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What's the Point?

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Rebecca Todd



What's the
Point?

LOOKING FOR LOGIC IN
MODERN AMERICA

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Chapter One

Average, Everyday Life

“My turn of mind is so given to taking things in the absurd point of view, that it breaks out in spite of me every now and then.”

– Lord Byron

Fight aging with dignity instead of dollars

It happens to everyone. One night in your late thirties, you go to bed feeling fresh, firm and youthful and wake up with a few 'unsightly' lines around your eyes, a sagging mid-section and an achy shoulder. But you learn to live with it. No big deal. You call them battle wounds and move on.

A few years down the road, you get up one morning with a face full of 'fine lines' and an arthritic hip or two. Two years later, you wake up, look in the mirror and find your great grandmother and/or father is looking back at you snarling, "You should have taken better care of yourself, Junior!"

Mankind has been on a quest for the fountain of youth for centuries. Enter young Juan Ponce de León, who sought the legendary spring, in what is now modern day Florida, in the 14th century. Many retired Americans relocate to Florida each year on a similar quest. But Juan was not the first. Stories of the ancient quest for youth are common in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East as far back as time can record.

It's not fun to wake-up and realize that you are suddenly no longer a part of the youthful crowd; that somewhere you crossed an imaginary line. But even less fun is watching the torture that many people endure in order to

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take a few steps back across that line. In the Land of Nod that is modern-day, reality-rejecting America, the quest for youth has gone to repulsive extremes.

Case in point, one of the fastest growing industries in the United States today is the spa industry, earning an estimated \$11 billion in revenues in 2005. The most frightening thing, however, is that in today's modern spas, mud bathes, seaweed and cucumber slices have given way to lasers, surgeries and injections.

Personally, I can't go near a spa. I don't care for the idea of a stranger invading my personal space, let alone injecting questionable fluids into my body. I can't even bring myself to get a pedicure because I have to ask, what kind of person would like to clean someone else's toes for a living? I really don't want to associate with these people.

But I have to admit; I have invested in the spa products. I have the cleansers, toners, polishers, scrubs and moisturizers. When I exit the shower, my bathroom smells like a farmers market. There's pineapple shampoo, coconut conditioner, cherry blossom body wash, spearmint crèmes, avocado scrubs, peaches and cream lotions...it's a regular fruit salad in my bathroom. Forest animals are haranguing outside my window thinking it's a smorgasbord. Worse yet, I'm currently experiencing a microderm-abrasion abrasion that I don't think there is a name for yet.

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No one is immune. You age, you fight, yet you age. Could it be that there is a master plan? And I'm not talking about a financial master plan for the spa industry. I'm talking about the fact that aging gracefully may not mean investing your life savings in artificial preservatives. It may just mean looking back in the mirror and telling Great Grandma to stick a sock in it. Doing it with grace may just mean accepting it.

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Stop the banquet, I want to get out

Last summer my daughter convinced me to ride the Scrambler with her. I considered the possibility that it might be fun. I also considered the possibility that I might throw up. At any rate, I opted to go for it. What was I thinking?

If you're not familiar, the Scrambler is an amusement park ride that jerks you in several directions simultaneously at high speeds. It rocks your head on your shoulders, makes your eyes roll up in your head and causes vital organs such as your liver and spleen to shake loose and begin looking for an exit from your body. Sounds like a good time, doesn't it?

After the ride, I staggered drunkenly to a nearby bench and began trying to locate my organs and shove them back into place as I vowed never to ride the Scrambler again. I realized then that I am not cut out to ride amusement park rides.

A couple of months ago, I received an invitation to my high school alumni banquet. My class was being honored for surviving a ridiculous amount of years since high school. I had never considered returning to my old high school for any reason, let alone to gather with other decrepit people that I hadn't talked to in...a ridiculous amount of years. Then, much like the Scrambler, I

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considered the possibility that it might be fun. I also considered the possibility that I might throw up. Nevertheless, I again made a foolhardy decision and opted to attend. What was I thinking?

