

VIA OPEN LETTER
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This is an OPEN LETTER I wrote to all the Embarrassed — on June 1, 2025.

Dear Embarrassed,

CLATTER-SKITTER-SCATTER-SPLATTER, tiny frozen cubes went over the edge of the pitcher. Ice cubes went cascading across the elegant spread of the dignitaries' table. I froze as if I was literally the Statue of Liberty, unable to move a muscle, and turned as red as a fire hydrant. The sound was deafening, wishing I was six feet under and forgotten.

It was my high school senior “end-of-year formal dinner,” annually presented to parents and community dignitaries. I was assigned to keep fresh water brimming in the gold-etched glasses of the head table, occupied by the revered guests.

It was not too far into the dinner when I had the biblical proportion of an embarrassing moment. Thinking I would fill one more glass and then go refill my pitcher, I, in a most gentlemanlike manner, with the pure white towel draped over my left arm, quietly and smoothly (thinking I was hardly noticed) picked up the glass of the one most esteemed leader.

Standing to his side, I slowly tipped the pitcher to gracefully pour water into his glass. Just a bit more, I thought ... when the liquid flowing from the pitcher — glug, glug, glug — was abruptly punctured by the hard, fractured sounds of a staccato burst of clinks, clanks and clunks echoing.

The leader most respected was the one who shocked me back from the statue realm to the embarrassing human reality by saying, “O hell, fret not, son. At least it’s not milk, or we’d have to cry.”

If you've lived much while walking around on this blue marble that we call Earth, then more likely than not you've had a similar cosmic moment in your life. And if not, just keep being human, and your moment is coming, if not multiple moments — thus, to you, I write.

Cheer up! It's not that bad, it's worse!

No, really.

If you're human, the truth is you may as well embrace the fact of blunders and be grateful that you can be embarrassed, for at least you will know you're yet alive, and not AI! We're human! Accept and enjoy our humanistic peculiarities.

Yes, embarrassment is painful, but an important emotional state. My guess is that we lowly human creatures were given such an odd mechanism for the purpose of making us feel bad, so we will be inclined to learn from our mistakes, to have a great urge to not repeat our errors and to learn from them.

Maybe embarrassment is a greater gift than we realize, or we would stay stagnated and, even worse, go backwards, even into animalistic tendencies (like wokeness).

No one likes turning beet red, but blushing is uniquely human. Blushing is actually a bit of a scientific mystery and one of the many weird facts about the human body. Researchers still don't understand exactly why it happens. Unlike other emotional responses, blushing is more varied. "It's a very complex reaction," says Gary Small, MD, a leading expert on brain science. "Blushing doesn't mean the same thing for every person. Not everyone blushes at the same rate or has the same propensity to blush," says Dr. Small.

We tend to blush if we are embarrassed or ashamed. Dr. Small said, "It's an involuntary response to insecurity, embarrassment or simply an awkward social situation."

My introduction to the science of blushing occurred on a hot, stuffy day in eighth grade. We were sitting in class listening to our teacher read our health book (or should I say, we were supposed to be listening). Not something I'm proud of, but I was a class clown and usually up to something mischievous, and must have appeared as not listening when Mrs. Beverly said, "Neil, what are capillaries?" Not even missing a beat, I said, "You mean those things causing you to blush right now?" To her surprise and everyone else in class, they acted like it was the first time I had ever got the answer correct, and to my surprise, Mrs. Beverly actually turned bright red.

For blushing is when we have an emotional trigger that causes a physiological response. And the glands release adrenaline to our body, which causes the widening of capillaries, the smallest blood vessels in the body; they are tiny, thin as hair, delicate blood vessels. So, blood comes closer to the surface, and you see the redness, as they are widened. So, it's just a big scientific word she was trying to expound upon, when instead it ended up illuminating her own face.

So, face it: embarrassment, blushing and feeling like a complete ass is an important part of our human experience. In fact, notice how the word embarrassment is spelled: it has the word ASS all wrapped up neatly in it. So, maybe that's why the speaking clan say, "I feel like an ass," when we are embarrassed.

You know, embarrassment even happens to the best of us.

One day I was sitting with a small group visiting an old gentleman. He was a farmer on weekdays and a preacher on Sundays; he was one of the most honest men I have ever met.

When one of the folks sitting around visiting related an embarrassing experience they had had that week, then the honest farmer/preacher chuckled and said, "O, you say that's embarrassing? Well, what do you say of this?" And he began to tell us:

“In the early years, oh, I would say the early 1960s, then we, my wife and I, were building our house. In those days, after you got the shell up, then most folks would move in and make do, just get by, while they finished building the home.

