

Rubbing the wrong direction

Written by Deb Egenberger
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The man cave has a new look.

After the tedious process of taping edges and putting holes, “rustic green” has replaced “khaki” on the walls in the lower level of my home.

It’s fresh. It’s clean. It looks brand new.

I like how a coat of paint can transform a room from ordinary to sophisticated.

OK, I’ll be honest. The room isn’t exactly sophisticated with two oversized camouflage recliners and a pair of dead fish on the wall.

Maybe high-end redneck is a better description.

While the man cave was easier to update than the bathroom that I recently painted “fisherman’s wharf,” I still had to do all that preparation.

Filling holes and sanding putty is the worst part for me. It just takes so long to squish, scrape and smooth all those spots.

But while I worked on poking putty into each little nail hole and then rubbing off the excess, I had lots of time to think ... about sand paper.

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As I ran my fingertips over the roughness, the various grades in the package reminded me of the different people I've dealt with in my lifetime.

Some have been so heavily abrasive that it's no wonder I come away from an everyday encounter feeling deeply gouged.

Others are initially harsh but with persistent stroking and diligent work, their coarse exterior becomes tolerable.

And then there are a few who are so refined and smooth that they leave me buffed rather than scarred.

I guess there is something to be learned from every unpleasant task, including sanding.

This job helped me realize that life is full of people who will rough me up like sand paper, rubbing me the wrong way with their coarseness time and time again.

The trick, I guess, is knowing that if I surround myself with the right grade, in the end I wind up polished.