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### THE DISADVANTAGES OF BEING POLITICALLY CORRECT

I really have to chuckle every time I hear the phrase “politically correct” because most of the time politics are better known as being “politically corrupt”...but that’s another story. I guess that being politically correct means that we can no longer use the word “Christmas” or “Ho, Ho, Ho” in order to satisfy everyone and not upset anyone. Well, I’m not going to go into the origins of this concept or what it specifically entails. Instead, I would like to go behind the concept and try to help you understand its purpose.

For me, being politically correct is an attempt to be perfect and safe. That suggests that it’s wrong to be unsafe...to be able to speak out with what it is that you believe. Instead, the norm this concept holds to is that of having everything uniformly fit into a neat little package that is acceptable across the board. I believe that there are dangers involved in this kind of lifestyle. The danger is that we tend to lose our individuality for the sake of conformity. Now, don’t get me wrong. There’s nothing wrong with conformity in and of itself but if our individuality is at stake, then there’s a problem because that is what people tend to protest about...namely their need to be their own person. The same hairstyles, jeans, jewelry, shoes, ticky-tacky-houses and even the same bodies are touted as being the only way to dress and look. I find that to be very sad. What happened to the person...the individual?

What many people do not realize is that perfection is unachievable. And so is a person’s ability not to make any mistakes going through life. Life is about learning and conformity or a need to be “perfect” do not allow any effective learning to take place. The greatest learning is when we don’t know that we are learning and are having fun. Learning is different for everyone. There are no two children who learn the alphabet or their times tables in the same manner. For that matter, there are no two adults that learn in the same, exact manner either. Some of you may remember that dreaded disease called polio. Dr. Jonas Salk was a researcher who was attempting to find a cure for cancer and made a mistake only to find the cure for polio through the use of a vaccine. He made a mistake and we profited from it.

While practicing as a psychotherapist and now as a consultant, I find that one of the main contributing factors that create stress in people's lives is their need to be perfect. It's a hard job and the reason that it's so hard is that there is never an end result that allows us to enjoy the fruits of our labor. Usually, the main outcome for those who spend their lives trying to be perfect is a great deal of frustration and anger. Most of us have perfectionistic tendencies to one degree or another. The most common base for those tendencies can commonly be traced to misinterpretations that we made as children that we needed to be perfect in order to be loved. For some of us, that message from parents or parent-figure was driven home with a vengeance and the pattern of trying to achieve that state of perfection lasted well into our adult years despite the fact that there is no need anymore.

Realizing that it is no longer necessary to be perfect is hard to achieve but once we make that determination, it feels like a burden has been lifted from our lives. Most of us who have a need to be perfect don't really know what it's like just to be who we are. The key to changing that pattern is to be able to learn to relax....something that perfectionists aren't "allowed to do". Once we are able to experience that feeling of relaxation, though, it might serve up an incentive to continue to work at developing that state as a regular part of our daily routine. Just try this for a moment. Push back from your desk or table and place your hands on your lap and close your eyes. Now, just allow any tension that you might be experiencing to drain from your body. A good way of doing this is by starting at your toes and working your way up your body to relax those parts. Remain relaxed once you've achieved this scan for a few minutes and try to capture the feeling. Once the feeling is captured, your recalling it can allow you to experience it repeatedly and there will no longer be a need to be politically correct.

### **A Brief Biographical Sketch**

*After an over 40 year career as a professional psychotherapist and Director of The Sports Stress Clinic in Amherst, NY, Charles Bonasera came to Florida and decided to use the benefits of his previous professional experiences in his new roles of Consultant in Life Management and Business Coaching as well as his expertise as a Motivational Speaker. He once again became involved with athletes in different sports training them with his techniques to help them develop and maintain focus as well as staying in their zone. Much of his training methods are derived from the CD collection he developed under the heading of WIN-WIN SECRETS as the President of Personal Identity Controls. This collection consists of thirty-six programs dealing with vital issues in the management of stress.*

*Another role that he adopted to add to his professional career was that of Author. Early in the 1980's he wrote Guide to a Life Management Process which he has re-written as a workbook to successfully help people manage their stress which includes his own Working Model. As a result in his interest in golf and realizing that it was essentially a "mind game", he wrote The Mental Side of Golf which can benefit the beginner as well as professionals playing the game of golf.*

*He then compiled over five-hundred sayings that he had developed in the course of his professional career as stimuli to help people change patterns in their lives entitled How to Stay Well and Live Life to the Fullest. This was followed by a book documenting case studies around disruptive life patterns including ways to change them under the name of How in the Hell Did This Happen to Me? Both his personal involvement in sports as a participant, coach, manager and in his role in officiating, inspired him to write a primer for parents and coaches entitled The Legend of Little League.*

*Charles invites you to view his website at [www.charlesmbonasera.com](http://www.charlesmbonasera.com) as well as to write with your comments and questions to his e-mail address ([charles@charlesmbonasera.com](mailto:charles@charlesmbonasera.com)). He would also be very happy to communicate with his readers by telephone should they desire. His professional motto is “seeking alternative methods to happiness” and wishes those touched by his words to practice the three secrets to a happy life: “enjoy life and enjoy it thoroughly ... develop and maintain a sense of humor ... bring as much love into your life as possible.*