

## Messes in Our Life

*By Liz Gibbons*

Messes come in many sizes and forms. When I think of a mess I usually initially think of a physical mess that needs to be cleaned up. Yet in addition to physical messes, messes can be emotional, mental, or spiritual or a combination of any or all of these. Hurricane Harvey comes to mind as a physical mess of destructive wind and water. Yet it also greatly affected those in its path mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

People react to messes in various ways. There are the Procrastinators who put off dealing with it immediately. Taken to an extreme are the Avoiders who refuse to deal with a mess at all, sometimes even causing themselves great harm. At the other extreme are those who see messes as opportunities to accomplish things they would have never attempted to do without this push.

Bureaucrats love to analyze a mess, come up with legislation to address it, which if passed rarely solves the mess, but often perpetuates it and creates new messes in the process.

There are man-made messes created for the purpose of manipulating people's reactions and influencing their way of life. British author David Icke refers to this as "Problem, Reaction, Solution" wherein a group covertly creates a problem and waits for people to react with fear and outrage and to demand something be done. Then the group proposes a solution, which is what they wanted all along and which expands the group's power. Along this line of thinking, Rahm Emanuel, who was President Obama's Chief of Staff, said "Never let a good crisis go to waste."

Since discovery is a significant part of early childhood, young children are attracted to messes and revel in becoming completely involved by stomping around in a mess, tasting it, playing with it and becoming one with the mess.

The way we handle messes can tell us a lot about ourselves. Am I a take-charge person? Am I playing the victim role of "Why me?" Do I tend to give up in the face of adversity? Am I a reactionary who blames others for this mess that I am in? Or am I an opportunist seeing the mess I am in as a pathway for personal growth.

Overall, we usually dislike messes. Yet, some of our greatest learning experiences can come from dealing with them.