Deb's Page

Excuses, Excuses, Excuses

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DEB GAULDIN is a childbirth educator who performs songs and humorous tales ("Hormone-Affirming Music and Humor for Women") about pregnancy, childbirth, and the adjustments to parenthood. She lives outside Chicago, Illinois.

I was going to draw a cartoon, but . . .

Abstract

In this humor column, a perinatal educator learns that explanations are not always necessary when one is a grownup.

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What's your excuse? You have to wash your hair? Feed your turtle? Or my personal favorite: My great-great aunt who used to feed the poor alongside Mother Teresa is having a hernia operation, and I am her closest living relative. I would be happy to help you out, but I need to look after her on her first day home from the hospital. She hasn't gotten around so well since the fire.

I always feel like I need to have the excuse of the century. Simply saying, "No," or "No, it won't be possible," or "I don't care to," never even occurred to me—until recently.

I was apologetically returning a long overdue phone call. Jane, an elderly matriarch of the local women's movement, had called me weeks before wondering if I would be interested in helping her formally record some county history. I began to deliver a litany of legitimate excuses for the delay in getting back to her. Jane stopped me mid-sentence and said quite clearly, "That's all well, but life is too short for excuses. Let's move on. Are you interested or not?" For a moment I was taken aback, then appreciated the valuable example she set. (Of course, I said I would help her!)

Not a week later, my role model became my friend JoAnn's 3-year-old grandson. Apparently, JoAnn and

Ethan had been drawing pictures with chalk on the sidewalk outside his home when he noticed a group of teen-aged boys gathered at the corner nearby. Moving closer to his grandmother, Ethan darted his eyes at the boys through the frames of his little glasses.

"Grandma," he said emphatically. "Those boys. Those boys over there. They're crap."

"Why would you say that?" my friend asked, not quite believing her ears.

"Well," Ethan replied with complete certainty, "Number one: Grandma, those boys are crap. Number two: My baby sister doesn't like them either. And number three: My bike is green."

My bike is green. There you go. Not only do I not have to make elaborate excuses, but also the ones I do have don't have to make sense to anyone but me. Move over Dr. Phil. Ethan is my man!

Editor's Note:

Deb Gauldin travels nationally, presenting keynote speeches for perinatal practitioners. For booking information, call 800-682-2347 or visit www.debgauldin.com. Deb's CDs and tapes contain songs about pregnancy, childbirth, and the adjustment to parenthood. They are available through Lamaze International (800-368-4404).