

Baby! Yes or No?

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Today was a wonderful day in my life. I finally found the courage to tell Sally that I liked her. I had planned this day for such a long time!

First, I invited her to see a **romantic** movie, a **perfect** choice for the **occasion!** We had been friends for years, so I wasn't surprised that she accepted my invitation.

We sat quietly through the movie. However, I could feel the **increasing warmth** between us. I was excited and nervous at the same time. Tonight was my chance to make our friendship become a **relationship!**

When we left the movie theater, I made my move. I held her arm, took a red rose out of my bag, and said, "I really like you, Sally!" She didn't reply, but she took the rose before walking away. I think she was just too shy to show her feelings. "Call me soon, baby!" I shouted as she left. Tonight I was over the moon. I did it!

Well, today was just an **awful** day. Tom invited me to see a movie with him. This invitation made me feel a bit strange because I had never been out alone with him before. However, I accepted his invitation because we were friends. That was such a mistake!

When I arrived at the movie theater, Tom had already bought the tickets. I was surprised that he had chosen a romantic movie. **Anyway**, the movie was so boring. I let Tom believe I was enjoying it because I didn't want to hurt his feelings.

When the movie was over, I made an excuse to go home right away. Just as I was about to leave, he suddenly **grabbed** my arm. Then, he **presented** me with a red rose and told me that he "really liked" me. Again, I didn't want to **upset** him, so I took the rose before running away. He shouted "baby" while I was **escaping** from this **situation**.

My goodness! Can you **imagine** my surprise? I have to **reject** Tom because I like David, but I don't want to break Tom's heart. How can I tell him the **truth**?

—by Ian Fletcher

Have you ever wondered what cola can do? Most people just take a **sip** and enjoy this cold, sweet *beverage*. However, cola is not just a drink. Under the right **circumstances**, this **ordinary item** will perform magic—it can **remove** *rust*. You don't believe it? In fact, many *household objects* can be a great help to us in our daily lives, as long as we know how to use them.

On the **surface**, cola seems to be the same as any other beverage. Most of the **ingredients** in this type of soda are common: water, sugar, and *flavorings*. Yet, cola contains a special ingredient—*acid*. This is why cola can help with the rust problems. Find a rusty object, *soak* it in cola, and leave it **overnight**. Then, the acid in the soda will eat away at the rust and make it easy to **wipe** away the next morning.

Sugar cubes, another common item, can perform magic as well. If you put a few cubes into a **container** of cookies, the cookies will stay fresh and *crisp*. Why is that? The sugar can **absorb** the natural *moisture* in the air, so it is able to **prevent** the cookies from going soft. Just throw a few sugar cubes into your cookie jar, and your cookies will **last** a lot longer.

Then, how about bad refrigerator *odors*? Do you know how to get rid of them? Believe it or not, used tea bags can do the trick. It seems that a used tea bag is good for nothing, but in fact, it is the perfect thing for this job. If you collect some used tea bags and put them in the refrigerator, they will absorb any bad odors in the refrigerator. This trick doesn't even cost you a *penny*!

Science is not only for **laboratories**. It is **alive** and in use all around you. Learning about the “magic” in common things around your house can be fun. With some basic **scientific** knowledge, you will know how to get the most out of your household objects. Then, next time you have a problem, you'll know what to do!

—by Junita Bognanni

The Last Runner

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In my town, the **annual** *marathon* is very popular. One year, I joined the marathon **medical** team. My job was to follow the runners in an ambulance and give them medical **treatment** if they needed it.

There were a hundred runners in the race. “Remember to drive slowly,” I told the ambulance driver as we began moving **forward**, “because we are supposed to stay behind the last runner.”

As the fastest runners **disappeared** in the **distance**, I noticed a **participant** who was moving very slowly. **Immediately**, I knew she would be our last runner. Both her feet were turned in, but her left knee was turned out. Her legs were so **bent** that it was probably difficult for her to walk. It would be even more difficult for her to run a marathon.

The driver and I watched in **silence** and in **amazement** as she **struggled** forward. We drove slowly behind her. Every time she stopped, we would just stop and wait for her to continue. Before long, she was the very last runner in sight.

We stayed behind her, and the strong **determination** that she showed moved me to **tears**. In the last few miles of the marathon, she still stopped once in a while, but then she would go on running in a slow, determined way.

Several hours later, we finally reached the *finish line*. Most of the **crowd** had already gone home. However, at the finish line stood a man who was still waiting for the last runner. He looked very proud of her. In his left hand was one end of a paper *ribbon*, and the other end was *fastened* to a *post*. Very slowly, the woman crossed the finish line and broke the ribbon into two pieces like a winning runner.

I never knew this woman’s name, but since then, she has changed my **attitude** toward **challenges** in life. For her, the marathon was not about coming in first in the race. It was about finishing something that she had started, even if it might be difficult. Now, when I feel that things are too difficult or *time-consuming*, I think of that amazing woman, the “last runner.” Then, I realize how small my own problems really are.

—by Lisa Beach, adapted from Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul 1

Fast Food or Fatty food

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These days, fast food is very popular *worldwide*, and many people like it very much. However, according to a study, people who eat fast food more than twice a week **gain** weight more easily than those who eat it less than once a week. Another study shows that children who start eating fatty food at an early age are more likely to become unhealthy.

Here is a real example of how eating fast food can **damage** one's health. In 2003, an American *filmmaker*, *Morgan Spurlock*, did an interesting but **shocking experiment**. To find out how fast food would **affect** a person's health, Spurlock ate three meals a day at McDonald's for 30 days. After drinking *milkshakes* and eating hamburgers and French fries for a month, he found that he had gained around 11 kilograms. He also began to **suffer** *liver* damage and terrible *mood swings*. Later, Spurlock made his eating experience into a movie which was called *Super Size Me*. Since more and more people in Asia are eating fast food, *Super Size Me* is a film that Asians should see.

Though all the big names in the fast-food **industry** McDonald's, KFC, Burger King are from the United States, more Asians now eat at these restaurants than Americans. There is an important reason why fast food is so popular in Asia. Many Asians today are busy with school and work, so they **rarely** eat at home. They choose to eat fast food because it can easily **replace** *homemade* meals. However, unlike most Asian food, food in places like McDonald's has a lot more salt and fat. As a result, more and more Asians are getting fat. In Taiwan, at least 30 **percent** of children eat fast food once a week, and over 25 percent of children are *overweight*.

Is there any way to stop this **trend** toward eating fatty food? Some **customers** have **complained** that fast food makes them fat. They think that they should be **warned** about the health risks of fast food. These complaints might **force** fast-food restaurants to make some changes to their menus. In fact, many fast-food restaurants now list *calorie* counts on their menus. They even offer salads and fresh fruit in order to **attract** more customers. Maybe it's time for everyone to cut down on fatty food and start having a healthy **diet**.

—by Paul Go