

Opinion

Everyone has nuances, but . . .

Stereo types, I love stereo types. Dual, Kenwood, Sony, NAD, Technics, I love stereo types. I like the way their names sound. Hold it, what am I on about. Rub, rub, rub. Stereotype: A biased, generalized image of the characteristics of an ethnic or social group.

Yeah, that's it, stereotypes. The key word in the definition is "characteristics" because the building blocks of stereotypes are real, identifiable characteristics. In other words, stereotypes are accurate. The idea of stereotyping has picked up its bad reputation for imposing real group behaviour on individuals.

Of course, usually it's the emphasis on ethnic or regional differences at which people poke fun. I, however, am concerned with the subgroups within our very own southern Ontario.

Know anyone who wears driving gloves? It kills me! These guys like to strap themselves into their 1978 Ford Rustbuckets, carefully put on the gloves, with the holes for the knuckles so they don't lose that pinpoint control of the steering. God forbid that their hands touch the steering wheel. It's so cold!

Batting gloves for baseball are almost as funny. Same with golf. Helps you get a better grip, I'm told. Yeah, so do calluses, guys. These people want you to think they know what they're doing, then you see them swing and realize they're actually a travelling band of contortionists.

What you call something is important to your perception of it. Those who call a resume a curriculum vitae are snobs of more than just language. People who speak of their CV are really trying to play the hip intellectual type, just the coolest, smartest thing they can think of to be. They often wear Einstein T-shirts. They probably mention that on their resumes.

How people pay for things is a study in it-



**Reaume
With a View**
with BRAD REAUME

self. One person I know hates two-dollar bills. Huh? Money's money guys, deal with it. I have a personal aversion to \$1,000s. Yep, it's bad luck.

Some people figure out a tip in a restaurant to the penny, others pay the nearest dollar amount. The former might be an indication that only more moderately priced restaurants are a consideration — if not, look for the kilt. The latter behaviour is a clue to the person's inability to calculate anything. Look for a brain.

Some people always drive in the left lane, others always in the right. Some people can't stand to turn in one direction or the other, and they should be hauled off the road, tarred and feathered, and banished from it forever.

Some people drink a certain brand of beer because they want to be associated with its image. The same is true in clothing and other products. Image is everything.

Strangely, people who buy these products are often associated with the image of people who buy the products because of their image. So instead of being considered smooth, hip, and stylish, they're actually seen as crass, showy and elitist.

Actually, we all do things like these because, let's face it, we are all trying to project an image to the world. If it happens to be far different from reality then let them laugh. They will anyway.

We sneak off to his apartment

That Wednesday morning, I waded to my three children sitting in the motorboats, little beacons in their bright orange lifejackets. They zoomed off to the other side of the lake to stay with their grandmother. I was headed for the city to spend a night with my husband. It was the first time in nine years that we had been alone overnight.

As I drove away from the cottage, I felt as if I had left something behind. As it turned out, I had: My glasses. Even after retrieving them, I still sensed I was travelling lighter than usual. Did I miss my children already?

Good old practical me had made a cheese sandwich before leaving the cottage so I passed up a luncheon invitation from my husband. Getting through my shopping list left me little time for socializing anyway, but we finally got together for dinner at 5:30 or thereabouts. (Actually, I was running late, as usual.)

We parked at a dreary suburban strip mall featuring a nondescript restaurant. So much for a classy meal, I thought. I was surprised, however, by its out-of-the-ordinary menu and its elegant atmosphere.

Our dinner conversation rarely wandered beyond kids and cats. Skipping dessert, my husband and I parted ways. I went to a meeting and he returned to his apartment.

Let me tell you a bit about this so-called apartment. It is my husband's temporary residence until we sell our current home and move to the city where he's been transferred. Once a garage, this dwelling was then converted to offices and eventually an apartment. There are three rooms, only one of which has a window. The back storeroom houses a makeshift shower and a cubbyhole for sink and toilet. Take two steps out the back door and you fall into the landlord's swimming pool.

The carpet is a dirty Z-grade and still sports brown needles from the Christmas tree of a bygone era. My husband has moved in a minimal amount of furniture, including a cot that is too short for him. The fridge is empty



**On the
Home Front**
with ESTHER CALDWELL

except for beer. A loaf of bread and bacon sit forlornly in the freezer. My husband claims that the place doesn't depress him as he is rarely there.

When I returned from the meeting, we set about inflating the queen-sized air bed I had brought. He assured me that his vacuum had the hole that blew out air. He was wrong. We tried the tire pump. We huffed and puffed into the huge mattress. We got nowhere. Finally, my husband rigged up a makeshift contraption with the vacuum cleaner. Within seconds, the mattress was fully inflated.

I considered going for a dip in the conveniently located pool, but the temperature was headed for an unseasonal low of near freezing. I could feel the chill in the air.

Abandoning reruns on the black and white TV, we shuffled a deck of cards I had packed in my suitcase. As we started playing cribbage, we discovered the deck was missing one card; but we couldn't be bothered figuring out which one it was. Also short, one cribbage board, we kept score on a scrap of paper. He won.

My husband suggested we go for an evening stroll along the dark road but I declined. Later that night, cars used that same road for drag racing. I missed the call of the loon and the song of the whip-poor-will. Instead, I heard the hum of the pool filter in the back room. At some point through the night, I moved over to the short single bed and curled up into a ball. I was freezing.

We'll have to do that again sometime.



Stuttering treatment works well

Until age six, we should just leave a child's stuttering alone. Ninety-nine per cent of children will simply outgrow it.

If at the age of six or later, a real problem of stuttering is suspected — consistently high rates of occurrence over a period of six months often associated with certain fearful situations or else focused on certain kinds of sounds — then one should consult a child psychologist or speech therapist to get assistance.

When stuttering is a problem, it is important to seek treatment.

There are many possible negative side effects of stuttering. A child feels more uncomfortable in school, doesn't participate, and falls behind his peers. He may avoid social situations out of embarrassment, and therefore normal friendships and social skills don't develop. He may have a poor self-image, and feel inferior to others his age.

Such side effects can be prevented, however, if we deal with the problem quickly and effectively.

A tremendous body of research has shown that stuttering can be treated, and quickly. Success rates are very high.

If it is caught early and treated properly, the stuttering usually disappears with no repercussions on social functioning, school, friendships, or damage to the child's confidence and self-esteem.

The following procedures have shown some success in the treatment of stuttering. While these are the most common approaches, you should not try them on your own.

An experienced therapist or child psychologist is needed to get the proper treatment in place. With professional assistance, however,



Psychology
with ARNOLD RINCOVER

studies have shown them to be effective.

1) **Delayed Auditory Feedback.** When one's own speech is fed back through headphones, it can delay hearing what is said for a fraction of a second. This slows down our speech, and prolongs each word. For many stutterers it eliminates the problem, producing slow, prolonged fluent speech.

2) **Metronome Method.** Speaking in time to a beat, such as a metronome, has been known to produce a marked (though often temporary) improvement in fluency.

3) **Shadowing.** Stuttering is greatly reduced when the person is asked to repeat or read a passage right after another person has read it. In this way he practises normal, fluent speech.

4) **Habit Control Package.** This is a relatively new and exciting treatment for stuttering. It contains a number of components.

They include teaching the person which situations produce stuttering, so he can come to recognize and anticipate it ahead of time; relaxation training to handle any tension associated with stuttering; teaching activities that are incompatible with stuttering — to stop speaking for a minute and take slow breaths, formulate mentally the words before speaking them, emphasize the first few words in a sentence, and speak for short periods.



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