

DEAR MEG



Meg Whitcomb

Bitter parent brainwashes kids

By Meg Whitcomb

DEAR MEG — One day, when my sisters and I were very young, mother packed up everything we owned and moved us to Chicago. That night, my father came home to an empty house. For 11 years, he searched for us.

When he found us, I was 13 and my sisters were 16 and 17. We'd all been told bad things about him, so we didn't know what to expect. But he turned out to be real nice, and the court said he was allowed to have us for weekends.

That was a year ago, and I visit him once a month, but my sisters have seen him only once. He and his second wife moved all the way from Oregon to be near us, so I think it's unfair that they won't talk to him. His wife is a nice lady and always asks about school and everything.

How can I get my sisters to visit him and see for themselves that he's not the "devil incarnate," as Mother calls him? (She says that when she drinks, which is most of the time.) — CARLA, ILLINOIS

DEAR CARLA — Undoing the damage a bitter parent can wreak takes time, and a lot of understanding.

But right now the problem is your mother's drinking. Until she gets off the booze, she will continue to control your sisters' behavior, and they'll continue to take her word as gospel.

The three of you should start going to Al-Anon meetings. They will help you distance yourselves from your mother's irrational behavior. But don't expect your sisters to call Dad tomorrow. They must make their decisions in their own time.

DEAR MEG — Soon after I started my first job, I met Paul and fell in love. After two years, we started talking about marriage.

Paul lives in another town. This was never a problem until the day I decided to surprise him with a visit. When I arrived, I was the one who was surprised. He has a woman living with him.

I took the shock very well (I thought) and apologized for dropping by and assuming I was the only one in his life. But Paul was furious. The three of us just stood there looking at one another.

It has been three months, and he still won't accept my apology or speak to me. I've written and called. No reaction. What else can I do? — DESOLATE IN DELAWARE

DEAR DESOLATE — Forget Paul and get on with your life. Whether or not his roommate was an innocent bystander or a guilty party is immaterial. If after two years, communication between you two was so poor that you were unaware of his living circumstances, the relationship was going nowhere. You may have talked about marriage, but Paul wasn't listening.

Find someone who's interested in a two-way dialogue and a real commitment. And make sure you're not doing all the talking — and the wishful thinking.

POLLY'S POINTERS



Polly Fisher

Chemistry helps you clean silver

By Polly Fisher

DEAR POLLY — Do you have a formula for a homemade solution that you can dip silver into for the purpose of removing tarnish without heavy rubbing? — MAGGIE

DEAR MAGGIE — You may be thinking of this method of silver cleaning, which depends on a chemical reaction to remove the tarnish. It's quick and easy, but it can leave silver looking dull and lifeless, so don't use it too frequently.

Place the silver on a sheet of aluminum foil in an enameled pan. Cover with 2 quarts boiling water and 4 teaspoons baking soda. Let stand for four to five minutes, then remove the silver and wash and dry it. Finally, buff to a shine with a soft, dry cloth.

This is just one of the pointers found in my newsletter "Cleaning with Vinegar and Baking Soda," which I'm sending to you. This pamphlet includes dozens of other cleaning tricks that these common household items can perform for you. In fact, you may just be able to throw out many of the bottles and cans of commercial cleaner now cluttering your cleaning cupboard. Others who would like a copy of this issue should send \$1 for each copy to POLLY'S POINTERS, in care of this newspaper, P.O. Box 93863, Cleveland, OH 44101-5863. Be sure to include the title. — POLLY

DEAR POLLY — We here in the South love our grits, so I'm sending you a hint to make them even more tasty. I mix a raw egg into them just before I take them off the burner. You can also use an egg in instant grits. Just be sure the water added to the instant grits is boiling hot. The egg makes the grits fluffy and they taste just great.

This other hint is for you ladies who wear pierced earrings. If the post irritates your ears, coat the post with clear nail polish. This should be repeated every so often. — C.L.

DEAR POLLY — Can you tell me how to get wrinkles out of blouses and shirts after they have been washed and put in the dryer? — P.M.

DEAR P.M. — Well, of course, you could always get out the old iron and ironing board. But, for an easier method, try one of these techniques (assuming they are permanent press):

Put the wrinkled garments back in the dryer with a very damp towel. Tumble dry just until dry, then remove promptly, shake out or smooth out and hang up immediately.

Or hang the shirt or blouse in the bathroom and turn on a hot shower. (You might as well get yourself clean at the same time!) Let the garment bask in the steam, but don't let it get hit directly by the water. Allow to dry and cool while still on the hanger. Many fabrics, including wools and velvets, will hang out beautifully with this treatment.

If all else fails, re-wash and either let the garment drip dry or tumble dry, removing it promptly as soon as it is dry.

Also keep in mind that many permanent-press garments, especially if they are all cotton or blends that contain a great deal of cotton, do need touch-up ironing to look their best. And ruffled-look cottons that should not be ironed are still popular. We all love natural fiber clothes, but the price of giving them proper care must be paid! — POLLY

Grass, blood and ink stains all disappear with the proper treatment. Polly's newsletter "Guide to Spots and Stains," tells you how to get rid of most common laundry stains effectively. Send \$1 for each copy to POLLY'S POINTERS, in care of this newspaper, P.O. Box 93863, Cleveland, OH 44101-5863. Be sure to include the title.

DEAR POLLY — Should meat be salted before or after cooking? — BETTY

DEAR BETTY — Some cooks say roasts should be seasoned before cooking, but others say no. Actually, when roasting meat by dry heat, any salt you put on the outside of the meat only penetrates a tiny way into it. The salt can also draw out juices, making the outer rim of the meat slightly tougher and dryer than if it is not salted before cooking. However, this is generally not enough to ruin the whole roast, so if you feel salting before cooking improves the flavor, go ahead.

Broiling or pan-broiling a steak is a different matter. Salting the meat before cooking will definitely draw out the juices, leaving the meat less juicy and tender. Since the steak is a smaller cut than a large oven roast, this is really detrimental to the flavor and texture.

Braised meats do not suffer as much, and salting before cooking can add flavor to the broth if desired.

In my opinion, salting before cooking is rarely necessary with meat, which is so flavorful that many meat preparations will not need salt at all. I prefer to let diners salt their own meat at the table if they really feel it's necessary. — POLLY

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