

Human Kind, Morality, and "Playing Dirty" A One Woman Study of Herself

Scientist Finds the Beginnings of Morality in Primate Behavior

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/21/us/21mass.html?ex=1332129600&en=d258a45cf34b4993&ei=5089&partner=rssyahoo&emc=rss> this is in response to a blog by

halflete: <http://halflete.spaces.live.com/> **Human Kind, Morality, and "Playing Dirty" A One Woman Study of Herself** First let me say, that the most credentials I have for writing this piece is the fact that 1. I am human, 2. I have been raised with some sense of morality 3. I have recently found myself for the first time in my life "Playing Dirty" and 4. I am an amateur psychologist having taken many college level classes, read many books and articles.. And that

is it. I'm not PhD, not even in basket weaving! ***** "To thine own self be true" -Shakespeare's "Hamlet" ***** My mother's side of the family prides itself on being "civilized". They did not approve of my father's side of the family, which was considered, "Uncivilized", unruly, and even dare I say it, somewhat, dirty. I grew up knowing the distain that one side of the family feels for the other. Mother tried to "protect" us and keep us from the uncivilized side. the uncivilized side never quite understood why. Hence, my personality displays features of both the "dark" and the "light" sides of my particular life. Bottom line is that they were all just people. People with good, bad, and ugly mixed in. On my mother's side there is a murderer, (I am a direct descendant, with only two generations between myself and that person), there are child molesters, perverts, along with your regular garden-variety hard workers, housewives, and just plain regular folk. Mother's side did not speak of or acknowledge the bad folk in the family; these are things I found out through research as an adult. On my father's side are the occasional horse thief, murderer, child molester and other assorted colorful personalities as in my mother's side. The difference being that the good folks of my father's side didn't seem to shove the bad stuff under the rug so much. There were good people on this side too, judges, town selectmen, and a pilgrim on the Mayflower! I grew up hearing many times from directly from my mother, "Two Wrongs DO NOT make a Right" (maybe two lefts?), and yet it was this same woman who overtly traded her granddaughters wellbeing, i.e. she emotionally abandoned a blood grand daughter in order to insure financial support for the rest of her life. We won't go into details, but my kid was hurt, hurt bad, and the results were devastating and I think, life long. So, how does one reconcile the behavior and morality of the folks one looks up to for moral guidance as they themselves grow up and form their own morals?? How does this all effect the adult? And how does playing dirty fit in to all this stuff anyways! Just hours before reading Halfletes blog about "playing dirty" I read a New York Times article about how scientists are seeing morality in the Great Apes. The conclusion is that ethics, morality, etc. has evolutionary roots, which we evolved as moral beings in response to needing to survive. Hence, many thoughts have crossed my brain today, put the New York Times article to bed with Halflete and have sweet dreams of my own life. What did I see?? It is all a matter of opinion of course.. It's my word against all others that I write about. But to put it plain and simple I have been a product of a dysfunctional family, and married into more dysfunction, and then after being smart enough to get out of that, still was beatdown enough to have picked a boyfriend who was just as bad or worse than my husband.. and yes, I admit my own "dysfunction." I am conscious of my own shortcomings and have spent at least ½ my life trying damn hard to over come them, only

to hit my mid years and say "\$@&^ it! People can like me or not, I don't give a flying *\$@&^." I am tired.. So, I go along and having been told all my life to be a "good girl" to "play nice", and "follow the rules". I have made it point to do everything I have done in my life as truthfully, and as "right" as humanly possible. For the most part I still function by and believe in, "being good for goodness sake." In a previous child custody case I operated by the "spirit of the law", always trying to be on the up and up. Naively not understanding how anyone could operate any other way. I've been raped, I've received nightly beatings and have chipped teeth to prove the beatings. I've been emotionally abused to the point that I thought I was nuts-my self esteem shot to the point, that I could not make a simple decision without running it by friends and support people first. I have come a long way, baby. It took antidepressants, anti anxiety pills and years and years of therapy to over come all this. I no longer take antidepressants or anti anxiety pills. Maybe I should. But, at age 45, I have finally stooped to "playing dirty". I can give you all the reasons. The man emotionally abused me, he physically and emotionally abused my son (in fact, my son still swears this man molested him), he took drugs and put the whole family through the ringer of drug abuse. And the only times he was sorry for what he did was when he was sorry that he got caught. After making my emotional comeback from the rape(s), beatings, and emotional abuses of the husband, it was the dysfunctional boyfriend that finally did me in to the point where I don't care what it takes to win. **I am going to win.** I don't know if it's the survival instinct, or the tired of loosing, the exhaustion of being harassed, or just being plain sick of the neediness that abusers display, but I can tell you I want this man to disappear and I am playing dirty to get what I want. At this point I have lied to him about the origins of our child. I have lied to him about my part in our relationship, I have tried with all my might to confuse him, cause distrust, and utterly destroy any faith and trust he might have ever had in me. The idea has been to make him hate me so much that he will just leave me alone and go away. And there is no rational reason for him to do so, our child resides with me, which means he will continue to live close by and drive me utterly nuts! I would love to call it a survival instinct because then I could rationalize my behavior but the reality is, that I am in more danger of killing myself than of him killing me. I get angry, my blood pressure must go through the roof, there is nothing rational about what I am doing or why. Why do people play dirty?? Except that I want this man to leave my life and let me live in peace. I had a year and a half of several hundred miles between us. My life was peaceful. I loved life; I loved my husband, my kids, my home, and my yard that I fill more each day with flowers that I love. I was the happiest I'd been my whole life. When this "boyfriend" followed me to my new residence, and I was truly and utterly devastated. My life has not been the same since.. Every day I wake up in a shadow knowing this could be the day that it all starts up all over again. If I could legally do it, I'd have him removed from existence, and those are some strong feelings from someone who is a relatively peaceful person who has led a mostly peaceful life. Another excuse and it's one that has played constantly over and over through out my life, is that I want peace. I have longed for peace. In my childhood I sought out peace, in my first marriage I remember crying to my husband that I wanted peace.. I never found it with the boyfriend.. I finally found it with myself, and then invited in a man who was good enough to be my husband. and having tasted it and loved it, not getting nearly enough of it to quench the thirst of my being, it has been shattered again. There are days when I barely function now. I have a very understanding husband, or maybe he has no clue how bad off I am. Again I search for peace. Does this equate to survival? I do not think that I can, at this point because of where I stand on a mental and emotional plane be truthful with myself or you about the why.. I am trying, but I'm up to page four of my essay with still no answer of why I

at age 45 years of age, have changed my whole Modus operandi and begun to play dirty. This essay is simply another voice amongst the many that offer more fodder for the debate as to the why, and the how of it all. I am sure there is more than one reason. I'm sure that the man has touched some deep and buried emotional scar in me, and if I were to listen to him, my reactions are all the faults of others and none of his making. It's my ex husbands fault that I did not have the patience with him that was required to make a relationship work. Eight years of my life was not enough, obviously.. eight years where I never once, promised life long loyalty, let alone love. I was never able to commit to the man, my gut told me NO. Maybe there is a buried child in there fighting for survival right now. Who truly sees him as a threat to survival, but that would never win in a jury of my peers as to why I have treated him so unkindly.. Who am I now? How do I bury this each night? What does it have to do with survival? Was I ever the person I thought I was: honest, sincere, and good to my fellow human being? Or am I simply like everyone else, "just plain regular folk"