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*Really?*

A pet peeve of mine is entitlement. No, this essay isn't about white male privilege. Nor is it about drivers who think they own the road. Instead, it's unexpected instances of entitlement that provide a sudden jolt. My upbringing was committed to the idea that caring for others was a significant value. Understandably, it was carried to an extreme, but that provides a stark contrast to the self-centered behaviors that I often encounter.

In the late '70s while in graduate school at University of Florida, we had a required computer course that was scheduled at 4:30 on Fridays. That was back in the days of mainframe computers, before PCs. We were learning to collect and crunch data, which involved computer runs. We'd have to check back periodically to see if our run had finished and then look over the results to see if a next run was necessary. The process was often not completed till around midnight. Although we would stop to eat at some point, it was a long and arduous evening at the end of the week. We groused among ourselves about the scheduling of this course, but it never occurred to me, and I doubt anyone else, to complain to the chair of the department. That's just the way it was.

In contrast, a generation later, *I* am the chair of a large university department. Late one Wednesday afternoon my phone rings. It's Michelle, a master's student. She tells me that she needs a Tuesday evening career counseling class the following semester because the scheduled Wednesday evening course conflicted with her choir night. I decide to take the time to explain to Michelle the realities of scheduling a course. I told her that scheduling was done about a year and a half ahead. I needed an available subject area professor, a classroom, and at least 20 students for a class. She listened, then said, "*Can't you make that happen?*"

My sister, Lanny, a year older, and I grew up during the "children should be seen but not heard" era. I remember going to my Aunt Dorothy's for Sunday dinner (noon meal) after church. I was 5, Lanny was 6. We were required to sit side-by-side on the piano bench facing

into the living room and sit quietly while the adults talked. When the meal was ready, white napkins in our laps, we ate at the big dining table. Only after this command performance of politeness and cuteness, were we allowed to change to play clothes and head outside to find Whiskers and Buttons, the two old cats, and swing with them on the creaky porch swing.

In contrast to that experience is a recent incident at a local library. My partner, Marc, is a storyteller and often is scheduled to tell stories to children at libraries. That particular Saturday I attended. He was standing in an open area two steps higher than the seated audience in the library. While telling his story, two small children decided to play on the stairs in front of him. They stomped and ran up and down the stairs and bumped into Marc while he was trying to focus on telling his story. No parent intervened.

I'm a regular at water aerobics class at Colorado Athletic Club. I have my usual locker and bench that I always gravitate toward. I came from the shower only to find my clothes on the floor. A younger woman said very cheerily, "Oh, hi. I moved your things so there would be enough room for my daughter and me."

I just have one question. *"Really? How self-involved have we become?"*