

The Lighter Side

Valentine's Day is a time to celebrate the affection we feel for loved ones, but sometimes it is difficult to maintain a good relationship with spouses and/or others dear to us. Perhaps the following will shed some light on why this may be true:

Differences between Women and Men

Names – If Laurie, Linda, Elizabeth and Barbara go out for lunch, they will call each other Laurie, Linda, Elizabeth and Barbara. If Mark, Chris, Eric and Tom go out, they will affectionately refer to each other as Fat Boy, Godzilla, Peanut-Head and Scrappy.

Eating Out – When the bill arrives, Mark, Chris, Eric and Tom will each throw in a \$20, even though it's only for \$32.50. None of them will have anything smaller and none will actually admit they want the change back. When the women get their bill, out come the pocket calculators.

Money – A man will pay \$2 for a \$1 item he needs. A woman will pay \$1 for a \$2 item that she doesn't need but it's on sale.

Bathrooms – A man has five items in his bathroom: a toothbrush, shaving cream, razor, a bar of soap, and a towel from the Marriott. The average number of items in the typical woman's bathroom is 337. A man would not be able to identify most of these items.

Arguments – A woman has the last word in any argument. Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument.

Cats – Women love cats. Men say they love cats, but when women aren't looking, men kick cats.

Future – A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband. A man never worries about the future until he gets a wife.

Success – A successful man is one who makes more money than his wife can spend. A successful woman is one who can find such a man.

Marriage – A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn't. A man marries a woman expecting that she won't change and she does.

Dressing up – A woman will dress up to go shopping, to water the plants, empty the garbage, answer the phone, read a book, and read the mail. A man will dress up for weddings and funerals.

Natural – Men wake up as good-looking as they went to bed. Women somehow deteriorate during the night.

Offspring – A woman knows all about her children. She knows about dentist appointments and romances, best friends, favorite foods, secret fears and hopes and dreams. A man is vaguely aware of some short people living in the house.

Final thought – Any married man should forget his mistakes. There's no use in two people remembering the same thing.

Submitted by Tom Stephens



Letter to the editor

Charles J. Sykes' opening statement in his book, *A Nation of Victims: the Decay of the American Character*, tells us rather succinctly:

"Something extraordinary is happening in American Society. Crisscrossed by invisible tripwires of emotional, racial, sexual, and psychological grievance, American life is increasingly characterized by the plaintive insistence, I am a victim."

That Sykes characterized a demand to be recognized as a victim as a decline in our national character is profound. Of course, what is at the heart of this is a desire to not be held accountable. I had a very good friend who once in total frustration announced to me that "When I screw up it is NOT my fault!" When I responded to this absurd notion with the very simple question, "Then who is?" I was greeted with silence.

What generates the decline of national character is the absurdity of one basic reality – having a grievance is not the same thing as being a victim. No one who has been truly victimized ever wanted to be. Anyone care to be robbed or mugged? I didn't think so. How about a nice, friendly little assault? No? What about a little mayhem or pillaging? Stand still while we do a tidy little drive by. I didn't think so. Being a victim is not a desired position. There is an enormous difference between being a target and not wanting to be held responsible for one's actions.

Ted Hires understood this. What made him such a victims' advocate is that he

understood what it was like to have a weapon pointed at him. He understood what it was to be the object of someone's interest for no other reason than [that] he possessed something they wanted but hadn't wanted it enough to actually earn it. He understood what it meant to be at someone else's mercy when they have no mercy.

It galled him. It hit him in the gut. It made him concerned for the safety of his family and for his city. It made him concerned for you...and for me. It gave him concern for your family...and for mine. It drove him to act.

In 1995 my wife and I made a trip to Tallahassee with Ted and his bride because he wanted to know about S.T.O.P. – Stop Turning Out Prisoners, an organization founded by Sheriff Charlie Wells and a marvelous citizen named Kathleen Finnegan, an organization founded to demand that our elected officials actually do what we hire them to do – address public safety.

Violent criminals were routinely released from prison with less than 35 percent of their sentencing served. S.T.O.P. found this reality abhorrent. So did Ted. S.T.O.P. concluded that a number of victims would not have been victims had we simply required convicted felons to serve their sentences. So did Ted. Comforting victims was important to Ted. So was reducing their number.

We will miss him for it. I certainly will.

- Michael Liles
Jacksonville

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