

Families are Forever!

Family Relationships

The Baker's Dozen Project 3: 1

“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”

“Men marry women with the hope they will never change. Women marry men with the hope they will change. Invariably they are both disappointed.”

“Knowledge of what is does not open the door directly to what should be.”

Dr. Albert Einstein

John Bearister's Bicycle

Family relationships are tough to understand and to manage. Many parents with grown children will tell you “Don't try to manage them; you don't have control anymore. When you think you have them figured out, up will come something new that changes everything. Better to have the philosophy “What is, is; What will be, will be.”

Those are half-truths. Half-truths are just what they say they are, part true and part not true. I will not spend your time identifying every half that is false or true. I will identify some things that some parents have figured out and seem to be consistent for all parent-offspring relationships. Let's start with John Bearister. He is a father in his fifties who has three grown children. One, David, the oldest, is almost exactly like John. John has mixed feelings about that. His middle child, Michelle,, is very much like her mother Judy, with differences. The major one is that she doesn't have any children of her own yet and doesn't seem to be as close to her husband as John would like. He would love to have more grandchildren and wonders if she married a man just like him; one who works a lot? His son Ian is a mystery to him. Often a disappointment in what he doesn't do, yet so much fun to be with. Ian is what John calls “A free spirit.” John doesn't know if a woman will ever catch him?” But then again, all men seem to

find their mate eventually.” John says to almost everyone to whom he talks about Ian. Let’s join John as he troubles himself about relationships.

John Bearister is again puzzled. What used to be the best of times is now not so for all. He is on a business trip, alone in his room. He had a nice dinner, joked with the waitress, called his wife Judy and tried to reach David and Michelle, two of his adult children but as usual got their answering machines. “Why haven’t they called me back? John asks out loud, angrily. “Well, I know better than to even try to reach Ian who leaves the voice mailbox on his cell phone full so people can’t reach him.”. The family life that he valued so much when his kids were still living at home seemed no longer reachable; tonight he really felt alone. There were no Celtic’s games on television and CNN was pretty dull. He pulled out his copy of Robert Pirsig’s **Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance** and read a bit. He noted that Pirsig always wrote about several themes in every chapter. One was how to keep his motorcycle running, something that interested John. The second was Pirsig’s complex relationship with his grown-up son who was riding with him through western small towns. John thought a lot about that relationship. He felt close to David, his oldest son, but disconnected from his son Ian. John wondered what he and Judy had done wrong in raising Ian? John many times over had examined what he and Judy had done with Ian and really couldn’t see an difference in their parenting than what they had done with the first two. What if they hadn’t made any major mistakes? What if Ian’s personality and the choices he made were a result of something else that he hadn’t thought of? John decided that he would read more of Pirsig’s motorcycle journey with his son to see what was shared and then to write in his own blog, which he had titled “John’s Bicycle: Falling Off and Getting Back On”. When he finally got to his blog, he thought. “Sure wish I didn’t fall off and get back on so much!”

John was a writer by trade, a columnist for his regional newspaper; he wrote regularly in the two areas of money management and computer usage. As John started to ramble about his day on his blog, he decided to be like Pirsig and write about the American Family and their relationships. What would he say? He decided to write on the hurdles and disconnects of being a parent with adult children, ages “18 to 80”, especially the major hurdles parents like Judy and he were facing. So he started a list. When he finished his first draft 90 minutes later, he felt satisfied with his work and sleepy, ready to go to bed. “I am not going to write any more until I get home and talk with Judy about her ideas,” he stated to no one in particular. He printed a copy for his own reading for as he still liked to read off of paper. No Nook, Kindle, or iPad for him. Let’s look and see what was on this initial list entitled: “Families of America Twenty-first Century

Style: Bumps to Consider:

1. Separateness. Everyone wants to do their own thing their own way. Modern conveniences make life easier but also separates humans from their loved ones and or those that they just encounter. We have machines for everything yet still can’t manage our time. Smart phones especially are convenient but they actually decrease the quality of relationships. It wasn’t the phones but the people who use them so incessantly. Divorce doesn’t just occur within families but everywhere in life. Companies divorce themselves from their home communities by sending jobs overseas. Marriages fail at greater than a 50% rate. Products fail as do their service. Houses are disappearing as people live in boxes piled high. In Florida one owns only the home, not the land on which it sits. There is no loyalty from the work place nor from the worker, thus working relationships are short, weak, and self-focused. Our main line religions are experiencing a large drop in membership as people feel isolated from each other religiously. In male-female dating relationships, the one night stand is the in thing; dating isn’t called dating anymore but known as “Hooking up”.

