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Through Rainbow Colored Glasses

By Christine Dinsmore

I'm resigned to the fact that I will put my therapist's kids through school. After they graduate from college, I wonder which med school they'll chose? Until I come to accept the world as it is, I'll be keeping my weekly appointments.

I suffer from this notion that people will do what they say they will do. Systems will work efficiently. The government will protect citizens' rights. Salespeople with buttons saying, "I'm here to help you," will actually be helpful. I believe cell phones will work in the Hudson Valley.

I'm baffled when it turns out otherwise. My diagnosis could be called "world-image dysmorphic disorder"—an unrealistic, distorted view of society.

I get agita when an educated English speaker says, "irregardless." I become irate when three perplexed customer-service workers gather around one shopper trying to exchange a weed whacker, while a line of waiting patrons snakes through the aisles. This, in stark contrast to the norm—no reps at the service desk.

I suffer apoplexy when Amtrak's train due in at 3:01 p.m. arrives at 6:16 p.m. I go nuts when the power is knocked out in my home because a chipmunk hiccupped in the forest. I go ballistic when 24 hours later we're still in the dark because that damn chipmunk is mightier than 'Lectricity-R-Us.

And I'm astonished that there are two gay Olympic-esque games this July—Montreal and Chicago—because people can't work out their differences.

These high expectations are based on my view of myself—competent, capable, and able to comprehend the social cues required to survive on this planet. I don't brush my hair while driving, gab on my cell phone in restaurants, or stab asparagus spears off the serving plate using a fork dripping with my germs from remnants of masticated bits of tofu. I wash my hands after using the bathroom. (I also do gymnastic contortions to get out of public restrooms without touching doorknobs after my hands have been disinfected.)

I also remember who I regularly call on the telephone. No need for the National Security Agency to keep tabs of my phone habits.

My desire for the world to work in a particular way has grown as I get older. I spend more time writing letters to corporate headquarters of AT&T, Time Warner, Central Hudson, and other conglomerates. Eliot Spitzer has heard from me so many times, he considers me his pen pal. Hillary Clinton's minions must be tired of sending me their "Thank you for your views" letters each time I lambaste her for another move to the right. Can't wait to hear what she has to say about my take on her palling around with Rupert Murdoch, the ultraconservative media mogul. The time spent on these missives would have allowed me to write that fabulous novel that's floating around in my head.

What drives me even crazier than incompetence is the usual attempt to buy our forgiveness. People are forced to sell their firstborn to pay for gas. So Republicans woo us with a proposed \$100 rebate to make up for our pain at the pump. Within days of that dumb idea, Harry Reid, Democrat from Nevada, sends a Web letter, supporting the Menendez amendment to rollback gas taxes. I wrote Senator Reid, too. This Prius-driving curmudgeon reminded him of global warming and suggested that *perhaps* politicians shouldn't enable Americans to drive more. Haven't heard back from Harry yet.

My next letter is to Edward Cardinal Egan of the New York archdiocese. My query: With the ongoing genocide in Darfur, nearly 6 million children dying of hunger each year, mounting casualties in Iraq, does God really care who I marry? Just wondering, Ed ...