

Sacred Cow Alert!

5 New Age Myths That May Be Killing All Your Relationships



By Margaret Nash
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A Sacred Cow is a metaphor for a wise old saying accepted as truth, and considered too sacrosanct to question.

The term comes from the sacred cows of India, which are allowed to roam freely throughout the villages—protected because of their divine status. These cows will trample your garden, eat your flowers, and hold up traffic with impunity.

There are a number of New Age Myths—Sacred Cows—that have taken up residence in the modern psyche and it's taboo, just politically incorrect, to ask if they are actually helpful.

You can find these Sacred Cows being quoted on TV talk shows, in seminars, by life coaches, self-help gurus, in books, and even by psychologists. They have been quoted so often everyone believes them.

An example—“You can be anything you want to be! The only obstacles are your own limiting beliefs!”

Eek! No I can't! I can't be a supermodel no matter how strong my belief.

Right. What about a nuclear scientist? Even though I flunked science and can't add?

Perhaps...but don't bet on it.

Like most folk wisdom, this Sacred Cow has a lot to offer, but if taken out of context or used carelessly, can be an excuse for lazy or irresponsible behavior.

It offers the inspiration that I can be more than I think I can, but also poses the danger that all I need to do is believe in something fiercely enough and it will magically happen for me.

So this Cow needs to be watched like a hawk and treated carefully. This girl holds some truth and could help in some circumstances. But it can be hard to shift this entrenched Cow off the patio and out to pasture where you can keep a beady eye on her.

Here are 5 New Age Sacred Cow Myths that need especial attention in how they are used in our interactions with others. They have their roots in ancient wisdom and sound indisputably wise.... but beware! They can fool you and send you down the garden path to disaster in your relationships—undermining your popularity, and leaving you alone and friendless.

You don't want that. So watch out and ring that cowbell if you hear these words being spouted.



Sacred Cow #1

"People have to accept me as I am. I'm not changing who I am for anyone else."

Well, no they don't, and for the most part, they won't. It's your choice; be your good ol' authentic self and make people fit in with you—and enjoy being all alone—or play nice and flex your behavior to fit in with others—and have others to play with.

On the surface this looks like a sensible Cow. How can you argue with the idea that you need to be true to yourself? Yes of course people should accept you the way you are ... unless of course you are cranky, selfish, and hard to get along with. Hello.

If you stick to your guns no matter what, and won't change for anyone, then guess what? People quite possibly won't like you! Sometimes we all need to alter our behavior, or tone it down, meet halfway, say we're sorry—even when we're not—or just act pleasant when we really want to throttle everyone in sight.

If we want to have companionship and friendship then a lot of the time we have to swallow how we're feeling and just go with the flow. It's as simple as that. You're feeling grumpy and impatient? Suck it up and smile. Or lose your friends.

Change and alter behavior that isn't working for you. By working for you I mean behavior that gives you the results you want. If you want to be around people, have good friendships, and be well liked, then remember sometimes it's not OK to be who you are without any constraints.

Corral that Cow and make her behave a bit. It won't do her any harm.



Sacred Cow #2

"Always speak your truth."

Munching grass closely behind the first Cow is this little darling. Boy, can she fool you. She's so seductive and she's got some big guns backing her up.

There is no arguing that truthfulness is important in relationships. "Be impeccable with your word," says Don Miguel Ruiz in his book, *The Four Agreements*. We can't form or maintain good relationships if we are dishonest.

Yes, but. The truth can be a double-edged sword that can cut you dead if you don't treat it respectfully.

- The truth can hurt.
- Speaking the truth isn't always necessary.
- You don't have the right to wound someone else in the name of your truth.
- Sometimes it's better to say nothing.

The thing is, once you say something, you can never take it back. Oh, you can try, but it's hard to erase memory and people seem especially inclined to hold on to critical or hurtful words. They will remember them for decades.

And never forget, even if the intention behind your truthful words is to help the other person; it may not help the relationship. Which is more important?

These three questions can keep you out of trouble. Memorize them.

Ask yourself these before you say anything that's less than kind or complimentary:

1. Do I need to say it? Or is it better left unsaid?
2. Is it helpful and kind? What do I hope to achieve by saying it? What is my goal in saying this and who will benefit?
3. Are my motives pure? Do I really want to help... or deep down to wound or get back for something? Is there any jealousy or resentment or anger in what I am about to say? Am I venting?