2. Parenting is tough. Experience doesn’t count. With all the information available to today’s new family leaders, those raising their 0-18 year old children don’t value their parent’s life experience very much anymore. i.e. A 60 year old physician remembers his son in seventh grade sudden asking him: “Dad are you a doctor? I didn’t know that. It explains why the kids at school are calling me MD kid, and being mean.” The physician also notes that his son and wife never call him with medical emergencies for advice but

go to the web. Einstein's famous quote "information without experience is useless" isn't heard by many in this century.

3. Technology and ease are in. Technology, technology, technology. Life is good when easy, life is good when easy, life is good when easy are today's mantras. The technology dog's tail rules the dog and his family. People email and text rather than talk directly because it is easier. A lot of a family's budget goes to support technologies to enhance communication between those distance from each other while at the same time creating distance between those geographically close to each other. Dads must buy their seven year old daughters smart phones or both face rejection. S(he) who has the most toys loses in relation to relationships.

4. Money rules! Families seek to possess large amounts of money, demanding high salaries at the beginning of a career. "I want it all today". Credit cards are on their way out as everyone wants their money now. Electronic wallets and apps are being developed by every major corporation for payment for their products. Political life follows the money. One can't run for public office unless a millionaire many times over. Politician's don't vote their conscience anymore, just vote as told by those who pay their bills.

5. Sex also rules! A three year old girl's mother finds that clothes for three year olds come with a fashion label, have sex appeal and are advertised by sexy seven's, all dressed up to look like teens. The age of the first gentle sexual experience for females has dropped to eleven. Cheerleaders at high school and college sports don't cheer; they bump and grind.

5. Salt TO Pepper hasn't been discovered yet. Only Salt OR Pepper, the old dualistic thinking approach. . We are absolutely sure we are right on all things. If others are elsewhere on our lists of beliefs, they are absolutely wrong. If you are not with me, you are against me say our leaders. Negotiation and compromise are not in in the vocabulary of today's leaders. Government is run by the winner of the latest scrimmage and is no longer representative.

6. Consumer's and families don't count. Corporations are the same as individuals and families says the Supreme Court.

7. American families experience much anger. America is an angry country. We wage wars in order to get our way. Our conflict resolutions methods model football, our favorite national pastime. When people don't know what to do, they kill other people. Guns have become Gods.

John Bearister's pain is our pain. These are just a few of the issues parents worry about, both what to do about them and how these issues are going to affect their relationships with their

grown kids. Let's see what the Forever Family can share on family relationships. You met them all earlier except Vincent, Dr. D.'s and Nana's fifteen year old grandson and his girlfriend, Lucy. It looks like they are partying, all of them.

Partying, Celebrating and Relating

Kelly: "Welcome to all. I am at a State Park in the mountains of beautiful Colorado. This is a gorgeous place on a very serene lake. There are cottages and cabins to rent, a modern well-developed campground, a sandy beach for swimming, very nice picnic areas, playgrounds, hiking trails and about everything you would want for an outdoor experience. This is a surprise picnic for Dr. D's and Nana's forty-seventh (47) wedding anniversary. As they are 'outdoor people' we thought we would hold the party here. We are glad you could come.

"They will be here in a couple of minutes as they think they are taking Vincent and Lucy horseback riding. V & L are in on this and are to see that Vincent's grandparents come here before going to the stables." As usual, Kelly is sipping on coffee, this time iced coffee.

Dr. D. enters holding hands with Nana, his wife. "What is this? What are all these people doing here? What is going on? Whose idea was this? When did you all arrange this?"

"Surprise. We aren't going horseback riding at all. That was just a trick to get you here. Isn't this great? I know we fooled you." Vincent states loudly; all the time holding hands with Lucy.

Nana whispers in her husband's ear: "D., I think I know what this is all about. Today is our wedding anniversary, the 47th to be exact. I bet you forgot? Anyways, just calm down and enjoy it all."

Kelly: "Look at all the people who came just to honor your long standing relationship.

