

Opinion

Can't they see the signs!

Warning: This product is hazardous to your health.

Nice message, eh? They should add, "But we'll sell it to you just the same." Corporations are wonderful. They'll kill to make a buck.

A little truth in advertising would be nice. Why ban the advertisement of some dangerous products and not others? Everyone should be allowed to advertise the truth, in fact it should have to be the whole truth. It should be a rule that you can't say your medicinal product has a new and improved formula if it is still the same 10 for one mix of water and salt.

Similarly, they should display the birth and death dates of the Marlboro man when he does cigarette ads. Only people who've lost a limb could advertise fireworks. The list goes on and on.

Then there's the lifestyle beer ads. Beautiful people hang around beer. Nobody actually drinks the stuff, that's how they stay beautiful. They just like being around the beer that the rich beer companies so graciously provide along with other accoutrements of a party.

What we really need is truth in beer ads. People drinking all day, falling down, throwing up, choking on their own vomit and dying. If you abhor the graphic content then perhaps scenes of Karl Malden's nose would appeal to you.

We could even strike a fine balance and show normal people lying around, drinking beer, and cleaning up the empty bottles the next day while they fight the effects of an enormous hangover.

Maybe they should just put warning labels on all things that are dangerous. Beer would be posted with: *Irresponsible use of this product promotes shorter lifespans.* Car seats could all be posted with: *Warning: This seat will stop dead upon impact. You, however, will not. Seat-belts save lives.*

All hockey equipment should be labelled: *Use of this product may cause other people to as-*



Reaume With a View
with BRAD REAUME

sume you are playing with intensity. Soon they'll manufacture different coloured equipment for each standard of play. Extreme beginners will be given bright red sticks with flashing lights that issue the computer-generated verbal warning: *Danger, danger — this person is a menace to society. Stand clear!*

Of course, NHL goons would be told to wear the skull and crossbones instead of their team insignia. That goes both on and off the rink.

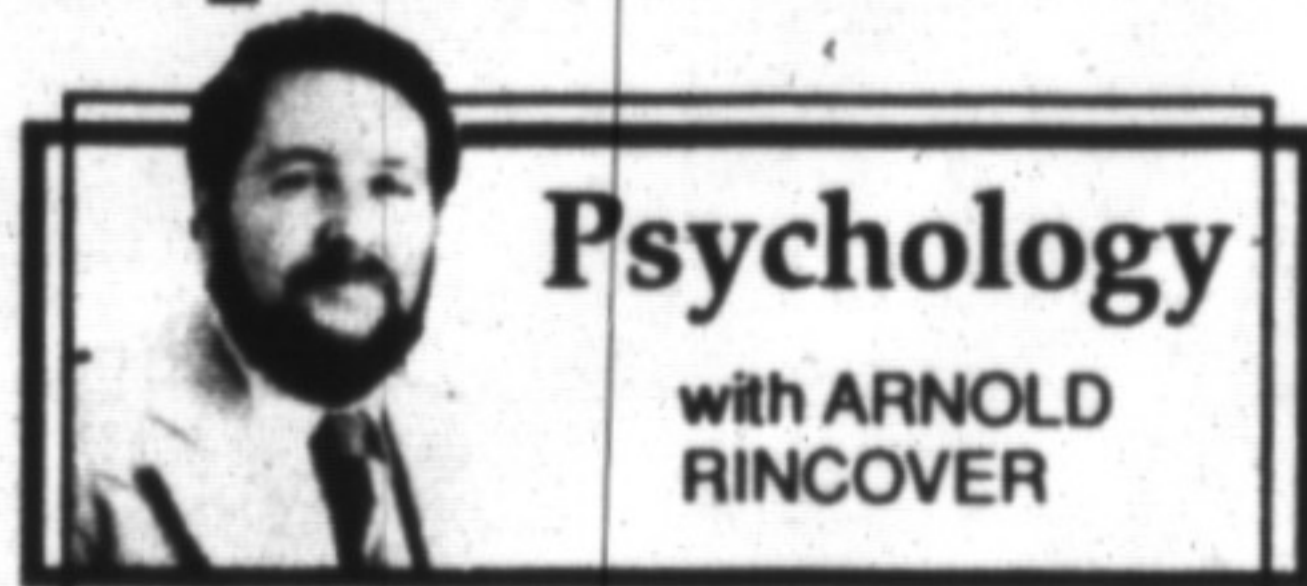
Your bathroom would be required by law to have posted signs in the bathtub (rubberized for better traction); on the mirror, which has a high chance of shattering upon encountering your morning visage; and on all faucets, which increase chances of drowning. In fact a large sign, flanked with flashing yellow caution lights, identifying the room as a highly dangerous bathroom, should be set in place for visitors to your home.

Everybody knows someone who is a little unco-ordinated, a little prone to accidents. These people should be labelled, in the interest of public safety, with some highly visible running lights and an appropriate warning sign.

Perhaps the bureaucratic process to which our society has surrendered itself can be altered. If not, a warning light should be attached to it. In fact, warning lights should be mandatory for big government, big business and big religion. If people can't protect themselves with a little common sense and personal responsibility after being warned by signs, lights, and sounds, then let 'em suffer the consequences. Big government is getting too much like big brother.



Exploring the sleepless world



Psychology
with ARNOLD RINCOVER

We've all had trouble sleeping at times, laying in bed staring at the ceiling, counting sheep, and finally giving up to turn on the TV.

Then we try again in the wee hours of the morning, eventually nodding off, only to drag ourselves out of bed what seems like minutes later, to careen through the next day praying that nothing requires more than two brain cells.

