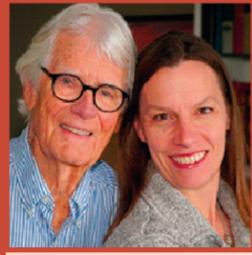


HEALTH CORNER



Life in an Iron Lung Is a Test of Tolerance

By W. Gifford-Jones MD and Diana Gifford

Reading a recent tribute to the life of Paul Alexander brought back horrible memories for me. Paul Alexander was only six years of age when he developed polio. The result? He spent the rest of his life enclosed in an iron lung. I too had polio in my final year at the Harvard Medical School. If my fate had been life in an iron lung, I would have begged someone to kill me.

It's not just memories of polio that trouble me. It's also some people's long-festering misinterpretation of my stand on vaccines, including some editors who got my message totally wrong.

The polio vaccine hadn't been invented when Alexander and I contracted the disease in the 1940s. Given the consequences for Alexander, he could have given in to depression. Rather, what he accomplished by sheer will power is astounding. He studied economics at the University of Texas and then took a law degree from the same university, all while enclosed in an iron lung.

A lifelong friend, Daniel Spinks, attributed Alexander's successes to his positive attitude about life, sense of humour, and strong feeling about God. Spinks proved his dedication by driving Alexander to court appearances, which must have required bravery too, on both their parts.

Alexander was able to escape from his iron lung for up to six hours at a time by gulping air. But according to Spinks, as he got older, even short escapes were too difficult. Even so, Alexander lived his life telling people they could do great things.

In 1949, during my last year in training at Harvard, I awakened one morning with a devastating headache. Later that day I was admitted to hospital and a spinal test diagnosed polio. The following morning, I could not move my legs and paralysis of my abdominal muscles meant I could not sit up. I well remember distinguished professors telling me there was no way to stop the paralysis. I believed my plans to be a surgeon were finished.

But I got lucky. After several weeks of therapy, I regained the use of my muscles. And I did become a surgeon. It was a close call. Then vaccines in the early 1950s became available to prevent polio.

I started reading about vaccines as a teenager and how Pasteur and other researchers had developed vaccines to prevent a number of diseases. To be clear, I have never, never been against vaccines. But I have warned readers that on rare occasions vaccines cause complications. Governments have paid compensation to some patients. Even aspirin can trigger problems, not to mention the dangerous side effects of many prescription drugs. But my column was discontinued in a few newspapers as some people screamed lies about my position on vaccines.

Readers will recall the anti-vaccination group of abhorrent protestors who brought chaos to Ottawa for several weeks. I wondered why it was allowed to last so long.

I also wondered how these rowdies would have reacted if a polio epidemic had been raging in Ottawa. What if they had witnessed people being paralyzed by this terrible disease? Would they have condemned these people to living the rest of their lives in an iron lung? Or would they acknowledge that the polio vaccine is the reason why such scenarios are unheard of today?

Vaccines have saved countless lives. They have occasionally brought harm to some as well. There is no perfection with vaccines or many other aspects of medicine. People need to inform themselves and make personal decisions. Everyone should respect the choices people make.

Reader responses would be highly welcomed.

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The Long Way

from Wayne & Tamara



I've known my best friend for six years. Initially I thought she was a great I wrote you about four years ago, when my eight year marriage was ending in divorce. At that time you gave me some great advice about beginning again. After reading the recent letter from Linda and how she "settled" for the wrong man, I felt I had to write an update letter.

I can look back now and realize in too many ways, I "settled" in my first marriage. I reaped the results eight years later with a broken heart. After that marriage ended, I chose to live my life to the fullest, to take every opportunity to enjoy life and my friendships, and within reason, to never settle in anything. I wanted children, a family with which to grow old together, and the white picket fence. But I couldn't focus on what I didn't have. I could only focus on what I did have, which was a lot of time and some great friends. Sure there were women who came and went during that time (mostly went), but I never settled. Amazingly, I did meet a fantastic woman who is in every way my other half, as I am for her. We've been married now a little over a year and are happier now than when we were courting. We can't imagine life without the other now.

My point is not that I met my other half, but instead I want to mention the positive outlook on life and love we both originally had. Being the right person for the other would not have helped either of us if my wife and I had a 'wrong' attitude when we met. We would have simply walked right past the other.

