

# NEWS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED

*Carla Cotropia*



## A COLLECTION OF EMBARRASSING MOMENTS

Here are some:

Maggie told me about an incident that occurred in her writing class. The assignment was to write about their most embarrassing moment. One member of the class stood up and read her story. She had a one-night stand with a fellow and was contemplating what if anything it meant the morning after when her phone rang. It was the fellow calling wanting to thank her.

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He said he wanted to thank her because he had been on the fence as to his sexual preference and after last night with her he now knew he was gay. Oh dear. As Debbie Downer would say, “wah-wah”.



Judy told me she was once in Seattle and was walking down the street. She admitted she was dressed “casual” but didn’t realize exactly how casual she looked. She was handed a flyer and a concerned young woman told her there was plenty of free housing in Seattle. Judy tried to explain she wasn’t homeless but couldn’t seem to convince the young woman otherwise and just took the flyer and hurried away. She admitted perhaps she did look like she lived on the street.



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME

I took a deposition and when it was over the court reporter informed me that I had on one brown shoe and one black shoe. I gave a speech once with the price tag still on my sweater. This was the period where I didn't like to look in the mirror.



Ok, I will go ahead and admit one very big embarrassing moment. This was during the 80s when I hung out (i.e., drank in bars) with some very successful plaintiff lawyers. They were all men of course because in those days that was the way it was. I was like a kid sister to the group and because of my very nerdy appearance, no one considered me a romantic interest. Fortunately, or unfortunately for my liver, I did a good job of keeping up with them, drink-wise.



**SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME**

No matter how drunk they got, it was always about trial war stories, how they clobbered someone on the witness stand, and other informative trial techniques. It was a learning lesson.

Only problem was one night we were all drinking in a private room in a fancy hotel and I went to the bathroom and discovered I had started my period and the entire back of my skirt was red. This was the moment I wanted to go thru the floor. Not knowing what to do I froze. One of my drinking buddies, a powerful trial lawyer, began knocking on the bathroom door. I opened it a peek and he calmly said, “Wash out your skirt and get back out here. We just ordered another round.” Not knowing what else to do, I complied. One of the group, a Texas Supreme Court Judge at the time, was so embarrassed or freaked out he had left. As I walked back to the table and looked at all those nervous men, I said, “In case you didn’t know I am still capable of having children.” The relief on everyone’s face was palpable and with big smiles all-round, we continued the trial war stories and drank another round.



**SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME**

## I LOVED GEORGE CARLIN

George has been dead since 2008 but his memory lives on. He had an uncanny way of saying things provocative but still truthful. His famous “Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television” which got him arrested, is a far cry from what we hear today. In some ways “TV No- No Words” were never the same after the Bill Clinton/Monica Lewinsky affair. Words never spoken on TV were now being said on the six o’clock news. So, George was just ahead of his time.



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME



Here are some of his famous quotes:

Here's all you have to know about men and women; women are crazy, men are stupid. And the main reason women are crazy is that men are stupid.

Men are from Earth; women are from Earth. Deal with it.

Some people see things that are and ask "Why" Some people dream of things that never were and ask, "Why not?" Some people have to go to work and don' have time for all that.

The word bipartisan usually means something larger than usual deception is being carried out.

A house is just a place to keep your stuff while you go out and get more stuff.

Most people work just hard enough not to get fired and get paid just enough money not to quit.

Never argue with an idiot. They will only bring you down to their level and beat you with experience.

I like it when a flower or a little tuft of grass grows through a crack in the concrete. It's so F\*\*kin heroic.

Religion is like a pair of shoes: Find one that fits for you, but don't make me wear your shoes.



**SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME**

Most people with low self-esteem have earned it.

I went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman, “Where’s the self-help section? She said if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.”

Have you ever noticed that anybody driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac?

Some people see the glass half full. Others see it half empty. I see a glass that’s twice as big as it needs to be.

It’s never just a game when you’re winning.

People who say they don’t care what people think are usually desperate to have people think they don’t care what people think.

My advice: just keep moving straight ahead. Every now and then you find yourself in a different place.

Trying to be happy by accumulating possessions is like trying to satisfy hunger by taping sandwiches all over your body.

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but the moments that take our breath away.

Don’t just teach your children to read. Teach them to question what they read. Teach them to question everything.



**SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME**

## Carla's Favorites:

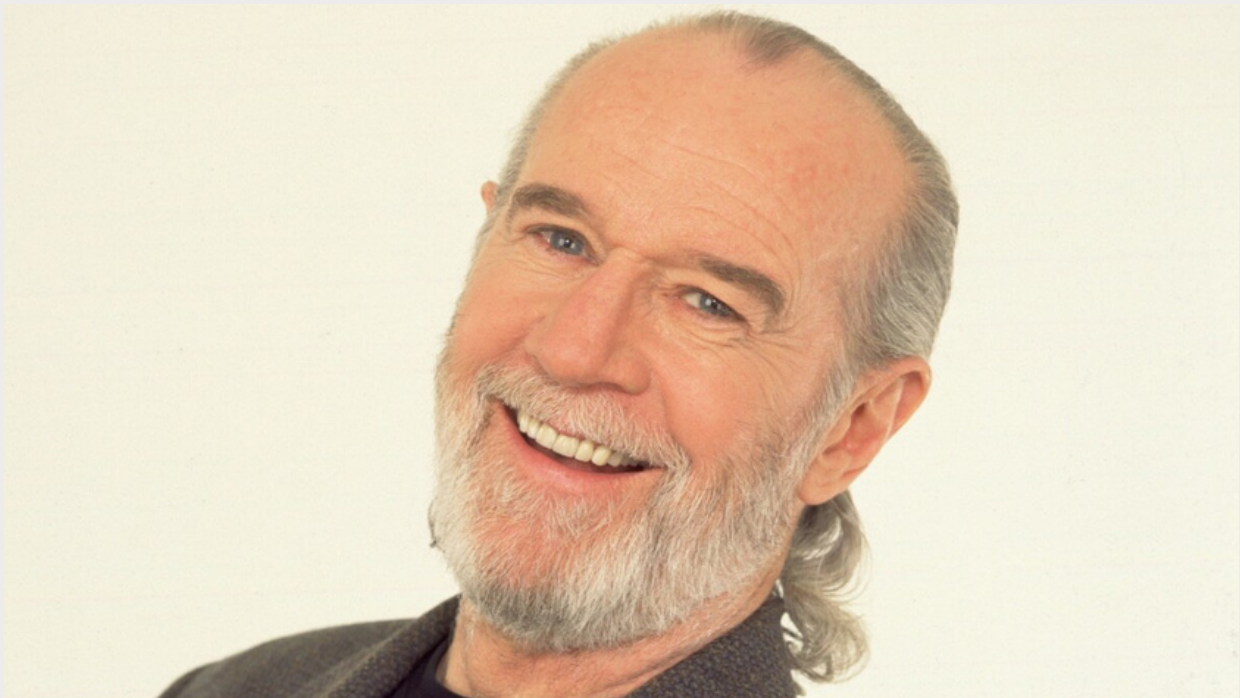
Trash that won't burn--- another way of saying you are in big trouble.

My brain is on 2 bars.

A lyric from Prince, "when the elevator of life brings you down, just reach up and punch a higher floor."

If in doubt, punt.

If you know you are not in control, you are in actually in control since no one is really in control anyway.



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME



## DO YOU KNOW A NARCISSIST?

You may know one or horrors work with one or worse yet live with one. Unfortunately, I seem to be a magnet for them or maybe I am just aware of them now. Everyone knows or has worked with one but may not have understood what they were dealing with. Narcissistic behavior is common in the workplace. Perhaps they do not meet the clinical definition of a narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) but you know one thing—and that is you don't enjoy working with them. Most people think of this type of person as a “jerk”, “bully”, “full of themselves” or “inconsiderate” and I could go on and on with these descriptions. You get the picture. When I did trainings for supervisors for better workplaces, I would always ask the group this: “Do you have an employee that when out sick or on vacation, the mood of the office changed?” And every time I asked this, many hands would be raised. We have all been there. When you have that type of employee, you have a toxic workplace. And I don't care if that person is allegedly a good performer.



**SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME**

Things get even more difficult when the narcissist is in a power position and many are. Being a narcissist doesn't mean you are lacking brain power. No, quite the opposite because they can be very successful. Somehow they know how to make themselves look better and smarter and in the process make you look smaller, dumber, and just wrong.



A narcissist has no empathy. They can be good at faking it but on a deep core level, they really don't care. Something happened in their early life that caused them to form a belief that they are special, better than everyone else, and deserve whatever they want or need. No matter the consequence. Does this remind you of a two-year-old? Throwing a fit when they don't get what they want, acting as if they are the center of the universe. But two-year-olds are cute and they mature emotionally and grow out of it. Narcissists don't.



**SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME**

They must “pretend” they are like you and me but they aren’t. A psychologist told me once that if a person came to therapy and said they want to quit being narcissistic, the psychologist would know they were not a narcissist. Because a narcissist doesn’t believe there is anything wrong with them. Their world is for their pleasure and if people don’t like it, then too bad.