Always think before you speak. If you follow these rules, and monitor what comes out of your mouth, you will have wonderful friendships and get along with everyone. Guaranteed. Round this Cow up and stuff some alfalfa in her mouth to keep her from mooing. She can afford to be quiet sometimes.



Sacred Cow #3

"I can't help the way I am! I have issues! You need to respect my wounds!"

Some people have experienced traumatic events in childhood and need help in processing anger and helplessness and letting go.

No question about that. Victim support groups have become very popular in the past 20 years and no doubt have helped many who have experienced abuse. This Sacred Cow deserves some credit for this.

But, even so. Let's put aside extreme examples of abuse or tragedy and focus on just folks with stuff.

There is a danger in clinging to victimhood and taking on a permanent victim identity. Sometimes you have to just get over yourself.

It may work to play this card in the support environment, but your friends and acquaintances will soon grow tired of it. Nobody likes a victim and it won't serve you well.

The truth is, you CAN help the way you are, and nobody HAS to respect your wounds. Almost everyone has things going on that they are sensitive about. You're not the only one.

People will gradually begin to avoid, and gently extricate themselves from the company of someone who is touchy or overly sensitive. At first they will listen with sympathy, but when the tale of woe is repeated often enough they will lose interest.

I'm sure you've known someone who gets ruffled feathers over the slightest perceived offense. It can be so tiresome.

For sure, if you've been damaged, then lick your wounds, talk it over with someone, and try to get closure.

We all need to work out our injustices and gain perspective. But don't make it your identity. It's not healthy to wallow around in your troubles.

Give this Cow some loving attention and then pack her off to pasture. If you don't, people will avoid you like the plague.



Sacred Cow #4

“It’s not about you; it’s about them. Don’t take anything personally.”

This Cow has got legs, no doubt about it. Don Miguel Ruiz propounds it as one of his four agreements and it has taken hold of the modern imagination as an indisputable truth, and the veritable stairway to heaven.

Ah, sweet liberation! If I don’t care what anybody thinks then I’m free of self-doubt and second-guessing myself. I can do and say what I darn well choose.

If this divine-bovine has taken up residence on your porch you may want to have a closer look at what she’s eating. Or smoking. Because she can get you in a lot of trouble.

She has great intentions and that is to empower you to be a free spirit; say and do what you please and if you are misinterpreted or disliked recognize that it is the projection of the other person and nothing to do with you.

Right... True... Always? This can be helpful if you are overly sensitive to what other people think of you.

This squarely places the responsibility for miscommunication on the other person. Not my problem. He took what I said the wrong way. That’s not what I meant. Too bad.

Oh dear. This Cow is so lazy you may have trouble getting her to move.

There is another side to this. It’s called taking responsibility for what you say and how you say it. If people are always taking what you say the wrong way and getting upset with you, don’t you think you should look at what you’re saying, and how?

Is it a good idea to simply ignore how other people are feeling? How other people respond to you IS your business. Otherwise if something isn’t working, how will it get better if you shrug away any responsibility and place the blame on the other person?

This Cow is of course correct in one aspect—you mustn’t take too seriously what other people think of you. Yes, liberating, empowering. But once you ‘get’ empowerment, balance it with responsibility for how you come across in the world.

Take responsibility for putting misunderstandings right. Care about other people. You’d be amazed how liberating this idea is. It takes you right out of victim mode and into the driver’s seat.

So, if you're continually being misunderstood and people are upset with you, then take a look at what you're doing. It won't hurt, nor will it disempower you.

Remember, if what you're doing isn't working, then it's up to you to change. You cannot change other people; you can only change yourself.

You may have to use a fly swat to get this girl moving. She's stubborn and inclined to laziness.



Sacred Cow #5

"Get rid of all the negative people in your life!"

This Cow has been embraced with alacrity by numerous talk show hosts, new age gurus, psychologists and personal development trainers.

She may at this moment be lounging in your living room and watching Ellen as we speak. It's a new age teaching so ubiquitous and so politically correct that nobody dares confront her and send her back out to pasture. The far end preferably.

Everywhere you see and hear that you must get rid of the toxic people in your life, the people who bring you down and who have a bad vibe. They will hold you back, spoil your happiness, and undermine your all-precious self-esteem, this Cow moos.

Really? Energy vampires? Unconscious people? Vibrating at a lower frequency than moi? Sucking my energy? Keeping me from realizing my potential? Oh no!

