

July 13, 2008



SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2008

Smile and keep turning the corner

A few nights ago, while watching American Gladiators (yes ... I confess to it), the phone rang and it was a very dear friend. I was glad to hear her voice even though my eyes were transfixed on Gladiators Titan and Wolf as they did away with their pint-size opponents. However, the call didn't last long and she only said four words before she hung up: "I turned the corner."

I smiled, knowing instantly what she meant and hung up the phone.



Generations

Peg DeMarco

Before her call, it had been a difficult road for her to travel for the past couple of years. When she was younger, a bit more trusting, and a bit more gullible, she thought she had found the man of her dreams. After a brief courtship, she confessed that she had fallen madly in love with him. He was everything she had dreamed about: charming, handsome, witty, smart, hard working and, best of all, he showered her with affection.

One Saturday evening after a romantic dinner, the words "I love you" slipped out of his mouth as easily as one would slip a banana out of its peel, and she shared the good news with me via a next morning phone call.

But, as we all know, some bananas are deceiving and actually rotten when we get the peel completely off and this one was no exception.

Sunday, Monday and Tuesday were still amazing days for her with several calls from him that ended with reassured devotion. However, by Wednesday, she realized he hadn't called at all.

Thursday dragged by and again there was no call. On Friday, he finally called, but what he told her left her holding the phone long after he had hung up. As best as she could remember, the quick, terse call went something like, "I think we need time apart. Let's take a break from seeing each other for awhile. I'll call you."

She rang my doorbell, scurried in, and repeated what he had said on the phone over and over again with tears streaming down her cheeks. We hugged and, finally, she calmed down.

"What did I do wrong?" she asked, removing her jacket.

I would have liked to have told her at that point that he was an idiot because she was one of the sweetest gals in the world, but I knew she was still in love with him,

and I figured if they made up, I'd be an instant outcast when facing the twosome. Instead, I said something really stupid like: "Give it time. You'll get over it. You're hurting now, but someday, you'll find someone who will." The rest of my repertoire was drowned out by her sobs.

And of course some of what I said was wrong. You never get over someone hurting you like that no matter how many years pass or how many people walk into and out of your life. People break up all the time and, lately, e-mail seems to be the way to go because then you don't even have to talk to the person. The computer shields cowards very well from an unpleasant task.

And who of us can forget

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DEMARCO

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when Sex and the City's Carrie Bradshaw got dumped via a Post-It note? Carrie had the right idea — she smashed to smithereens a vase of carnations the boyfriend had given her, but my friend didn't have the luxury of a zillion talented writers behind her. Only me, but it was late, and I was tired and running on empty in this category.

I put on a pot of coffee as my friend blew her nose into a hankie. Settling on the sofa and handing her a cup of steaming hot coffee, I knew I had to come up with something that would somehow comfort her during such a miserable time of her life. I didn't want to preach or scold, so instead I took a different tactic that I had once

taken with my daughter a long time ago when she was going through the same heartbreak during her teenage years.

Looking my friend squarely in the eye, I said slowly, "You know, I envy you."

"Envy me?" she gasped, shrinking away from me like I had the plague. "How can you possibly envy the pain I'm going through?"

"Uh-huh ... yeah, pain is tough," I said, looking off to the side so I could regroup and collect my thoughts.

It was difficult then to explain to her what I meant, and I'm still not sure she understood what I said or at the time believed me. I told her that life was filled with plenty of bumps in the road, especially those dealing with unrequited love, and that there wasn't any hurt quite

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as painful as rejection. The sting lasts for an awfully long time and sometimes it doesn't ever go away. Even the heroines in my books go through many trials and tribulations before they walk off into the sunset with the men they love.

Yet, there's one part of rejection that has an upside that not many people think about: the excitement of the

unexpected. The journey to love is long and tedious ... sometimes even boring as one weeds out all the Mr. Wrongs to zero in on Mr. Right. And then, seeing if he will remain as Mr. Right isn't as easy as it is in Hollywood. It takes work. The real fun is the thrill of searching for love and never knowing when the unexpected will turn your life upside down.

And that's when I told her about the corner, which really isn't a corner, but an imaginary time and place when for the first time your eyes meet the person you were really supposed to find all along to share your life with. Sometimes you know it right away but often, you have to struggle to find out where and who you're supposed to be with. That zing that you get in the pit of your stom-

ach when you first see your life mate — that's the corner.

It's a journey that we all go through, and we can either do it with a heavy heart or one with hope and determination that we'll be OK and that someday we'll have the right person to finish out our life with. I'm hoping that each one of you that has had a past disappointment in finding your life partner will keep an open mind, keep loving yourself, refuse to settle for someone just because you don't want to be alone, and that even if you make the wrong choice again, have the courage to go on and keep turning those corners until you reach the right one.

PEG DEMARCO is a local columnist for Gab.