

FORUM

Ahh...the power of love



Nigel Alston

Motivational Moments

"When in doubt, tell the truth."

- Mark Twain

What is the proper age to get married?

"Eighty-four, because at that age, you don't have to work anymore, and you can spend all your time loving each other in your bedroom."

- Judy, 8.

"Once I'm done with kindergarten, I'm going to find me a wife."

- Tom, 5.

Why does love happen between two particular people?

"No one is sure why it happens, but I heard it has something to do with how you smell. That's why perfume and deodorant are so popular."

- Jan, 9.

"I think you're supposed to get shot with an arrow or something, but the rest of it isn't supposed to be so painful."

- Harlen, 8.

And what is falling in love like?

"Like an avalanche where you have to run for your life."

- Roger, 9.

"If falling in love is any-

thing like learning how to spell, I don't want to do it. It takes too long."

The inside scoop on the "L-word" from kids.

John Blanchard could have used these tips and more when he stood up and studied the crowd of people making their way through a train station. He was looking for the girl. The one with the rose.

The girl whose face he had not seen, but whose heart he knew.

Miss Hollis Maynell was her name. He was intrigued by her. Months earlier, he had taken a book off a shelf in the library and noticed the penciled notes in the margin of the book. There was something about the handwriting that made him want to find out her name. With some effort, he located her address in New York City.

A beautiful relationship began with the letter.

He wrote her and invited her to respond.

There was one small problem, he told her. The next day he was to board a ship for overseas for service in World War II.

During the next 13 months they grew closer through their long-distance exchange of letters. Each message was anticipated. A romance was beginning.

Can you imagine falling in love and not knowing what the person looks like?

Blanchard requested a

photograph, but she refused. She felt that if he really cared, it wouldn't matter what she looked like. From penciled notes in a book to a long distance relationship.

Finally came the opportunity to meet her face-to-face.

It would be an emotional day! Anticipation.

Excitement. Nervousness. Joy and pain.

I imagine Blanchard didn't get much sleep the night before.

How would he recognize her? "You'll recognize me," she wrote, "by the red rose I'll be wearing on my lapel."

He would learn that great love and great achievements also involve great risk. When you put your heart on the line you trust your feelings.

He would also learn that your character is your destiny. He was bound to do the right thing.

"A young woman was coming toward me," he said, "her figure long and slim. Her lips and chin had a gentle firmness, and in her pale green suit she was like springtime come alive."

He was hooked! In love. There was one oversight though. She was not wearing a rose.

"Going my way, sailor?" she said.

Directly behind her was the woman with the rose. She was much older than

the woman he just encountered. Well past 40. Gray hair. Plump with thick ankles.

"I felt as though I was split in two," he said.

He did not hesitate to do what he thought was right. Maybe something better than love was in store. He would be happy with a special friendship.

"I am so glad you could meet me; may I take you to dinner?"

The woman smiled.

"I don't know what this is about son," she answered, "but the young lady in the green suit who just went by - she begged me to wear this rose on my coat. And she said if you were to ask me out to dinner, I should go and tell you that she is waiting for you in the big restaurant across the street. She said it was some kind of test!"

He passed the test, but did he enjoy the meal?

The answer is found in another tip from kids.

How can you tell if two adults eating dinner at a restaurant are in love?

"Lovers will just be staring at each other," said Brad, age 8. "And their food will get cold. Other people care more about food."

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Race report reveals what we already know



Val Atkinson

Jones Street

President Clinton's Race Advisory Panel completed its yearlong report, which included some interesting findings. The panel - headed by Durham's own John Hope Franklin - held over 300 meetings across America and interviewed scores of community leaders and civil rights activists. Some of the panel's findings included support for the President's position on affirmative action; the creation of a permanent panel to promote racial and ethnic harmony and dialogue; study police misconduct involving minorities; and a reduction in the disparity in sentencing for the use of crack and powdered cocaine.

But the most significant finding in the report was Amer-

ica's history of white privilege. The panel found that whites are still benefiting (either unknowingly or conscientiously) from America's history of white privilege. White privilege is defined as the uneven, unequal and capricious assignment of favors and perks to white people for no other reason than the color of their skin. I don't think we needed a panel and a yearlong study to tell us that white privilege is alive and well in America.

Just look at the results of integrated test groups that go out and assess the treatment of business customers. In too many cases, whites with the same background, credentials and qualifications as non-whites were given jobs, contracts and other privileges not afforded the non-white test subjects. White privilege covers the entire waterfront from auto shopping and apartment rental to bank loans and employment. In most cases the sales person or employer doesn't know either party. The only explanation for this behavior is America's history of white privilege.

Opponents of white privilege are facing an uphill battle in their attempts to leveling the

uneven racial playing field. It appears that the panel found that whites are uncomfortable with the term white privilege. Even some of the panelists think we need a new language to talk about white privilege. I say it's going to be next to impossible to resolve the problem of white privilege if we're not even allowed to talk about it. Whites are going to have to deal with this one, because it's too important NOT to talk about. As my college basketball coach used to tell us, "you're gonna have to suck it up."

In America's early beginnings, white privilege was an acceptable norm in the nation's cultural conditioning. Europeans were (and still are) the majority race in America. Native Americans - having lost their land in the "Great Wars," African Americans - having lost their freedom to slavery, and many Asian Americans - who served in lesser roles and positions gave Europeans a feeling of supremacy, dominance and privilege in America.

But should modern day whites who had nothing to do with their great-grandfather's accumulation of wealth

through free labor still benefit from that creation and subsequent transfer of wealth? In Dr. Claude Johnson's book "Black Labor, White Wealth," he outlines the process by which whites have come to such dominant power in a country of many races and ethnic groups, he also points to white privilege.

I say we make the abatement and destruction of white privilege a national priority. It's as important as affirmative action. After all, the real need for affirmative action came about because too many American institutions were discriminating against people of color, and at the same time continuing the historical practice of white privilege. If we waged an all out frontal attack on white privilege, maybe, just maybe, there will be little need for affirmative action. But whether we abolish affirmative action or not, white privilege has to go.

If we are to survive as a multicultural nation, we can't have one group of Americans considered to be greater than and other groups of Americans considered less than.

VAL ATKINSON is a Triangle Tribune columnist.

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USPS 067910
617 N. Liberty Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

The Chronicle was established by Ernest Pitt and Ndujisi Egemonye in 1974, and is published every Thursday by The Chronicle Publishing Co., Inc.

The Chronicle is a proud member of
National Newspapers Publishers Association •
North Carolina Press Association • North Carolina Black Publishers Association • Inland Press Association

National Advertising Representative:
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., 45 West 45th Street,
New York, NY 10036 212/869-5220

Postmaster: send address changes to:
THE CHRONICLE
P.O. BOX 1636
Winston-Salem, NC 27102

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