How do narcissists get away with this and how do they do it? You know the overt narcissist. He is the one bragging about everything, taking credit for others’ work, being showy and flashy, craving attention.

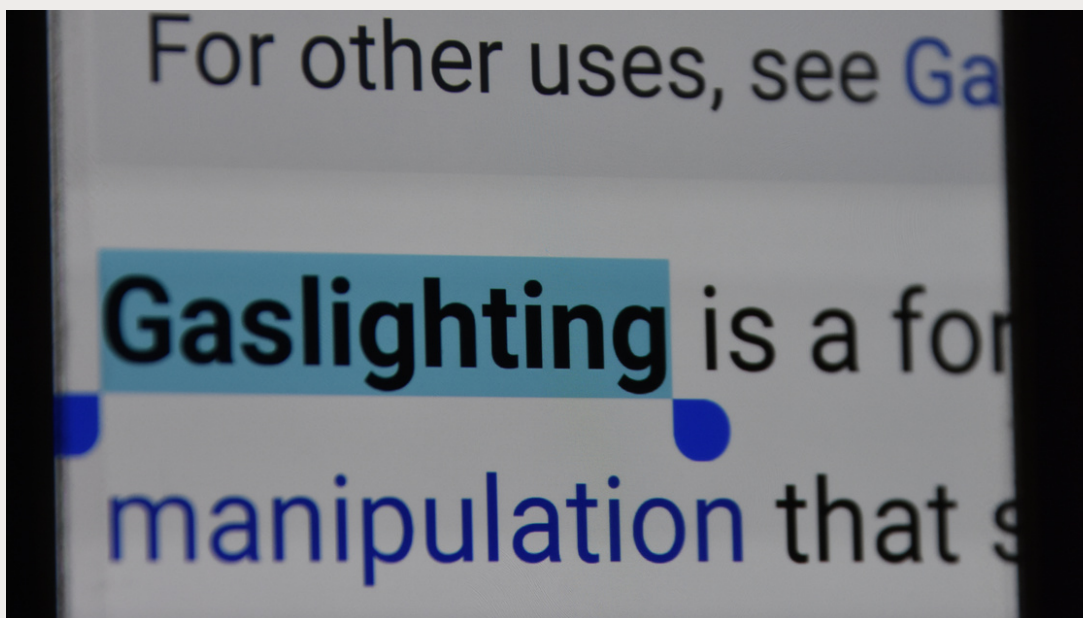


A more dangerous type is the covert narcissist. This type of narcissist is not so flashy and may even appear shy. But they are much more deadly because they know how to drop little seeds of doubt. A statement here and there that is a dig or put-down, but if you complain they make it out that you are being too sensitive. This is another trick they have up their sleeves—blame shifting. They weren’t being rude; you are just too sensitive.



**SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME**

Another trick is gas lighting. This term stems from a 1938 stage play made into a 1944 movie called Gaslight. In the movie, the husband slowly, a little at a time, turns down the gas lights. When his wife, played by Ingrid Bergman, comments on the light being dimmer and dimmer, he tells her she is imagining things which slowly makes her think she is going crazy. She thinks she is crazy but the lights are actually dimmer even though evil husband denies it. It is psychological manipulation of a person causing them to question the validity of their own thoughts, leading to a loss of confidence and self-esteem. Simply put gaslighting means to make another person doubt themselves by planting tiny seeds of doubt with the goal of driving someone crazy. It is a dreadful yet very effective way of manipulation.



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME

One method of gaslighting is to make the problem the victim instead of their own behavior. I used to work with a partner and when I questioned his behavior, he made me the problem. I was too sensitive, I was overreacting.

Once after breaking up with a boyfriend, he announced that no one would ever want to date me. Well, that was a good way to gaslight. He wasn't the problem, I was.



Another tool to torture you is blame-shifting. I experienced this with another coworker in the past. When I complained of his behavior, he quickly tried to remind me of how much he had helped me in the past. It was a slick maneuver of gaslighting with blame-shifting thrown in to boot. Never mind he was totally making up the helping me part.



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME



What can you do? The first step is to recognize the behavior for what it is. Don't let their manipulation chip away your self-esteem. Narcissists are not fixable so don't try. The best solution is to get away from them. If that isn't possible limit your exposure. Know they love to be admired and throw them some compliments now and then just don't expect it to be reciprocal. You are just on the earth to help them. They are never going to help you. You shouldn't have to walk on eggshells around them but if you don't, their child-like inner cores will take offense to the slightest insult or what they perceived as an insult. They want your power. Don't give it to them.



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