Surveys indicate 10 to 15 per cent of the population claim to have severe insomnia. Another 10 to 15 per cent say they have mild or occasional insomnia. As many as one of four people may seek help for sleeping difficulties at one time or another.

At present, the most common treatment is some form of drug. One study reported 26 per cent of people use pills to help them get to sleep.

This heavy reliance on medication has produced a number of problems, not the least of which is that sleeping pills are ineffective over the long run.

Most lose their effectiveness within two weeks of continuous use because our tolerance to the drug develops rapidly — it takes larger and larger doses to have any effect.

Besides being ineffective for the chronic insomniac, heavy drug use can lead to addiction, accidental overdose, severe withdrawal effects and distortions in the sleep cycle.

Insomnia refers to a chronic (persistent) inability to get adequate sleep. There are two important elements to this.

First, it rules out the occasional sleeping problems that even the best sleepers may experience. Though they, too, may benefit from the treatments we will describe, they would not be considered insomniacs.

Second, insomnia is not defined by how many hours of sleep one gets, but rather by whether or not the sleep time is adequate.

To be considered insomnia, a person's difficulty in getting to sleep would have to interfere with normal functioning during the day, and this would have to occur quite regularly.

What causes insomnia? There are a wide variety of causes, both physical and psychological.

"Sleep apnea" is a disorder in which the person stops breathing for about 30 seconds, and wakes up. If this happens often enough throughout the night, the individual may not get enough deep, continuous sleep. Similarly, "nocturnal myoclonus" is a physical condition which causes leg twitches throughout the

night, which may interrupt sleep.

Another set of causes are the normal, everyday drugs people consume. Caffeine, for example, is a more potent stimulant than most people realize. Coffee, tea, cocoa, colas, chocolate and many other items contain caffeine.

Insomnia may also be caused by the very drugs which are taken to induce sleep. In fact, this is thought to be an inevitable result of prolonged use of sleeping pills and is called "drug-induced insomnia". Chronic drug use results in less sleep and a lighter, more fitful sleep.

Perhaps the most obvious cause of insomnia is stress and emotional disturbance. Research has for more than 40 years shown that people who ordinarily have no trouble sleeping develop insomnia during periods of stress.

Another cause of insomnia is poor sleep habits. One part of the problem is that the person may not allow himself to acquire consistent sleeping rhythms or patterns.

Insomniacs who go to bed at very different times of the night, who sometimes sleep late into the morning, or who take naps whenever they feel like it, may develop disturbances in "circadian rhythms".

That is, they may disrupt many body cycles, such as those involving temperature, endocrine systems, or "deep" sleep, which may require 24-hour synchronization. If these circadian cycles are not synchronized, an optimal time for sleeping doesn't exist.

A final cause of sleeping problems is engaging in activities at bedtime which are incompatible with sleep. Many insomniacs make their bedroom a pleasure palace, with TV, crossword puzzles, books, letters and food readily available.

Conversely, bedtime may even become a quiet time for reflections, for reshaping the days events and tomorrow's tasks, in which case it may become a cue for worrying.

The point is they may spend many waking hours in bed. The result is the bed is not a cue for sleeping — it becomes a cue for numerous other activities.

Of fire, water and fantasy

My four year old is in his element at the cottage. Or should I say elements? Earth, air, fire and water — he loves them all.

His favourites would have to be earth (otherwise known as sand) and water, preferably together. Fortunately, we have unlimited quantities of both.

What does our young fellow wear for his elemental activities? Several changes of clothing. Generally, he lives in hand-me-downs unless a well meaning relative presents him with new clothes, whose state of cleanliness is always short-lived.

He usually underdresses, claiming that yes, he's warm enough in a T-shirt on a shivery, cloudy day. Or if it's raining, he'll throw on a jacket but forget to add his raincoat. Sometimes I wonder why I repeatedly cart the raincoat back and forth between home and cottage.

If I'm fast enough, he'll pull on socks and if I'm not, he'll be out the door booted but sockless.

When our boy gets caught up in his muddy, wet projects, he forgets he can't walk far into the lake. Before you know it, he's complaining about water sloshing around in his boots. Of course, it's mommy's fault that his second pair did not make the journey to the cottage.

When my little Jack goes into the lake to fetch a pail of water, he instinctively squats (hurray for his back) and down goes his bottom into the water. His arms reach down to hoist up the bucket. Now we have water travelling up his sleeves, down from his backside and up from his ankles. He will eventually experience such discomfort that not even the distractions of road and castle building can stop him from walking up to the cottage to dump his wet clothes on the bed (of course) and put on a dry outfit.



On the Home Front
with ESTHER CALDWELL

To be on the safe side, I have packed an extra day's set of clothing, but it looks like we'll be recycling mud-encrusted pants. We've only reached 11:30 on the first morning.

On the beach, he digs out rivers with a plastic shovel, draws highways with a stick, and builds mountains with stones, clam shells and cones pressed into lumps of sand.


He grabs every available container, even an upturned Frisbee, to carry water to his excavated troughs. He squeezes mittfuls of wet sand through his fingers, watching it plop onto the beach. It feels so good that he scoops up another handful.

Our little worker is oblivious to the hazardous outdoor working conditions. He ignores the rain (what's a little more water?) and lets the ravenous blackflies have their way with his bare midriff.

In the evening, the boy scout in our family gets a fire blazing on the beach, using leaves, bark, wood and two matches.

Earth, fire and water. What more can our four year old ask for? He grabs the nearest stick, pokes it into the flames and waits for it to catch fire. He removes it, swings it around and finally douses the smouldering wood in the lake.


Then back to the fire to repeat his elemental ritual.



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