On the night of the banquet, I arrived at the school gym and looked around at all the old people wondering who they were and what they had done with my classmates. After a moment it occurred to me that 1) the old people WERE my classmates and 2) considering my overall condition and appearance, I fit in with them nicely.

The banquet itself was the standard fare. The school lunch ladies outdid themselves, serving up cafeteria food including miscellaneous meat substance and mysterious fried items (chicken? vegetables?). The only things missing were the little cartons of chocolate milk.

All was well, however. We ate, chatted and reminisced until the entertainment began and we were all invited to stand and join in the singing of our school song, at which point I totally lost my composure.

As 200 or so older individuals, including myself, struggled to their feet, the snapping and popping of joints and bones was deafening. The music began, the crowd began to clap and tap their feet and I had to stifle a giggle. The sight of their unbridled spirit for a school long left behind was quite touching on the one hand, but on the other it

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struck me as uproariously funny. Lord help me, but when they reached the chorus and simultaneously raised their fists in the air and shouted, "RAH! RAH! RAH!" I collapsed in hysterics.

Soon everyone was looking at me and began to console me, thinking that I had become emotional and was crying because of my love for my dear alma mater. This, of course, set off fresh hysterics as I totally lost control. I laughed uncontrollably until my stomach ached and I feared once again that my spleen and liver were going to make a break for it.

It could have been the deep-fried food (seafood? mushrooms?), but I'm pretty sure it was my rampant fit of laughter that was making me feel oddly like I'd once again stepped off the Scrambler.

"What was I thinking?" I wondered as I staggered toward the nearest door, once again trying to locate my organs and shove them back into place. At that very moment, I vowed never to ride that high school ride again. I realized then that I'm just not cut out for it.

The night the appliances planned their attack

It's difficult to say exactly when it began. My best guess is sometime during late spring, about the time my husband and I were discussing how lucky we were to both be gainfully employed and doing reasonably well during these wretched financial times. They must have overheard. They must've decided then and there that the time was nigh. I think that's the night they planned their attack.

In the night I often heard them clinking and churning. I always told myself they were just doing their jobs. "Those are just compressors kicking on and off," I would think and then sleep soundly, not suspecting the heinous scheme. Now I know. They were plotting our downfall.

According to statistics garnered from the all-knowing, all-powerful Internet, a typical household has an appliance breakdown about once every two years. I find this hard to believe. It's been my experience that when one thing decides to break down, the rest of the household seems to follow suit. Coincidence? I don't think so. There's treachery afoot.

At our house, the refrigerator was the first to make a move. Leave it to a cold, steel box to lead the revolt. Slowly it began to get lazy, working whenever it felt like it, and frankly, it didn't feel like it often. It seemed to like to

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sleep in, serving up cold milk for dinner, but lackadaisically supplying warm eggs and o.j. in the mornings. Soon it was serving up thawed meat from the freezer on a regular basis. It was obviously on strike, no longer working for the Todd family.

After the refrigerator, the ball was rolling. They seemed to know when a few extra dollars were deposited in our account because that's usually when they decided to self-destruct. I'm pretty sure the ATM's at the local bank were in on it.

Next up, the AC took a powder; always fun during the summer months. That was closely followed by the water pump incident in which we were without water for several days. Next up, the explosion of the water pipes in the laundry room. That was a particularly heinous move on the part of the appliances. Not only did it ruin the floor, it took out half the drywall. I'm sure they thought they had won the battle at that point; that we would finally move out and let them take over the house. They didn't realize we had a friend that was a plumber. Ha!

But the infamous washer wasn't finished with us. Soon it went on strike completely. Was that the sound of a gear giving way? A belt snapping? No. I swear the treacherous machine was actually chuckling as it winded down and refused to spin, spilling foul water onto the floor.