Lucy, is quite self-focused and has to talk about her relationship: “Vincent and I have been going together for seven months and today is our anniversary. Well, that is as long as I have known we were special to each other. It took Vincent a while longer to figure that out.”

Vincent: “That isn’t fair. I knew we had something very much in common after our first ‘hang time’ together. I just wasn’t planning to go with any girl at all, until you told me that you really liked me. . . .”

Kelly interrupts, knowing this is already an ongoing argument between the two teenagers :

“There is lots to eat and drink so everyone help themselves.”

Two Basic Human Needs: To Structure Time and to Relate to Others

As the Forever Family celebrates, let’s look at some key factors in all relationships and that is how our use of time influences what happens in a relationship and its depth. We know that human beings relate to each other to meet basic needs and to structure their time on this earth. In Book One, “Tic Tock. The Clock Rules”, the twenty-four hour factor is discussed. Within each day’s twenty-four hours we relate to other people one of six ways or if you will, at one of six level of interaction. Five of those levels are very easy to comprehend and use to guide behavior. The one that is so confusing and the most frequently used is called ‘the game level’. The other five are rather easy to understand and with a little practice, one can use this tool to guide one’s thinking to make life’s choices as they present themselves to us.”

The six levels are: (1) Withdrawal, (2) Ritual, (3) Pastiming, (4) Activity, (5) Games and (6) Intimacy. ¹ This way of looking at relationships is so important that it is available on our website www.thefamilyforever.com. What is there is the original article by two psychologists/family

¹ <http://www.theadultchild.com/relationships-and-time-structuring-a-typology.html>

counselors James and Jongeward from their classic book **Born to Win** (James). We still use these six levels or types of relationships today to examine what goes on in family relationships.

Withdrawal

Withdrawal is the most basic way humans use portions of our daily time. We do so by either physically removing ourselves from others or psychologically removing ourselves by going somewhere inside of our mind, typically to our fantasies. Humans need time to be alone, to relax and think about what we want to do and enjoying feeling moments such as watching the sun come up. This is likely a result of our family values where we copy our parent's behavior e.g. when a father gets into conflict with his wife, he responds the way his father did in similar situations and that is to go to his workshop. He can also psychologically "tune out" his wife by going into his fantasies and literally not hear what she says. Or, he can go somewhere to be alone. Here in Colorado "The Cave" is an example of where some men go to withdraw and is the place where Dr. D. goes to withdraw or get away by himself"

Ritual

Communications on the second level, the ritual level, are quite basic and usually well-known to everyone, such as everyday "hello's" and "how are you?" Almost every person anywhere in the world uses the "hi-hello" ritual where the first person says: "hi, how are you" and the second person responds "fine, how about you?" Since this is universally known to be a ritual, the two parties know that the first person to speak is not asking about the other's health, but

merely offering a pleasantry and expecting one back. Even if the two parties do not speak the same language, as often is the case for tourists, this exchange may take place without a common language a nod of the head or a smile response. It is amazing how universal it is.

Almost every social contact begins with a ritual as it gives the two person coming together a way of beginning. Examples include church services, with their ritual of worship, political parties, social clubs, youth organizations and social activities in general that often have elaborate ritualistic patterns to guide the way they interact with their members. For example, many churches call their worship service 'A Ritual of Worship.' In marriages and families, the rituals which started out as a way of beginning, often became a way of life. After the adult children leave the home of origin, the relationship between husband and wife that does not have a life of its own becomes a way of life that holds interaction and communication to a bare minimum. Their relationship is mostly ritualistic.

Past timing

Nana will tell you that she definitely learned the next level of relationships from her parents as both were excellent past timers. Her Dad looked forward to Friday nights when he walked to town to meet many of his friends to pass the time about such topics as the weather, politics, sports or anything that they had in common. Her mom did the same thing over the telephone, at her mid-day church meetings and the regular walks she took every day. Nana has realized that she follows their patterns often, although she spends a lot of time working. At work, before she gets down to work (the activity level), she always chats with anyone around about the same type of things her mom and dad did, only updated to her generation. When not at work and among people, Nana loves to pastime and believes that she can talk with anyone. The secret here is to start by saying a ritual and then asking something about themselves. Other people love to talk

about themselves and almost always will do so unless they insist on living mostly in withdrawal, as hermits and recluses do. Past timing is a great way to begin every encounter with another person. Even animals respond to positive statements about themselves if repeated often enough.”

