

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Advice for the Groom

By Stephen Somerville

While in the dressing room for my weekly hockey game, the son of a family friend proudly announced his recent engagement to his fiancé.

Without any hesitation, the group of 50 and 60 year old men, in unison, said "Why?"; we then collectively offered "Our condolences" to the guy.

Lots of laughter ensued.

We then offered our best wishes (sort of!).

Sitting there looking at this young man reminded me of my own marital situation.

I thought about the card my wife gave me on or about our twelfth wedding anniversary, which was seven years ago.

The card Julie gave me was great.

The front of it had a picture of a four-year-old girl clutching her doll and watching her - I guess "five-year-old boyfriend try and fix his tricycle. He has a host of large tools beside him, all strewn on the floor.

The little girl's caption reads: "Maybe we should call a professional?"

The little boys' caption: "No way! I got it!"

Inside the card it says: "Some things never change " like my love for you!"

The only more appropriate card in my case would be something about not ever asking for directions while out driving!

This upcoming wedding also got me thinking about some funny situations over the years.

A while ago a female friend of ours from Aurora was getting married and the company that she bought her wedding dress from had gone under; she was not sure if she could get the dress and while she waited for word, she was searching for alternatives.

And as I was being my usual helpful self, I kindly suggested that since my wife Julie would not be in need of her wedding dress, why don't you offer it to your friend, or better yet, sell it to her for a couple of bucks?

With a Donald Trump type like glare, she icily shot back: "How do you know that I won't be needing this again?"

Well, at least, she didn't add: "in the very near future!"

In the end, our friend did get the dress from the firm.

That conversation also got me to thinking about a present I purchased for my wife a while back. As stated above, Julie always likes to kid me (I think she is kidding) that Brad Pitt is the real father of her son.

So, when I used to get the occasional phone call to bring milk or diapers home, if I am rather tired or just lazy, I would say, "why don't you get Brad to pick it up for you?"

At the time, I took a photograph of her and my son Ryan and bought a new picture frame to give her as a gift. I inserted a picture of Brad Pitt into the frame where I would otherwise have been occupying.

She loved the frame and found the Brad Pitt photo very amusing.

I placed the photo "along with Brad" in the living room and it became a conversation piece when people came over.

I left the picture of Brad in the photo assuming that Julie would remove it after some appropriate "but rather short - interlude; it would still be there today if I hadn't taken it down myself.

Do you see a pattern emerging?

These situations reminded about this nine-year-old boy in Colorado, who, as part of an elementary school assignment, observed his classmates social interactions for a week, and then wrote a paper on it.

The paper became so popular that television host Ellen Degeneres called and got him a book deal with HaperCollins in New York. According to the Toronto Star article, "At 46 pages, the book still has seven chapters and its original title (How To Talk to Girls).

What's new is the shiny red hard cover, the \$10.99 price and the fact that it's available in 17 countries."

With the hints that I have been receiving, I thought to myself, "Hey, I had better check his book out, as you just never know, I may be needing his advice as I re-enter the dating scene?"

This boy is mature beyond his years. Here is some of his common sense advice:

"Go for a talkative girl if you are shy. Then you only have to say one sentence, and she will do the rest of the talking."

And this:

"If you like a girl, comb your hair and don't wear sweats."

My personal favourite:

?Girls win most of the arguments and have most of the power. If you know that now, things might be easier.?

I could have really used this last piece of advice, oh, about thirty years ago.

I wish I had some similar insights that I could suggest for my friend's son.

Based on eighteen years of marital bliss and harmony, I do have but one piece of advice:

Make sure to purchase a shiny new television remote that is just for your bride-to-be.

Batteries are strictly optional.

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