Having the right attitude towards life, we ended up being like a huge magnet attracting steel. Anyway, thanks for the great advice and continue the great work! I never miss a week.

Scott

Scott, sometimes we get things right only after we have made a mistake. Sometimes we get things right when someone shows us the way. And sometimes we need a wake-up call to get things right. In the book "Life Lessons" David Kessler wrote about Caroline, a woman with "the most genuine smile you will ever see." Not only was she happy, but to him she seemed to be one of those people who live a charmed life. When he told Caroline he thought she was lucky in love, she told him her story. When she was in her early 40s, Caroline found a lump in her breast the doctors called suspicious. She waited three agonizing days to learn if cancer was spreading throughout her body. It wasn't. The lump was benign.

But Caroline resolved not to let those three days mean nothing. She had been single and desperately lonely. When she went to a party or event, she would quickly scan the room for Mr. Right. If he wasn't there, she'd go somewhere else searching for him, and always she went home more desperate than before. Caroline decided to change her approach to life. Even if Mr. Right wasn't around her, other people were. She would talk with them and enjoy them, no matter what. At the end of each day she no longer felt lonely for she truly talked and smiled and laughed with others. The more she did this the more wonderful people she met and the closer she grew to her friends. She stopped being a desperately searching person.

She didn't meet Mr. Right the first year. Or the second. She met him four years later, and two years after that, they married. Being "lucky in love" has a lot to do with being ourselves and being fully engaged in life.

David Kessler wrote, "In our hearts we know we are destined to live fully, to love fully, and to have great adventures in life." Our task is figuring out how to do it.

Wayne & Tamara

SEND LETTERS TO: Directanswers@WayneAndTamara.com

Wayne & Tamara are the authors of *Cheating in a Nutshell* and *The Young Woman's Guide to Older Men*—available from Amazon, Apple, and booksellers everywhere.

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STUGOTS \$1.80

By Rosaldo Russo

Allow me to begin this column by thanking the Oshawa/Central newspaper for allowing me the opportunity and access to the press. Not to many if any allow an average person like me to tell the world what I see and think. In my opinion, The Editor/Publisher is a real upstanding type of guy. He shoots from the hip and hold traditional core values.

My name is Rosaldo Russo. I came to this great country to make a better life for myself and my family. I thank Canada for everything it has allowed me to do and earn. I worked construction all my life. I know the value of hard work and honesty. I remember as a boy my father always telling me to work hard and buy land. So I did.

I remember days when I did not have enough to eat. I go to work... but I did not wait for hand outs. I rounded up my pride my skill and my determination to succeed and went to work. In those days the only benefits we received was the fact we were employed.

Before retiring I was the owner and operator of local material supply company that allowed me to retired without worry. Now that I have time to enjoy life. I look around me and have some concern for future generations. I see that the world is finished.

Before anyone gets offended. Let me explain what Stugots means.... Stugots is Italian mob slang lingo - Italian term that refers to the male genitalia. It is used to describe an idiot or a jerk. Now, I think that later is more descriptive of how our government treat us. The first more like those we elect to office.

I read a report on Monday warning me that by the end of the week the gas could go up as much as fourteen cents. Managia, fourteen cents... Che Fai, then they tell us on Wednesday that lucky us we may see gas prices drop as much as four cents.

Now am I blind, stupid or plain retarded? They raise 14 on Friday, the following Monday they drop four cents... They still stuck it to us for ten cents... But this is not the worst.

This mathematical conundrum is an open license for grocery stores to jump their prices in the name of high fuel costs.

I say, Bull dingy. This is an outright rip off. Not only is it bad that people can't pay for the inflated food prices. Now they will not be able to afford gas to go to work and make the little they make to pay for groceries.

Come on people. Where is the Canadian red blood? Is it not time for Canadians to grow some grapes and call the government out. We can send millions if not billions to fight loosing foreign wars. We can't take care of young families wanting to start a new life but can't due to the outrageous house prices. Now they can't even afford to drive to work. They surely will not be able to pay for food. \$14.00/lb for beef at some stores. Hamburger almost \$10/lb. Are you kidding me. But wait. We the apologetic people of Canada may go hungry and homeless before we figure it out. WE ARE GETTING SCREWED AND FORCED TO LIKE IT.

Let's send a clear messages that those Stugots we elected will not treat us the hard working tax paying Stugots like a bunch of Stugots. Oh Canada... Our home and native Stugots.