Team building activities done in the workplace can benefit persons who want to be promoted at work, have excellent work records, and are masters of their craft or profession, but seem to get passed over for promotions to that mid-management or higher levels. They typically come to the team building feeling angry and puzzled as to what to do . It turns out for many of them that if they become as excellent relationship builders as they are excellent at what they know technically, that they will then be promoted . Their bosses want someone who is a hard worker, really knows his/her stuff and who has excellent social skills. A mid-management leadership position is more about relationships and communication than about doing the job. Remember the old saying “it is not what you know but who you know” that really matters. We have added to that and say “it is not what you know but who you know and what you do with that relationship that matters.” If you tend to be a silent type while at work, seem to be into your own world, and always on task, others often think you don’t care about them and that they certainly wouldn’t want you for their team leader or boss.”

Activity

The fourth level of relationships or time structuring/ usage is activity which is a synonym for work. James and Jongeward again explain this level so clearly:

Activities are ways of structuring time that deal with external reality and are commonly thought of as work, getting something done. Activities are often what people want to do, need to do, or have to do: collecting stamps, preparing homework, milking cows, balancing the ledger, getting dressed, answering the mail, programming a missile, cooking dinner, weeding the garden, unloading a ship, building a birdhouse, sewing a dress, drawing blueprints, building bridges.

When some of the above and other time-honored activities come to an end, a person frequently feels empty, restless, or useless. This problem comes into sharp awareness when certain time-structuring activities, such as caring for children, going to school, or holding a job, come to an abrupt end. Many mothers who completely fill their time with children and household chores are overwhelmed with a sense of boredom, and inadequacy when the children grow up and leave home. Similarly, a father who devotes his life to being a breadwinner may suffer the same boredom and deteriorate rapidly after retirement.

Games

The fifth way of using time or structuring relationships, the game level, is very complicated to understand yet it is so important to do so as this is the level at which we humans spend a huge amount of time each day. Games are the next to the highest way humans go about meeting basic needs. Games are like activities except there is always a hidden, psychological level also in existence and it is this hidden level that controls everything. It is on this hidden level that humans get their basic needs met, even if they are met in negative ways. An example of a mild game is when someone calls out “hello” to another person to greet them, but because they want others in the room to notice them, the caller!

We spend so much time at the game level that this important level has its own chapter, Chapter Twelve, in Book I.

Intimacy (not what you think)

The last level of relationships is known as ‘intimacy’. Incorrectly, many people immediately think of a ‘sexual relationship’ as the only activity that can be done at this level. Another example comes from the game of baseball. Think about the excitement when a good defensive team turns a triple play. Imagine the feelings that all have for a few seconds when the third baseman fields a sharply hit grounder, steps on third for one out, throws to the second baseman who makes a clean throw to the first baseman for the third out., and then all run to the dugout

together for more celebration. The whole team exchanges high fives but it is only those three- the third baseman, second baseman and first baseman, with perhaps the shortstop that enjoy the intimacy of the moment. James and Jongeward offer some other examples of time spent in intimacy:²

“The sense of intimacy can occur in the midst of a crowd or in a continuing friendship, at work or in a marriage relationship. Intimacy may happen if:

- A person at a concert briefly catches the eye of a stranger. For that moment they are aware of the bond mutual enjoyment. They smile openly at each other in a moment of intimacy.
- A husband and wife at work weeding their garden experience a sense of closeness which spontaneously leads them to physical contact that validates their affection.
- A father looks into the tear-soiled face of his son who has just buried his dog. He puts his arm around the boy and says, “it’s tough to bury a good friend.” The boy melts into his father’s arms, releasing his grief. For that moment they are close.
- Two men work together for several weeks preparing an important proposal for the company. One presents it to the management and the proposal is rejected. When he returns, his colleague looks into his face, and without words a feeling of understanding for their mutual disappointment passes between them.
- Any activities such as going to a concert, digging in a garden, burying a dog, or working on a proposal serve as a context in which intimacy can occur.

