The Decree OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE

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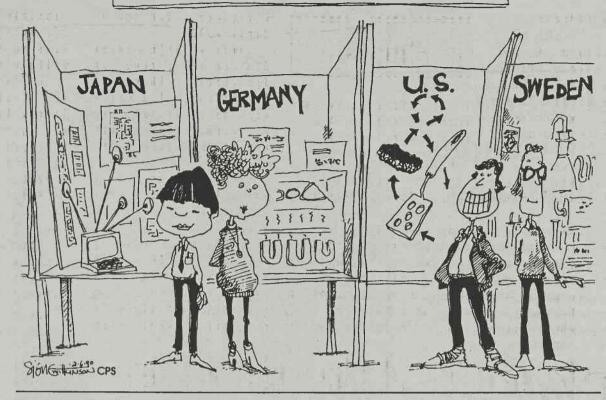
A simple question

In this issue's editorial, Why? Why? Why? Why? we would simply like to ask Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? "Why?" Why? Why? Why? Why?

Why? Why?

Why? Why not?

WORLD HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR



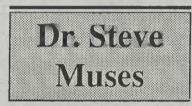
Honesty not always 'nice'

Crankiness not uncaring

By DR. STEVE FEREBEE

Some of my colleagues have suggested to me — in varying degrees of intensity — that I should try to be less ... well, less cranky. Recently I was told I hadn't "mellowed" enough to be fully trusted.

I don't think of myself as mean or uncaring, so I'm surprised at this kind of comment. I'm not considering the change, especially if it merely means be less honest, but I puzzle over misperceptions, over misreadings of my



motivations.

Let's say I'm in a committee meeting and I am asking someone to explain a decision I don't agree with. I push, pull, approach from quickly changing sides, allowing the person little breathing time, continually questioning what he says. I become excited; my voice rises; I disdain retreat; I frown.

I know I am sometimes perceived as a bully, but actually I'm trying to find out not only what but also how the person thinks. I learned this method in graduate school seminars and dissertation meetings, though I also remember a girlfriend in college who was always demanding what my facts were, as if there were some magic to facts that would shatter all deceptions. We argued fiercely, and I still remember some of what I learned from our angers. Perhaps we learn more from people's emotional reactions (or lack of) than from all the "facts" in all the computers in the world. We must encourage logic, but I also trust emotions; I do not trust people who don't. But I digress.

Does my skeptical, rapid-fire manner make me a bully? Am I really a mean person? More importantly, can you like a chronic complainer?

Let's say I'm in a classroom and I'm goading a student along the path of an idea he is relatively uncomfortable following. Does it make me an SOB if I don't stop at the threshold of discomfort, if I plunge the both of us onward? Do I serve my purpose as teacher better by offering finger painting exercises when what the student needs is an intellectual marathon?

Being nice differs from having compassion. If I see that a colleague can't take the grilling or the student has dropped by the wayside, I move on, both of us better for the moments of tension. Badgering someone in order to belittle or intimidate differs from arguing with someone in order to learn and teach, as does losing one's temper and consciously pushing someone to defend herself.

I'm often cranky because people do not live up to their potentials. I settle into the skeptic's role because I want people to improve themselves, to be clear about their ideas, to believe in themselves. I just don't think that pleasant tea-time talk produces progress.

I don't think I'm bullying a colleague when I criticize explanations; I think I'm doing what a

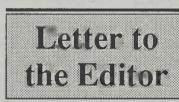
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Environment here is at risk

Dear Editor:

This year's Spring Symposium should alert us, if anything can, to the dangers of wasting energy. Indeed, if we are going to save our air, water, and soil, and maintain a climate livable for humans, not only can we no longer waste, we must also reduce our energy consumption.

It is both logically and ethically consistent to start right here. We routinely leave lights on in offices and classrooms long after they are empty. We regularly run air conditioners at the slightest hint of warmth outside, adding ozone-eating chlorofluorocarbons to the atmosphere; worse, we leave them on after rooms have been vacated.



Once last Spring, I came to my office on a Sunday afternoon. I was the only person in the building. Window air conditioners were running in two locked administrative offices. Evidently they'd been running since Friday.

On another occasion, I passed a classroom that was empty, except for one of my faculty colleagues. As he sat working, the air conditioner was grinding away and the windows were open. No matter how hard it works, that window unit cannot cool the outdoors.

Finally, during the very symposium that warned us about burning fossil fuels and wasting energy, I passed Gravely 105, recently used for a panel. It was then vacant. The heaters were blowing and lights were blazing.

Turning off lights, air conditioners, and other machinery when we finish with them is easy. Even though this will not be enough to save ourselves, it is at least a start. This College needs to organize itself to save energy, and to set an example for our community.

> R.L. Watson Professor of History