Then, be gone! Out with the trash. After all, people are expendable. Aren't they?

Now, I'm not being sarcastic about abusive relationships or people with chemical addictions or mental illness. Sometimes they just have to go, and this can be painful when it's someone close to you. It must never be taken lightly.

I'm talking about that person in your social circle who talks too much, or laughs too loudly or has other irritating habits that bug you. Or even the gossip, who talks about other people in order to be accepted. Or the insecure friend who goes on and on and on about someone they're not getting along with.

Or how about that old friend who just hasn't grown and evolved as much as you have? You'll just never agree on politics, will you?

Sometimes difficult or irritating people can give us great lessons in patience and forgiveness.

How else are we going to learn to detach and let go of our own negative thoughts and emotions?

If we just hang around people we like, or who like our posts on Facebook, how are we going to improve?

How about this novel idea—give folks a chance, the benefit of the doubt. Keep on giving until there is no more doubt. Practice compassion, forgiveness, overlooking faults. Nobody's perfect and we all need each other.

Don't discard people as if they were commodities who have passed their sell-by date. That person you want rid of may be the very person who nurses you back to health after an accident. Life is strange. If someone is really spoiling your peace and you've done your best, then be gentle and subtle and just slowly let them coast away out of your life. No need for hurtful or truthful statements. You don't have the right to wound someone simply because you have no more use for them.

The great spiritual teacher Jiddu Krishnamurti once said that we never need to be violent, hurtful or confrontational with anyone. If you need someone to not be in your life, just let him or her go easily with your blessing. Protect other people's feelings.

Finally—no need to steer clear, just be alert.



There. The 5 New Age Sacred Cow Myths you need to watch out for. They are useful and frequently wise, but can be used as an excuse for laziness, or for not trying to get along with people.

Make an effort to play nice and unselfish at all times. If you absolutely can't get your relationship to work with someone, then call in one of these Cows to help. She'll be more than happy to tell you what to do.

We all need to work hard, all the time, to make our relationships work. It's not wise to get lazy or take friendships or people for granted. The results of your hard work will be enjoyed when you get along with everybody, all the time. Treat these Cows with a respectful but wary eye, and you will always have friends and never have to be alone.

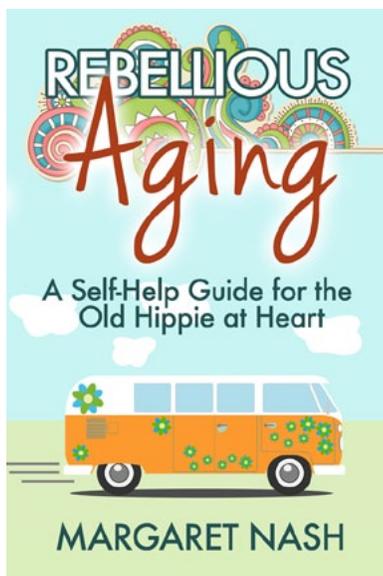
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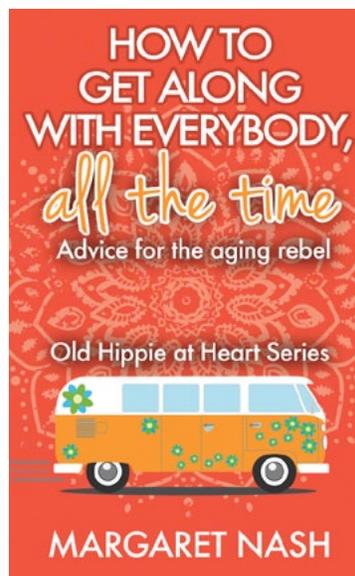
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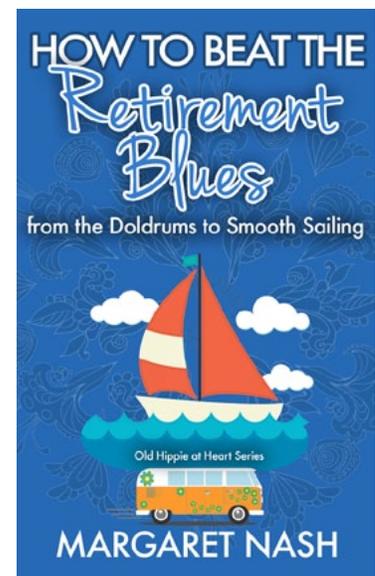
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