At a deeper level of human encounter than rituals, pastimes, games, and activities lies the potential that each person has for intimacy. Intimacy is free of games and free of exploitation. It occurs in those rare moments of human contact that arouse feelings of tenderness, empathy, and affection. Such affection is not just the warm sensation a person might get from a glimpse of shapely legs or broad shoulders. Intimacy involves genuine caring. People can live or work together for many years but never really “see” or “hear” each other. Yet, a moment may come when one sees the other for the first time—sees his coloring, his expressions, his many shapes, his movements, his differences. He may also hear the other for the first time—hear all his messages, verbal and nonverbal, emotional and factual. In modern life intimacy seems rare, People who feel crowded in one way or another often seek “psychological” space. They may withdraw or resort to ritualistic

² <http://www.theadultchild.com/relationships-and-time-structuring-a-typology.html>

living and use “keeping your distance” techniques. Even when jammed into a crowded elevator or train they remain distant, pretending not to see each other. Intimacy is often frightening because it involves risk³. In an intimate relationship people are vulnerable, and many times it seems easier to pass time or to play games than to risk feelings either of affection or of rejection. If the capacity for intimacy has been unnecessarily suppressed, it can be recovered. Through activating and strengthening the thought process, a person can change in spite of his early life experiences. Recovering the capacity for intimacy is a major goal of TA and is one of the marks of an autonomous person. Winners risk genuine intimacy and benefit when it does occur.

We rejoin the Forever Family at their picnic-anniversary celebration where Kelly has just asked Dr. D. and Nana a question.

“So how did all of these levels play a part in your marriage of forth-six years?” Kelly asks, as always sipping her nearby cup of coffee.

Nana respond first, quite happy to again tell her favorite story. “We first met in grade school, how about that? I don’t remember much about that but we didn’t have any real contact except while in school. It wasn’t until our senior year in high school that we started dating and when we went our separate ways after graduation, that ended. We got together again after our first year in nurses training and college respectively when ‘D’ asked me for a date. I don’t know what happened on that date, which was pretty normal in its activity but we saw each other every night for the next two weeks and we fell in love.”

Dr. D. reaches out to again hold her hand and when she pauses, adds: “Those two weeks were a wild ride and I don’t think I could explain them to anyone now. I can comment on using the levels over forty-six years. First, we like many of the same things to do so we have always been able to pastime in common areas. Nana got as interested in the Pittsburgh Pirates as I was during the first year of our marriage that she could name the entire twenty-five man Pirate roster. She

³ An example would be helping someone in danger or extreme need. This is not only an achievement extraordinary, but a short-term, intense, very rewarding for both parties, relationship. Rescue efforts in hurricanes, car accidents, and many other emergencies often, but not always, result in this level of relationship.

liked to sew and I was into woodwork so I made here a big wooden sewing center. We liked the same music, especially the Beatles, and the same movies. Later on in our relationship, we both liked to garden and ride bikes and we have played a lot of bridge over the years. When we traveled, we seldom disagreed on our destination. Both of us like to talk to people and we will both initiate conversations with strangers and learn about them. Nana is the best at that however.”

“Activity-wise, we both were in helping professions that had many similarities so although we worked in different places, we had much in common here. We both worked hard and frequently. Work is the number one way to be on the activity level”

Kelly, knowing her colleagues well, goes ahead with a tough question, not easily asked: “Do I dare ask about the game level. As all people do, you did have your moments where you were ‘psychological’ with each other, didn’t you?”

Dr. D. is quick and sly: “Actually more so than most couples!”

Nana knows he is about to go off into a real tangent, so she takes over, as happens often in couples that have been married for long periods of time: “Oh, you had better let me explain here. For some reason I don’t remember, we took a series of workshops together on a model of psychology and communication known as Transactional Analysis (TA). Those workshops, which featured TA ideas and language really hooked us and we began using it in everyday life and even taught some workshops together, another time spent at the activity level.

Kelly continues her brave questioning: “Since we now know that intimacy isn’t just something sexual, I dare ask you about this. What are some examples of intimacy in your long marriage?”

To protect his wife and perhaps himself, Dr. D. first responds like the doctor he is: “To remind the readers, intimacy is the highest level of contact or way of using time when people are together. It is sort of a goal for couples to reach. The term ‘bonding is one that many people will understand. I certainly can mention the most intimate moments for both of us in our marriage and they all relate to the actual moment of birth of our children. Those were extremely powerful moments that neither one of us will forget. I know Nana would also add the time she, as a new mother, spent breast feeding her children and other activities. Other ones that come to mind have been special ceremonies, not the whole time, as much of the ceremony time was spent at the ritual level, but at special moments during the ceremony, some you could never forget. With my youngest daughter, I remember that special moment of bonding when I came down off a rain soaked football stadium stands to the main field where the new college graduates were sitting in the pouring rain to give her my umbrella. She didn’t say “thank you Dad” in words but her eyes sure did. That was such a special moment that I remember it as if it were happening today”.