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The mutinous appliances have been replaced at this point. We can only hope the new ones will be loyal, and that the furnace was never brought in on the plan.

The point, and there is one, is never trust your appliances. Don't listen to the all-powerful Internet. It is not a coincidence that everything fails at the same time. Frighteningly, it is planned. Those sounds your appliances make in the middle of the night? They're plotting your downfall as well. The murmuring and humming that seems to be inconsequential is really the sound of your demise.

Anyone want to buy a used dome?

I know an elderly couple that has had the same toaster since 1974. The toaster doesn't have a timer on it. It doesn't have extra-wide slots. It doesn't make eggs, have a built in television, and it doesn't come in designer colors. It just makes toast. It works for them, so they've kept it all these years. This drives their children crazy. The kids think their parents need to dive into the 21st century and buy a 'designer' toaster. But their old toaster still works, and it would be a shame to throw out a perfectly good toaster.

My husband won't throw anything away either. I once had a hairdryer virtually explode in my hands. He rewired it, attached a new cord and actually thought I would use it again. "It tried to kill me," I said. "It's good as new," he replied.

My husband will try to fix anything. Nearly everyone in the county knows they can call him if they want to get rid of something. "It's just such a shame to throw away perfectly good stuff," he says. A rare breed in an otherwise disposable society, my husband was green long before green was in vogue.

What is it about our society that feels the need to constantly upgrade? Though "being green" is touted by politicians and the oh-so-important, all-knowing Hollywood

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crowd, let's face it, people are really only green when it is convenient and when it doesn't hamper their need to be in the now, keep up with the Joneses or attempt to keep up with Bill Gates' constant upgrades.

Case in point, the perfectly good Hoosier Dome. I mean RCA Dome. I keep forgetting to make concessions for the millions of dollars wasted to change the name. Anyway, with the Colts moving to Lucas Oil Stadium, the Dome will come down to make way for an expansion of the Convention Center beginning in March. It took two years to build the RCA (Hoosier) Dome, completed in May 1984. It will take five months to bring it down.

Instead of focusing on the magnificent waste of money that is Lucas Oil (more-big-bucks-for-a-sponsor-name) Stadium, let's focus for a moment on the twenty-four-year-old RCA (Hoosier) Dome.

It's bad enough that the computers, software, gaming systems, televisions, cell phones and other various electronics that consumers buy are obsolete before they even get out of the store. But is a 100,000 sq. ft. dome seating nearly 60,000 people really disposable after only 24 years? Can't anyone think of something else to do with it? How about a prison? A shelter for the homeless? A home for wayward pets? Or maybe a place to store all those old computers, gaming systems and electronics that are now obsolete. That would surely clear out some space in everyone's basement, attic and garage. I have three

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computers, a scanner, 4 cell phones and an electric typewriter—all of which I cannot pay someone to take—that I could donate right now. And, of course, we can't throw them away because, "it would be a shame to throw out a perfectly good computer."

Americans put their whole lives by the side of the road to be carted away once a week. We throw away more furniture, appliances and electronics in this country than there are furniture appliances and electronics in most countries. Our houses, jobs, cars, spouses, body parts...whatever dissatisfies us can be replaced.

This scrap-it society is a culture influenced too deeply by consumerism, chewing up and spitting out mass quantities of disposable items. I blame infomercials and the Home Shopping Network. And China. Everyone likes to blame them.

As for the RCA (Hoosier) Dome, if only they could donate it to my husband. Were it physically possible, he would cart it home and put it in the back yard where he could tinker with it and perhaps "fix it up and sell it." It's just such a shame to throw out a perfectly good Dome.

A Precautionary Tale

The other day, I was stirred from my computer chair by a high-pitched scream. When you have a house full of little girls, a high-pitched scream is an every day occurrence. Let's just say I didn't stir much.

"What now?" I asked in my usual annoyed, I'm-in-the-middle-of-a-really-funny-email tone.

