated time and time again by so many.

If you shout loud enough and behave menacingly enough, you may cause others to less frequently speak up or offer an alternative to your viewpoint. You may establish yourself as someone not to be messed with, 'or else'. If anyone dares question your actions, you may imply through your verbal aggression that there will be consequences. Not good ones. You mock, denigrate, belittle. You dismiss questions that don't suit you. You don't take advice. You reject anything that fails to advance your own

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position of power, your vision of what is right. You may gather weak-minded followers who feel a bizarre attraction to the strange glow of your power based in egocentricity, aggression, negativity, and intimidation of anyone who challenges your authority. Fair play is foreign to you. You are blind to the destruction you cause, to the pain and suffering inflicted upon many for the sake of your own gain. Over time, those who oppose you fall silent and your vision of the world hangs in the air like a shroud blocking the sun.

So it is in the world of a bully. He gazes out over his landscape and smiles with satisfaction at his perceived accomplishments. He clears his throat and spits when he thinks of those who dared stand up to him and were thwarted. He rewards adoring minions who willingly and without question continue to support his dictums. He proclaims himself winner as though

he had won the ultimate championship, the title in a boxing match, through fair play. He has convinced himself that he is deserving.

Call it Karma. Call it the Natural Law. Call it Poetic Justice. Bullies never really win, despite their program of self-aggrandizement and delusions of invincibility. True power requires the unconditional and genuine support of many, not a cult of mindless drones. It is earned, over time, through honour, respect, integrity. Power resides in a foundation built on love for and trust in your fellow human being. The house of a bully washes away like a fantasy castle constructed in sand, as fake in its grandeur as the temporary power wielded by its loathsome former inhabitant.

"Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad with power." -Charles A. Beard



Billi J Miller
Columnist

At 18 years old, I remember sitting on a beach on the coast of the North Sea outside of Amsterdam staring, in wonder, at the ocean. It was the first one I had seen. I remember thinking even then: "I live in Canada and I've never seen either one of my own". There are three to choose from, and I had yet to see one of them. It was wrong to me, and I told myself right then, that by age 30, I would see every province in Canada.

I met that goal and in doing so I fell in love with Atlantic Canada. My first trip

here was in 2003 and as I sit and write this in April 2015, I'm back for my sixth visit. This time, I have my 21-month old daughter with me, which although she will not yet have memories of it, I know I most definitely will. This trip had a few "missions": one was to increase my photo portfolio of Atlantic Canada as I am now a photographer (many of my old photos are on film) - (check); the other was to write - (check); the other (aside from catching up with good friends here) was to somehow honor my upcoming 40th birthday and the fact that all in my life is "just as it should be".

It's hard to put into words why this place is as special as it is. But, many people,

especially those from here, agree. It's mystical, charming, quaint, wild, friendly, warm and probably one of the most soulful places I've ever been.

I remember on my first visit to St. John's, Newfoundland, when I was walking up the hill with my backpack and camera to Signal Hill to take photos, a woman stopped me to ask if I needed a ride. We got to talk, and I explained that it was my first time there and I was enjoying the walk and the scenery. She asked if I needed a place to stay. I already had lodging, but I was awe-struck and warned that someone would ask a stranger into her home.

This trip, while in Peggy's Cove (home of the famous lighthouse), I parked near a Coffee shop to find a washroom to "freshen up" my 21-month old. A man stopped me saying renovations were on and the coffee shop wasn't quite ready yet, but to feel free and use the house in behind it. He led me there and showed me the washroom. I changed my daughter and when I came out the man's father was there. We talked for over 10 minutes and in that time; he shared with me how destructive Hurricane Bill was and about the loss of his wife four years before. He eyes moistened telling me about how they were married for 57 years. I had a letter written and mailed to "John" telling him how much I enjoyed meeting him before I flew home. "We like pen pals", I wrote.

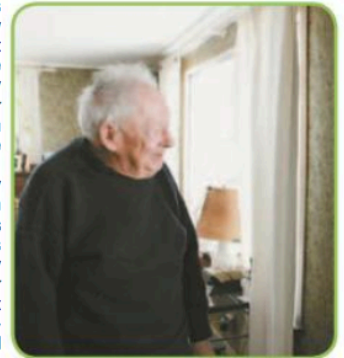
Back in 2009, I stayed in Mahone Bay with a good friend and lobster fisherman (Garnet) and his wife. That trip, I met his family (a daughter and son), stayed at his cabin (or, here known as "camp"), ate my first raw scallop, took a stroll in a lobster fishing boat, took in a traditional east coast "fish fry", and got to experience Hurricane Bill (which they quickly renamed to "Hurricane Billi"). By the end of that trip, Garnet and his wife had a previously planned trip out of province, but insisted I stay at their home (with a vehicle, no less)

until my flight left for home a day later. I remember driving around Mahone Bay and waving at people I ran into because I now knew them. I just remember so many moments during that trip - realizing that I was so lucky and I was making memories I would never, ever forget. (Not to mention: Garnet's daughter and I (now and a 1/2 years later) refer to each other as "sisters").

This trip, I stayed a short drive away in a vacation rental with my daughter (simply for child-friendly-ness) but, had many visits with these same old friends.

I met Garnet originally while working at a fishing lodge in the Northwest Territories in 2005. I remember appreciating that experience too, knowing full well that I was in a part of the country many Canadians would never see. I've heard many say that of the east, as well. I just knew, though, on my first trip 12 years ago that Atlantic Canada touched me, and it wouldn't soon let go.

It still hasn't - and, I'm convinced it never will.



"John" looks lovingly at his wife's photo on the wall when talking of their 57-year marriage.



This renovated 170-year old schoolhouse was "home" for the week for Billi and her daughter while they caught up on their visits and took many photos of the breath-taking landscape.



"Garnet" sits at his wharf with Billi's 21-month old daughter in Mahone Bay, NS.



"Garnet" heads out from Indian Point Harbor for a morning of setting lobster traps while Billi and Kate wave goodbye. Photos Billi J Miller.