

A little late? Remember to adjust the clock

Remember when you used to come home late?

As a teen, I was notorious for burning the midnight oil into the wee hours of the morning. Now it seems, I need my sleep more than I did back then.

Years ago, my arrival time at home was always a source of argument and discussion. My parents gave me a curfew of 1 a.m. and I was expected to adhere to it.

Of course, as teens are always wont to do, I continually tried to stretch that curfew to the limit.

My parents were concerned about my spending the late hours out and about around town. They used to get really steamed when I came home late. And they always knew what time I got in. It was uncanny.

I could come in, sockfooted, shoes in hand, and sneak past their bedroom door. They always sounded like they were asleep, but next morning, sure 'nuff, they would know exactly what time I had come home.

It was starting to wear on me. One of my sisters clued me in to their secret.

"It's simple," she said, "They just look to see what time the clock stopped at."

A TED BIT

By TED BROWN



Maybe I should explain.

In our kitchen hung this large wall clock. It always hung there, right beside the door.

Apparently, when I came home late at night, and closed the door, the clock would stop, telling my parents what time I came in.

It was as good as punching a time clock for them to keep tabs on my schedule.

I figured I had better check this one out.

The next weekend, I wandered in, not too late, and closed the kitchen door, as usual. I checked the time.

Next morning, regular as clockwork, my mother questioned me about the time I came home. I told her, right to the minute, and she agreed.

Ah ha! I had her. She wouldn't have a clue what time I was coming in now. I only had to adjust the clock.

A couple of weekends passed, and I was late. I mean really late. In fact I was so late, the sun was just about to sneak up in the east as I was coming in the door from the west.

I looked at the clock, ticking away in the semi-darkness. It was time to make that adjustment.

I wound the hands backwards, to about 1:30 a.m. and stopped the clock.

The next morning, (a few short hours later) at breakfast, I attempted to appear well-rested and take part in the conversation.

Mom was ready for me. "What time did you get home last night, dear?" she asked, so nonchalantly.

"Oh I dunno, Mom," I answered slowly, staring into my corn flakes, "I guess about 1:30ish."

"You're sure it was that time?" she questioned. Hmmm, she seemed suspicious.

"Oh sure, Mom. I remember distinctly. It was right around 1:25 when I came in," I replied, quite sure of myself. She wasn't going to catch me on this one. "Why do you ask?"

"Well," she began slowly, "I noticed the kitchen clock stopped around that time, but I'm quite sure it was running when our company left at 2 a.m."

Oops! She had me. Right where she wanted me.

I knew, precisely at that moment,

it was going to hit the fan. Big time.

As I recall, the next couple of weekends were pretty quiet, and there was absolutely nothing on TV. I know, because I spent them at home. My social life ceased to exist for about two weeks.

One could say there is a moral to this story. You know, like always tell the truth, or come home when you're supposed to and obey your parents.

But for me, after that episode, I learned one thing;

Always restart the clock after you come in at night.

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