"A bug!" came the terrified, overly dramatic reply.

Sigh. "Get a paper towel," I said. "Not again," I thought. With all the rain, the bugs have been really bad this year. We were finding several interesting bugs in the house every day. And they seemed to be getting bigger.

"No, Mom. A paper towel is definitely not going to work."

Setting down my mouse I slowly ambled into the living room to see the scary bug.

I was not prepared for what I found. Staring me down at the other end of the living room was a bug about the size of a small dog, like a Rottweiler or a Great Dane, only with approximately 112,000 times as many legs and eyes. The girls were huddled in the corner. There was nowhere to run.

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The monster bug and I stared at each other from across the room. The theme from a Clint Eastwood movie began to play. A tumbleweed rolled by.

I thought briefly of going for my husband's B.B. gun, but it was too far away. The monstrous thing in my living room could carry off my children before I got back. A steak knife? No. He was more legs than body. He could definitely overtake me before I got a good stab at him. I was going to have to outsmart him.

I nonchalantly sauntered over to the coffee table and picked up a copy of the newspaper, pretending to read the headlines. The monstrosity moved a few inches closer. I think I heard him chuckle.

Suddenly, quick as a ninja, I rolled up the newspaper and wielded it like a sword. Surprised, Bugzilla took a couple of steps back. Then he regained his composure and came at me, his front legs raised as he prepared to attack. In a flash, I brought the newspaper down directly between two of his eyes. I'm pretty sure this all happened in slow motion.

Again and again I bludgeoned my nemesis. The pain and fury of fighting bugs day in and day out exploded within me as I screamed in rage. In the end, he was nothing but a hideous stain on the rug and a few twitching legs.

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Oh, okay, fine. This account is somewhat fictionalized. I used a paper towel. But it was a really thick, absorbent paper towel, not one of those cheap, dollar store ones, yet he still put up a good fight. And I've never in my life moved like a ninja. But the rest is true. Really.

I'm telling this tale as a warning to all. Arm yourselves, people, because no one is safe. If you haven't already subscribed to a newspaper, do so immediately and keep a copy readily available in case you find yourself facing off with a hideous creature in your own living room. Newspapers are not just for reading in these days of torrential rains and giant insects.

Bugzilla may have been vanquished, but I know he has friends.

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Housekeeper support group now forming

Over 45 percent of accidents and deaths occur in or around the home. In addition, statistics show that over 100,000 women are injured annually doing ordinary household chores. And those are just the ones that aren't too embarrassed to actually report the incidents that cause them pain while cleaning house.

I quote you these statistics in preface to the tale I am about to tell, which otherwise would not bode well in my favor.

While changing the sheets on my daughter's bunk-beds, I decided it would be easiest to reach the back top corner by climbing up the ladder. In my defense, I've done this particular maneuver several dozen times in the recent past. Unfortunately, this particular ladder was built in the 1970s, as it is the same ladder I climbed when I was seven. I've climbed this ladder several thousand times in my lifetime. I was probably a few pounds lighter when I was seven. And a little more agile. I think you know where this is going.

Imagine my glee as I answered the doctor when he asked, "How'd you do this?" Is it embarrassing to tell people I sprained my ankle while making a bed? Just a little.

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When I was a kid, we cleaned our rooms every Saturday morning after cartoons and pancakes. We did the intensive cleaning; Mom gave us a bucket of Pine-Sol and water to scrub the woodwork...the woodwork! I can just imagine giving my kids a bucket of Pine-Sol and water. "What's this stuff? Eww! It smells gross! And what's the woodwork?"

But I never remember suffering serious injuries during the carefree cleaning days of childhood, other than humiliation when the neighborhood kids wanted to play. Why is housecleaning so painful now? I've suffered bruises, bumps and "dusting elbow." I've recently moved on to pulled muscles and stretched tendons. Broken bones can't be far away. I may have to retire soon.