“The most intimate moments are not typical nor predictable, nor reached by planning. They do not occur in casual relationships, not even if sex is involved. Prostitutes have sex many times in an evening with their ‘Johns’ which is anything but a intimate moment for either. For the ‘John’ he is likely at the withdrawal level as he imagines what he does. The Pro moves back and forth from the ritual level to the activity level because she is working and doing so very, very routinely. The movie “Pretty Girl” starring Julia Roberts is a favorite movie of many. In that movie, their relationship starts off on a sexual level as he hires her as a call girl for a week but then it moves up through the various levels as they spend time together, including many games, and they reach intimacy when they finally decide that they both want a future together. They do fall in love and we are lead to believe they do live happily ever after. It is worth noting that the

intimacy at the end is quite playful human sexuality, not what they experienced early in the movie and their relationship.”

Nana, perhaps thinking that there are too many sexual examples, offers these thoughts: “In putting this to practice, here are some ideas how to assist your adult children to have positive relationships:⁴

- In the game of life, as in the game of golf, some people keep score only by the number of errors they think the other side made. That is a very unusual way to keep score because it isn't done that way anywhere else. Instead of looking at mistakes in relationships, look at what goes well, celebrate that and build from there.
- If you hear someone “butting” you all the time in a pattern, be aware that they have an agenda regarding you or the topic under discussion.
- Some family members actually like each other but don't know how to show it other than by fighting.
- There is a difference between judging and evaluating or describing and evaluating. Humankind would be better off if we all knew these differences. In solid relationships, judging is kept at a minimum and people use stated, known criteria to evaluate.
- Values are a part of every relationship. Their strength is that one could not possibility think through every situation we face. Instead, our values become a summary of what we should do, using our experience and the collective experiences of others. That said, one would benefit from knowing what your prime values are and how they are put into play in your extended family. That would also be true for all family members. Humankind would be better off if they grounded their primary values in a mainstream religion such as Christianity and chose New Testament norms and values rather than human norms and values.
- I have learned to enjoy and appreciate non-blaming human conflict. Such conflict frequently means that a dialogue is happening, and if one starts listening, reflecting, summarizing, and looking for commonalities and new joint paths to travel, creativity can occur.”

“Many more suggestions about what a parent can do with communication and relationship issues can be found in Chapter # Four, Book II ‘When the Apple Falls Near the Tree.’”

⁴ Cogswell, D. (2012) “Dr. D.’s Double Takes” The Double D. Day Book. Not yet in publication.

Vincent suddenly appears, full of energy as always: “Hi, what have we missed? Lucy and I have been exploring the park and this is a cool place. The diving platform at the beach looks awesome and I am coming back here when I have my swimming suit.”

Nana whispers to Dr. D. “Well, you finished that movie example just in time.”

Dr. D. looks at Vincent and Lucy and says: “Why don’t you get something to eat and sit here with us. We can talk about what the two of you have been doing together as you explored.

Lucy: “Sure, but what is the big deal? Vincent and I were just having fun as we always do.”

Kelly rescues Dr. D., again: “Isn’t today special for you two, you said you two were having your seventh month anniversary of going together. Tell me, what are the things that have kept you as a couple for that long?”

Nana: “Oh, no, I think I have been a part of this conversation just a little bit ago. I don’t want to go there. Lucy, never mind them. Let’s you and I share some pizza together and you can tell me where you got that neat ‘Go Outdoors For Fun’ tee shirt.”

Vincent: Öh, Girl talk. I know what is going to happen. I’m out of here. Want to come with me Grandpa Dude down to the water? Let’s give some of those ducks some excitement!”

Dr. D. “Ok Vincent. I’ll teach you how to skip stones, something every man should know, after we feed the ducks. But first, I have to say: ‘In closing, remember relationships are complex and oh so important. It really is not what you do but who you do it with and how you use your time together that matters. Being active in a relationship is important. I have offered explanations of the way things are in the ‘world of relationships’, those rascals!’ And some steps one can take to change them. But then again, things may not be that way. . . Look out ducks!”

