

Cooperative Funeral Fund Inc.

People Pleasers

as seen in:

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► **Cooperative Funeral Fund Inc. (CFF)** specializes in the management of preneed and perpetual care fund accounts. CFF has provided a program for the death care industry to facilitate the creation, investment, tax compliance and payout of funeral trusts since 1989.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

People in the funeral and cemetery profession tend to be people-pleasers. In many ways, this is a good thing, but you know what they say about too much of a good thing. We need to take care of ourselves as well as others.

How to take care of yourself while trying to please everyone

“I am the last person to ever let you down.” Yes, we are all probably a little guilty of using this response when Joe Public makes fun of what we do and who we are. Seriously, these are the same people who depend on us during one of the most traumatic times in their lives. The ironic part of this statement is that those of us working in the death care industry never want to let *anyone* down—metaphorically speaking of course.

According to “Psychology Today” (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/shrink/201210/are-you-people-pleaser>), “A people pleaser is one of the nicest and most helpful people you know. They never say ‘no.’ You can always count on them for a favor. In fact, they spend a great deal of time doing things for other people. They get their work done, help others with their work, make all the plans, and are always there for family members and friends.” Hmmm, does this sound vaguely familiar?

Collectively, those of us in the death-care industry are the ultimate “People Pleasers.” Universally, we are the most polite and accommodating people who will never (well, almost never) say “no.”

No matter what aspect of death-care services we provide, we all embody the true definition of “people pleaser.” I wonder if those of us taking care of families, either preneed or at-need, were born people pleasers, or did our choice of profession make us this way? Maybe our nature it is what led us to this profession.

In searching for information, I found more material on the negative aspects of people-pleasing:

- “People-Pleasing: The Hidden Dangers of Always Being ‘Too Nice’” (<https://lonerwolf.com/people-pleasing/>)
- “Unhealthy People-Pleasing

Behaviors You Need to Stop—Verily” <https://verilymag.com/2015/06/unhealthy-approval-seeking-behavior-people-pleasers>

- “How to Stop Being a People Pleaser: 8 Steps (with Pictures)” <http://www.wikihow.com/Stop-Being-a-People-Pleaser>. This last one had me intrigued because it included visuals which looked like something right out of the 1950s—check it out for yourself.

The positive aspect of being a people-pleaser in our profession

However, as a whole, people in our profession fall on the positive end of the people-pleasing spectrum. Here are 10 examples of our people-pleasing characteristics that make us all really good at what we do:

1. Calm in an emotional storm. We are the calming voice of reason for the families that we serve.
2. Awesome listeners. We “hear” what the families are asking for, even when they are not able to exactly express their wishes.
3. Authority in adaptability. We are able to find a way to modify the situation to suit the family’s needs.
4. Go-with-the-flow pros. Because we are likeable, people trust in us to always take care of them with honor and respect.
5. Resident experts. We enjoy sharing our wealth of knowledge with those in need of our services—we just can’t help ourselves.
6. Boxing ring referees. We work out any disputes with poise and confidence and with minimal eye-rolling.
7. Cruise directors. We are able to coordinate details involving many people and places to accommodate any reasonable request.
8. Quick thinkers. Because we are

Keep an eye on any building resentment. Make sure you have an outlet where you can deal with your feelings, whether by talking to someone you trust or by practicing yoga or meditation. If that approach isn't your cup of tea, maybe put a punching bag in your meditation room.

always thinking on our feet (even while we are sleeping), we are able to handle anything thrown at us at the last minute and make it work.

9. Entertainers. We specialize in putting the "fun" in funeral — when it is appropriate, of course! With more families wanting a "celebration of life," it is becoming more the norm.

10. "Your way is our way" gurus. Because we don't want to ever let anyone down, we are the best people to be the last people to "let you down."

How to practice self-care

Too much people-pleasing can contribute to job burnout, so it is important for us to take care of ourselves as we take care of the people we serve. In doing so, it is vital to remember a few things:

- **Never neglect yourself.** Make sure to feed your soul physically, mentally and spiritually by setting aside a designated time to take care of yourself.
- **Keep an eye on any building resentment.** Make sure you have an outlet where you can deal with your feelings, whether by talking to someone you trust or by practicing yoga or meditation. If that approach isn't your cup of tea, maybe put a punching bag in your meditation room.
- **Stay present.** Watch for signs of disengagement. An example of this would be when you are in a room full of people and you feel like you have mentally checked out.

It is impossible to be everywhere people ask us to be. It is OK to know when you can and when you cannot be somewhere. If that fails, there is always cloning

• **Watch for and deal with stress and depression.** If you are feeling overwhelmed, ask for help. If you have a long "honey-do" list, prioritize. I will bet you a week on any tropical island that there are a few items that can wait until *much* later to complete.

• **Remember that you don't have to say "yes" to everything.** No one wants to be taken advantage of. Set your boundaries and know what situations you are comfortable with.

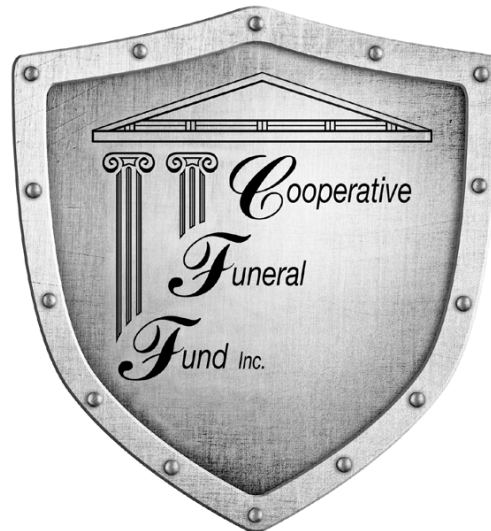
If someone is taking advantage of your

people-pleasing nature, it is only the other person's fault one time. After that, the fault is yours.

Finding balance between work, family and play is important if we are to live

happy, healthy, fulfilling lives. We, of all people, know that life is too short, a mantra we often forget. Now do yourself a favor and don't ever let yourself down. (Sorry, I just couldn't resist!) □

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