It seems I am not the only one having these problems. According to the Associated Press, Italian inventor Enrico Berruti, recently debuted a self-making bed at the International Exhibition of Inventions in Geneva, Switzerland. At the push of a button, the bed can be made in minutes. I can only assume that Enrico has suffered the same agony as I. Or maybe he's just lazy. At any rate, if only I had had his contraption a few days ago, I could have saved myself a lot of time, pain and money. Now if he would just invent a self-cleaning house.

Of course, I shouldn't complain. We have it a lot easier now that housekeepers did in the past. We have machines to wash dishes, wash and dry clothes, you can

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even buy robotic vacuum cleaners. Yet some of us are still not safe. Some like myself – and don't forget about those other 100,000 women annually – still manage to sustain injuries.

So I'm down to either retiring from cleaning and living in squalor or continuing at the rate I am now and winding up in a wheelchair. Perhaps I should contact those other 100,000 women and start a support group.

The Junk Drawers of Doom

The other day I was searching through the house for a pencil and notepad. Did you ever notice you can never find what you need when you need it? Some of you are probably completely organized with everything in its place, so you know exactly where to find everything you need. Most people will have to search their junk drawer when they need an odd or an end.

If you're like me, however, when you are on a quest for a simple object, you have to mine your way through a series of junk drawers, each one more frightening than the last. Think Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom; every door, every cabinet, every drawer could hold a treasure, a mystery, a horror, or perhaps some ancient Egyptian artifacts.

My house has the standard junk drawer in the kitchen, but it also has half a dozen more throughout the house. We have a tool junk drawer, an office supply junk drawer, a craft junk drawer, and an electronics junk drawer. We also have an oversize junk drawer that we commonly refer to as "the garage." For your reading pleasure, I'm going to briefly examine the contents of each of these drawers.

Our kitchen junk drawer contains dried-up pens, several used batteries, extension cords, and keys to a car that I sold in 1993. There is also a hammer, a couple of

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screwdrivers and some pliers. You would think these items would reside in the tool junk drawer, but that is already full of Christmas lights and office supplies.

The office supply drawer has dried-up pens, several used batteries, a few markers and some loosely strewn thumbtacks, one of which now protrudes from my thumb.

I notice a theme developing as I examine the craft junk drawer and find dried-up pens, several used batteries, and some markers. For a moment I think I may have discovered one of those ancient Egyptian artifacts, but alas; it is only some miscellaneous colored beads stuck haphazardly in some Play Dough.

I'm sure there will be more interesting items in the electronics junk drawer. So moving on, I'm happy to discover that there are, in fact, some dried-up pens and used batteries. There is also an old cable box, some extension cords and telephone jacks, remote controls to VCR's and televisions long dead and buried and a tape recorder that no longer works.

Our large junk drawer, known as "the garage," harbors many fascinating items. Beyond the usual paint cans, lawnmowers and yes, more tools, my husband installed cabinets and an entire wall of drawers. I'm not going to look in each one, because I'm frightened. Although I'm sure there are some useful items, such as dried-up pens

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and used batteries, there are probably many rare and disturbing items as well, such as broken toys, old gym shorts and possibly Jimmy Hoffa.

Upon careful examination of the contents of all my junk drawers, I would think it wise to simply dump all of it into the trash and be done with it. As soon as I did, however, someone would inevitable point a finger at me and say, "Hey! What happened to my collection of dried-up pens and used batteries?" "Where's my Play Dough/bead masterpiece?" or "What did you do with Jimmy Hoffa?"

So I've decided to simply leave everything where it is, take inventory, and carefully write down the contents of every drawer. As soon as I can find a pencil and notebook.

Frustration comes in small packages

Earlier this afternoon I bought a new pencil sharpener. I often jot down notes in pencil because I do a lot of erasing when I write. For some strange reason, however, there is never a sharpened pencil in my house. I'm pretty sure there are pencil elves that come out at night and snap the lead off all my pencils. Then they steal all my pencil sharpeners and hide them in my children's backpacks. Pencil elves are a menace.

