

I really should give up reading the news, it's not good for my health. Surely I am not alone in feeling the oppressive weight of the constant drip of bile and negativity that seems to permeate every story. It feels that, as a society, we have become immune to anything that could be construed as positive and instead prefer to squint intensely through the strong lens of scepticism looking for ulterior motives.

At this point you're probably thinking I must be writing this at the end of a particularly bad day but this is actually the product of a week during which the Duchess of Sussex has been vilified again for some charitable work she is doing, a pop star admitted she had been driven to suicidal thoughts due to the relentless and hateful criticism of her appearance and a former rugby captain had emotionally "confessed" to being HIV positive to counter blackmail threats to "out" him. And all this comes on top of the almost daily news of stabbings, which are now rapidly becoming almost a part of normal life.

However, my tipping point was the news this morning wherein it was stated that someone (I can't remember who) would be "having their feet held to the fire" today. This is not the first time I have heard that revolting expression used and I wonder if the language and behaviour of leaders, and the media that surrounds them, is seeping in to everyday life and skewing our perception of what is acceptable.

I have frequently heard people say with

AGGRESSION IS THE NORM



Society is squinting through a lens of scepticism and looking for ulterior motives, writes the IBMS' Sarah May.

pride "I like to say it as it is"; in my mind that means having personal carte blanche to be rude or hurtful without restraint in the cosy, misguided belief that people "know where they stand". Is it any wonder that aggression has almost become the norm when hardly a month goes by without us hearing of a person in power who has abused their position by bullying or being thoroughly unpleasant? But then I suppose that when the leader of the free world communicates with regular monotony using a barrage of angry and aggressive tweets, we could all be forgiven for thinking this is acceptable behaviour.

The bottom of the barrel was surely scraped though when a newspaper editorial suggested that David Cameron's

grief over the death of his young son was somehow lessened by his position of privilege. Wow, that really takes the biscuit. Irrespective of our political views, gender, religion, or our position in society, we all bleed when cut - whether that cut is physical or emotional. Thank goodness for the "Good Deed Feed" in my daily commute reading material; it reassures me that despite the nastiness there are still lovely people out there.

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