“We had just started drywalling and had one wall done — the wall dividing the kitchen and living room. All other walls were still just stud frames. It was a Saturday night; my wife was in the kitchen doing the dishes, and I decided to go take my Saturday bath.”

Note: Even in his old age when I knew him, he still took a bath on Saturday nights, and that is all he did: no shower or bath the rest of the weekdays. The old days were a bit different than nowadays, eh? He didn't even use deodorant, but believe it or not, he didn't ever smell bad, and he was a farmer, hardworking, and a go-to-church-on-Sunday preacher, and I never remember smelling him. They must have been put together a bit differently back then.

He said, “I was as dressed as our first parents in the Garden of Eden, except lacking a fig leaf, as I stood in the tub reaching for a bar of soap, facing the front door through the studded wall, when suddenly a knock came on the door. The tub was directly in line of the front door, behind the studded wall of the future bathroom. But my wife, standing in the kitchen behind the only drywall in the house, said, ‘Come in,’ not realizing the full extent of the situation.

“After we made eye contact (hopefully ‘eye contact only’), then all she saw and heard was a big splash and all my naked flesh attempting to go down the drain of the tub.”

The honest farmer/preacher, by this time in telling us, was laughing with tears on his cheeks and said, “I don’t know if the neighbor lady remembers or not, but I do every time I meet her at church.”

And then he commenced to tell us another embarrassing moment he had: “Long ago, one of our farm neighbors passed away, and we

were attending their graveside service. I was standing, intently listening, when suddenly my pants fell to my ankles.”

One of the folks sitting there listening to him tell this experience, gasping, said, “What did you do?” Once again, chuckling with tears from laughing, he said, “What the hell do you think I did? I pulled my pants up!” He assured us he never wore a belt again; his frame was of such shape that he was of the necessity to wear suspenders to keep his pants on.

This reminds me of an experience I once had ... Aw, it’s just too embarrassing!

Some experiences are just so embarrassing we never want to repeat them ... know what I mean?

O, what the hell, I’ll relate it for the sake of this letter to you, Embarrassed, but I better never hear of it again ...

On a seemingly normal, regular day, I had just pulled into the business district and parked behind a business that I was delivering to. I opened the back door to my truck and was gathering the items to take in when, out of nowhere, Mother Nature demanded my full attention. I had an extreme urge to pee — I mean, I needed to pee right now!

It was a secluded back area with high concrete walls obstructing any view from adjacent buildings, and almost no one ever in that back area.

Mother Nature was demanding! As if it was my own mother with her furrowed brow insisting (in no uncertain terms) that I empty the trash cans immediately.

This was the feeling Mother Nature was urging me with severe magnitude: that I only had seconds to empty my bladder before I would experience irreversible consequences.

I grabbed the only possible solution within reach — an empty water bottle — and followed the strict demand of Mother Nature by

beginning to empty my bladder in said bottle.

I'm sure you've had that feeling you get when you know you've pleased your mother by obeying her and she is overly praising you. Well, I was relishing such feelings when, out of completely nowhere, a nice lady walked up to the back door to ask me a question.

Facing each other, there we stood. I'm sure you can only imagine. That moment will forever be etched in my mind. Capillaries? Redder than a fire truck! There were not enough corners in the back of that brown truck to crawl into.

You ask, what did I do? What the hell do you think I did! Zipped it up! It was as if instantly Mother Nature was nowhere to be found, and I had no more bladder juice. I don't know if the nice lady remembers, but every time we pass on the road, I do.

Simply put, my fellow earthions, we are a species intended to get "embarrassed" for a wise purpose — so sometimes all we can do is "pull our pants up" or "zip up," and sometimes endure the feelings of being a complete ass. All we can do is adjust the way we do things and carry on.

No, we won't ever forget the experiences, I assure you.

But hopefully we can learn from our stumbling and shortcomings — at least to not repeat them, but hopefully to increase in dignity and in intelligence, as is expected for us mortals to do.

Or, at the very least, we will have something to tell our grandchildren.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Neil A. Zitting". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

NEIL ADAIR ZITTING · sNAZy PUBLISHING

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Plain truth, good humor, and a better tomorrow.



WRITTEN BY

Neil Adair Zitting

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Neil A. Zitting". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Written by a human, for humans.

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