But that's not the worst of my problems. I got home from the store with my brand spanking new pencil sharpener, and I couldn't get it out of the package. I was sure I had one heck of a great pencil sharpener on my hands, because it was wrapped tighter than airport security.

Remember the good old days when you could walk into a store, buy a product, then take it home and use it? Today you need an engineer to help you open the package and a foreign interpreter to decipher the directions.

I used a knife, a pair of scissors and, like any red-blooded American, my teeth to open the pencil sharpener package. I don't know what kind of indestructible substance my pencil sharpener was packaged with, but if the company would only lend their technology to Homeland Security, I guarantee America's borders would

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be safe from intruders. I could even use the technology to keep the pencil elves out of my house.

Roughly half an hour, two stab wounds and a toothache later, I had my pencil sharpener, and I was surrounded by shards of plastic, cardboard and two twist-ties. I discovered the two twist-ties after I finally penetrated the unyielding plastic barrier that had kept the pencil sharpener protected. The twist-ties were wound around and up through the pencil sharpener, keeping it securely locked to the bottom of the package. I can just imagine some evil worker in the packaging factory threading those twist-ties up through the pencil sharpener, laughing maniacally at the thought of someone trying to pry them out.

My triumphant happy dance at finally having my pencil sharpener out of the package was interrupted when I noticed an unidentified lever and suction mechanism on the bottom of my sharpener. I decided to consult the directions to discover the origin and useful properties of the mechanism. Much to my dismay, I discovered the directions had been printed on the packaging that lay in ruins at my feet. From what I could piece together, it seemed they were printed in French, or perhaps Portuguese, or maybe it was Pencil Elfish for all I know, so they were useless to me anyway.

When the kids came home from school, they went straight for the pencil sharpener so they could do their homework.

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Within five minutes, Child A informed me that the pencil sharpener was junk (“and what’s this little lever and suction thingy for?”) and Child B said that the pencil sharpener was broken.

In my haste to purchase a pencil sharpener, I had not realized the pencil sharpener industry had become so complex. I picked up the first one I found and carelessly tossed it into my cart without first consulting an expert. I will not make the same mistake again. In the future I will do extensive research and packaging analysis on even the simplest purchases.

As for the sharpener that sits listlessly on my desk with a dangling lever and a suction cup that won’t suck, I can only hope the pencil elves want it.

Please don't pet the peeves

When things are going badly, many people believe they need a pep talk. They think that perhaps if they talk to someone upbeat or watch an episode of the Brady Bunch, things will start to look better. I, however, disagree. For my point, tune in later. For now I'd like to digress a little.

Everyone has those little things that get on their nerves. Even the most annoyingly perky people have their own little quirks, things that can wipe those pesky smiles off their faces. Personally, my little quirk IS annoyingly perky people. The fact is that everyone has his or her own pet peeves.

According to Bo Bennett, "Peeves do not make very good pets." Bo is a self-proclaimed "success expert" (snicker). Bo and his wife Kim created a not-for-profit organization to, and I quote, "promote kindness, respect, generosity, forgiveness, honesty and patience." That's sweet, Bo, best of luck with that.

Really all Bo does is sit around thinking up charming and whacky quotes like the above and posting them on his website. Then failing companies hire him to come and give motivational speeches to their disgruntled employees. It's a wonder he is still alive.

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Anyway, the problem is, Bo couldn't be more wrong. Sorry, Bo, but you can please some of the people all of the time, all of the people are sometimes...wait...pleasing people are sometimes always...hold it... Well, people are jerks, Bo. And besides, it's impossible to go through life without little inconveniences. The only people that go through life without them are either seriously disturbed, seriously medicated or a combination of the two. And let's face it; how boring would life be if every day was a Brady Bunch "Sunshine Day?" How would we ever know that things were going well if things never went badly?

