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Two toads of central and southwestern Europe are called midwife or obstetrical toads because the male helps care for the eggs. The male fastens them to his legs and carries them until they hatch. He usually hides under a stone or some other place while carrying them, but comes out after dark to bathe the eggs in a pond or stream.

— NAPS

WINSTON CHURCHILL SMOKED ABOUT 300,000 CIGARS IN HIS LIFETIME
(From: *Random Kinds of Factness*)

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Jacqui

“Inlaws That Should Be Outlawed”

“I simply can’t win. My in-laws find fault with me no matter what I say or do, especially my mother-in-law. She constantly compares me to the first wife my husband divorced. They still maintain a relationship with her and often mention her in glowing tones. I find myself on the defensive constantly, and the man I love doesn’t stand up for me because he hates confrontation.”

In-law frictions are notorious. They lead to unhealthy tension all around and they often cause so much friction that they can actually doom a new relationship or even a new marriage.

The most important rule is for the new couple to be and act as one when it comes to meddling in-laws even if the two loving partners may have different points of view. If so, they need to discuss them with each other and find common ground before communicating with the outside world. It is essential that they represent a unified picture to the outsiders, a singular point of view and that they establish clear boundaries from the very beginning that meddling parents, friends and other outsiders will respect.

To deal successfully with in-law issues, there are two effective solutions to stop the negative process: 1) the animosity can be reversed through open discourse among all parties.

2) a better understanding is established that will lead to normalized relations over time. If that is not possible, the offending parents have to be neutralized so that they cannot infiltrate the fabric and life of the new couple and undermine it. Loving somebody’s son or daughter does not mean we have to accept being abused.

* In the case discussed above, it is essential that the husband must step up and support his new wife. He needs to understand deeply how vital it is that he comes through for her. Love cannot flourish if one or the other partner feels betrayed by his or her mate. Your partner is your primary support system or should be. That doesn’t mean you can’t have differences of opinion. It is all right to ask for his support in a loving way, he wants to come through for you and will find the way to come to terms with his fear of confrontation. Couples that stand-

by each other cannot easily be divided, not even by their own parents.

* In this case, it is best for the husband to suggest one or more family discussions, making it clear why it is essential to do so to his parents. The ground rules must be respected by all. This is not a session to lash out and accuse but a way to understand each other’s feelings, positive and negative, and the common goal is to become closer as a family and be able to share in each other’s lives. All involved need to be fair, open and hear each other out. There is a possibility that behind all that hostility some real issues come to light that can be resolved, improved or eliminated. If all fails, then the less desirable course of action is indicated, which is to minimize all contact.

* Practically that means to learn to ignore the aggressor’s talk and accusations. Minimize phone conversation and social contact. Accept that your relationship will never be warm and loving because they cannot or don’t want to change. Make your investment of love and caring in your husband and your friends and don’t expect miracles from them. They won’t happen.


* Be graceful when family situations force you to be together such as weddings, holiday events or birthdays. That doesn’t mean you have to run out and find the perfect gift for them; that is your husband’s domain. Just be pleasant and non-confrontational.

* Understand that their hostility and attacks are their problem—Not yours. You cannot change how they feel or act. But you can resist letting their accusations and insults enter your being or poison the good feelings between you and your partner. You know who you are. You own your sense of worthiness. Nobody can take that away from you if you don’t let them. — Jacqui

E-mail Jacqui your question: info@veryprivate.com or by regular mail to: PO Box 491341, Los Angeles, CA 90049. Visit: www.veryprivate.com. We never reveal or give out names or addresses. ©2005 Brandwynne Corp. All rights reserved.

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A Beating Heart

John’s heart beats. Steadily. Healthily. It is his heart now. It keeps him breathing. It gives him life. It gives him something he cannot quite put into words. I knew John with his former heart, when it got sick and didn’t want to work for him anymore. And I know John with his new heart.

His new heart once belonged to another. It had lived in someone else’s body for many years. It had been part of someone else’s life. Of his dreams. Of all he hoped to do and all that was yet to be done. That heart was committed to another. For a very long time. But then the body it called home ceased to exist.

And the heart had nowhere to go. Its job was done. At least it had always been that way.

But not any more. Not since heart transplants. Now a heart can find another home. Its job is not done at the end of someone’s life.

And so John’s heart beats but it is not the heart he was born with. It came from someone who no longer lives. And John never forgets. Not while he works in his family restaurant. Not while he plays with his grandchildren. Not while he enjoys his hobby of ballooning, and everything else he used to do with his previous heart.

He never forgets the person whose heart beats in John’s chest. “I wanted to get in touch with the family,” John told me. “I wanted to know them and for them to know me. I wanted to convey my gratitude.”

And so John did. With his whole heart. He visits them. They have become extended family to each other, sharing what families share. Holidays. Birthdays. Graduations. Good times and difficult ones. John’s heart beats on, reminding all of them that even from a tragedy, something joyous can emerge. And there is no need to feel guilty in that celebration of renewed life.

It is not only John who speaks often of his heart. Though we might not realize it, hearts are in our daily conversation. “My heart told me it would happen,” someone says. “I felt it in my heart,” another confesses. “She broke my heart,” is a familiar refrain. And so it has come to pass that we think of the heart as more than a muscle. Somehow we feel it is connected to our souls. That it feels the emotion that sweeps over us. It sweeps over our hearts also. In our minds, we follow our heart’s desires. How does one transplant all of this into another? And what is the proper “thank you” to the families of those

who have donated this cherished gift? John thinks about that often. What he owes this other person who is no longer here. For giving him such a gift. He tells whomever will listen how he feels about this miracle that has been given to him. He has information in his restaurant about transplants, donors, and what is not written is in his mind. If you do not know about heart transplants before you enter John’s restaurant, you will know about them after.

And when he meets another heart transplant recipient, there is a look between them that no one else can understand. Except perhaps a beating heart. For more information about heart transplants, contact John Schneider at organdonorinfo@aol.com or www.organdonor.gov

Harriet May Savitz is the author of 20 books and has taught creative writing courses. Her books include *The Lion-hearted*, *On The Move* and *Run, Don’t Walk* and *Growing Up At 62*, an adult inspirational book. All books can be ordered through Amazon.com.

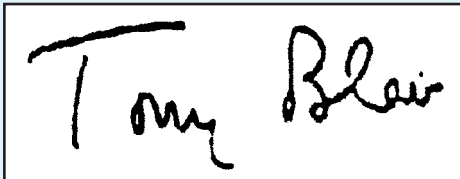
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Harriet May Savitz

WHAT’S IN A NAME


Tony Blair



In the first letter of his signature there is evidence of his leadership qualities. The length of the “T” crossing discloses enthusiasm for his work and the heavy pressure of the “T” crossing, shows strong will power and vitality.

An inquiring mind is revealed in the triangular shape of the “n.” The small size of the writing discloses concentration ability. A cautious tendency is noted, also, as is tactfulness. The “i” dot to the right of the “i” stem indicates his interest in the future.

Mimi Levin, a handwriting analyst, lectures in the Palm Beach County area and does in-depth personality profiles, compatibility screening and personnel screening. Mimi is a certified grapho analyst. She can be reached by writing to her at 5451 Verona Drive, Boynton Beach, FL 33437.



Mimi Levin