

Don't Feel Guilty About Evictions

By Robert L. Cain

Too often landlords feel guilty about evicting a tenant for anything from nonpayment of rent to being an otherwise all-around jerk. I am passing along some thoughts from other landlords on how they deal with any guilt they might feel about evicting a tenant.

Joe Olesik wrote...

I have gone a step further on my eviction thought process.

I work at Eastman Kodak, and like many big companies, they have a drug "help" program with counselors who are always available. So I went to a counselor and said "I have a drug problem I would like to discuss with you." Needless to say, he had me into his office in a flash!

So I told him of tenants who used drugs, were behind in the rent, and having the rest of the "life management problems" that go along with a bad habit.

Then I asked, if money was no object, what was the best I could do for the drug using tenant.

I was told, in no uncertain terms, that my behavior of letting rent slide was wrong. By not getting my rent, I was enabling the drug problem, alcohol problem, gambling problem....

The counselor made it plain that the only way a drug problem can be overcome, is for the person to "hit bottom," and have to squarely face their problem. An eviction is an excellent way for a person to hit bottom, especially if no one else is there to make it easy for them.

From this, I have concluded that an eviction is the best way that I can help a tenant with a bad habit!

This sure helps me sleep better when an eviction becomes necessary.

Susan Lyons also sent us her story...

Mine was clueless...

I had one family that I had to evict. I stopped by one day to hand-deliver a 3-day eviction notice. I handed it to the wife and I remember her actually stumbling backwards (in shock) like I had dealt her a physical blow! Kid you not! (Thought stuff like that only happened in the movies.) She mumbled something to me like she thought her husband had 'cleared' his delinquent rent payment with me already. She didn't have a clue what was happening in her own family financially. Darn shame...but I guess, that's life.

She was what I would call, a religious 'nut' (took it one step further than necessary. Plus, I think she had a loose screw, to boot. (seriously) (Man, I sure can pick'em, can't I?!! A week or so after they were out of my house, their teenage son (18 or so) showed up unexpectedly on my front porch one night. I started to step out onto the porch to see what he wanted (didn't recognize him). He let go with a tirade of hate!!! I locked the door behind me (because my kids were inside) and asked this guy who he was!

Then I scurried across the front yard for Kenny, my husband.

Being caught off guard like that really scared me. I'm tall---but he towered over me. You never know what somebody is going to do when they are that enraged. He actually threatened us.

We told him to hit the bricks; that he was trespassing.

Called the police and told them they could find the entire family now living at some religious retreat. The cop wouldn't do anything because "he hadn't witnessed anything." (Guess next time I'll have to show up at the police station with a knife sticking outta my back.....)

I happened to glance over at the kids' window and there they were---bud-eyed with mouths agape---watching the whole 'show'!

I just happened to see the husband recently. He had curly hair to start with. Looked like he hadn't had a haircut in a year; had gained umpteen pounds; was just shuffling along looking slovenly and beaten down.

To me---that was a very sad sight (probably because I knew him). The man just could not hold down a job. The family was musically talented to beat the band! (no pun intended). The father had taught (I think) guitar. The son had cut a record. The family had sang in a group.

Makes you wonder what goes wrong. Sad!

But no, folks---I didn't feel guilty having to evict them because the income I generate from my real estate has to feed my family. My family comes first.

Tenants whom you have to evict are not good neighbors, they steal from us and our families and they often need help that they won't think about getting unless they have "hit bottom," as Joe Oselik explained.

Our job as landlords is to provide decent and safe housing for the people who pay us rent and take care of the property. We don't do our good tenants, our property, our neighborhood or ourselves any favors by keeping bad tenants. *Don't feel guilty about evictions.*

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