I am fortunate enough to be acquainted with one of the most irritable people on earth. Let's call him Marvin. Marvin's wife irritates him, his kids irritate him, his dog irritates him, insects irritate him, animals, vegetables, minerals, they all irritate him. Marvin doesn't have a pet peeve; he has an entire zoo of peeves. He rarely, if ever, misses an opportunity to complain. Marvin is what I like to call a spatial vampire, meaning he could suck the life out of a room full of people in minutes. If Marvin and Bo were locked in a room together for five minutes, Bo would come out in tears.

Which brings me back to my point. Remember way back at the beginning I said I had a point? Here it comes.

After a while, Bo would think about his life versus the time he spent with Marvin, and Bo would say, "Wow, I'm really lucky I'm not Marvin," and then skip off on his merry way.

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You see? The point is, when things are going badly, you don't need a pep talk. Don't hire Bo. Talk to a downer like Marvin for a while. If no one is available, turn on CNN. Or perhaps watch a reality show. They are founded on my very principle: encountering people with huge problems makes you feel better about your own life. Sad, but also true human nature. Be honest. Would you rather sit through an hour-long pep talk with Bo or watch an hour-long episode of senseless people whining and conniving?

In other words, don't "pet" your peeves and try to ease them, massage them and let them roar.

What's in your P.U.R.S.E.?

A lot of people give me a hard time about the size of the bag I carry. Ball games, work, school functions, family outings...the list is endless. I, like all mothers today, am constantly on the run. And if you're like me, a busy woman with a family, you don't go anywhere without a huge Portable Universal Receptacle, Storage and Equipment bag—otherwise known as a P.U.R.S.E.

A lot of people don't realize that P.U.R.S.E. is actually an acronym. Most are erroneously under the assumption that the word purse is derived from the French words *pur* or *pure* and *se* meaning *other*, which when put together become *purse* meaning *other than pure*. *Au contraire*. If you look inside most women's purses, you will see that they are in fact, *other than pure*. However, this is not the true derivation of the word. Let us examine how this word truly evolved.

From the earliest days, women were expected to carry everything. True, it was the cave man—let's call him *Id*—who slew the wooly mammoth. However, when the beast was fallen, what do you think *Id* said to his wife, *Og*? That's right, "Hey, hon, do me a favor and put this in your P.U.R.S.E." Much like modern women, *Og* obliged by cramming the wooly mammoth in her Portable Universal Receptacle, Storage and Equipment bag—at the time, more of a brontosaurus carcass with a shoulder strap—and carted it home for *Id*. This left *Id* free of that unsightly

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bulge that a woolly mammoth might have caused in the back pocket of his loin cloth, as well as leaving him hands free to slay any treacherous creatures that might cross their path on the long trek home. That's right, Ladies, you can thank Id and his cohorts for the fact that you are now often forced to carry your husband's wallet, keys, sunglasses, comb and deodorant in your P.U.R.S.E., thus leaving him free of unsightly bulges and able to defend you from stray dinosaurs.

In Ancient Egypt, a time when people were so obsessed with material things that they were buried with everything they owned, a P.U.R.S.E. was an absolute necessity. Women carried their valuables, jewels, cats, and, judging from Liz Taylor's appearance in the movie Cleopatra, an inordinate amount of eye-liner. These Egyptian materialists carted it all around in hand-made stone P.U.R.S.E.'s (known today as "pyramids") complete with hieroglyphic monograms.

In the Middle Ages, women loaded up their many children and P.U.R.S.E.'s and headed off to market. Within their flaxen bags they carried household and farm goods for trading as well as farm animals and small children. Upon their return home, their P.U.R.S.E.'s were fairly overflowing with the bounty of their quest as well as many rocks, sticks and various other toys their offspring had accumulated during the festivities of Market Day. Children were often heard to say, "Mama, cart my wares," during the journey back to the homestead. Mama would duly

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oblige, shifting the days traded goods around within her P.U.R.S.E. and heaving it onto her back without missing a step while simultaneously spinning wool and milking a goat and watching her beloved children skip ahead along the path. Today, we often see this feat recreated when visiting various state fairs and amusement parks.

In the Old South, pre Civil War, proper Southern ladies carried a dainty bag, not qualified to carry the needs of a large family. Thus the invention of the hoop skirt. Many people don't know it, but the hoop skirt was the precursor to the modern day "fanny pack" or gluteus P.U.R.S.E. Concealed under those many petticoats were all her children's toys, a change of clothes for each member of the family, her husband's wallet, keys and comb and quite possibly a woolly mammoth.

In modern day, you often see starlets gracing the red carpet carrying petite clutch P.U.R.S.E.'s. This is made possible by the fact that said starlets are followed by an entourage of people, each carrying a P.U.R.S.E. full of autographed glossies, diet pills and enough eyeliner for Cleopatra AND Liz Taylor.

Which brings us to the modern day working moms of America. At any given moment modern women may be called upon to produce diapers, soccer equipment, permission slips, minutes from her latest staff meeting, a full-course meal for five and a seven page report on the mating habits of woolly mammoths. Of course all of the

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above is conveniently located in her P.U.R.S.E. (sometimes know as a minivan).

And so we see that a woman's Portable Universal Receptacle, Storage and Equipment bag should not be looked upon as a burden, but rather a life support system for the family. When called upon to transport your family's every whim from place to place, know that Og, Cleopatra, and women from CEO's of large companies to stay-at-home moms share in this time-honored tradition. Carry your P.U.R.S.E. with pride.

What's the Point?

Time is no longer on our side

At 2:00 in the morning on November 4, our clocks fell back one hour, by order of our fearless governmental leaders, plunging us into darkness at 5:00 in the evening. It seems the higher-ups feel we need extra light at night in the summer, but not in the winter. I'm just trying to figure out if I'm getting more sleep or less.

The powers that be, i.e., the American government, are constantly playing with time. At first they thought Daylight Savings Time (DST) was a good idea. Then they repealed it. Then they made it year round. Then they repealed it. Then they decided it was only good for some of us. Then they decided we should decide. Then they decided we weren't smart enough to decide. And on, and on, and on. Why are we allowing politicians, a group of people who, judging from the national budget, can't even handle basic math, fiddle with the space-time continuum? I'm pretty sure physics is beyond them.

Speaking of physics, let me state my case as I've stated it before: we are not creating more hours of daylight with DST. No matter how you try to convince yourself or how you set your clock, you can't conjure an extra hour of daylight.

One day back in 2005, our fearless governmental leaders, apparently bored with voting themselves pay raises,

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decided to further confuse the issue of DST instead. So they passed a new law to extend DST to the first Sunday in November. Apparently feeling this was not confusing enough, they went ahead and started DST three weeks earlier as well, thus costing many U.S. companies billions to reset automated equipment and inconveniencing most of the country.

Some people enjoy having summer light until 10pm. But many others miss the early morning light. I personally just enjoy my sleep whenever I can get it.

So why do they do it? Why does the government force people to change their clocks instead of allowing them to adjust their own schedules?

I'll tell you why they do it. It is pure and simple a case of discrimination against the worm-catching, early risers of this country. The fascist night owls are out to get those who love the dawn's early light, a phrase so dear to the hearts of great American bright-eyed, bushy-tailed early risers, it starts our National Anthem. It's not, "Oh say can you see by the summer's late night light." No. That just doesn't have the same ring to it.

With so many people championing political correctness these days, I'm surprised no one has taken up this cause before. Well I say, all you bored people out there looking

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for a new cause to shout about, here it is! I think you should organize and march on Washington.

Let me know how it turns out. I'm going back to bed.

A unique and humorous perspective on life's little complications.

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