



CAROLYN HAX

Look inward to see outward

Adapted from a recent online discussion.

Dear Carolyn:
So... how do you tell someone who's emotionally abusive from someone who's just a bit of a control freak? It's easy to spot the more egregious examples out there (people — okay, jerkfaces — who limit your movements, actively insult you and so on), but what about more subtle examples?

Somehow, Va.

There's no need to apply labels. "Jerkfaces"? You're trying to be funny, I get it. But you're actually putting yourself at a disadvantage when you box up and isolate people as "other." Said jerkfaces are human, just like anyone else, and seeing them that way — i.e., understanding that they have feelings and histories and motivations that you may even recognize as similar to your own — is actually the best way to see them coming. Marginalizing someone is essentially a decision not to look inside, either the other person or yourself.

You're not looking for something in them so much as you're looking for something in you. If you feel yourself (1) pressured to conform to someone's preconceived idea of you, and (2) hesitant to resist that pressure, then you're not in the right relationship for you. It may seem counterintuitive, but looking at your own reactions to someone is more reliable than trying to puzzle out what somebody else does, says, means. When the person you're reading is you, you have more (and more trustworthy) information.

Dear Carolyn:
I have a friend who's been a bit of a thorn in my side lately. If I suggest a bar to meet up, she doesn't like it, but if I ask for another suggestion she doesn't have one. And that's just one example — she constantly puts down ideas and points out problems without offering any ideas of her own.

She's never been a cockeyed optimist, but it's gotten to be a drag. I don't really want to make plans to hang out with her, because I know it's going to be a hassle. I've asked if there's anything bothering her, she says no. Should I cut her some slack and assume that it's a phase, or confront her?

Negative Nancy

I don't know that this has to be a big deal. If you still want to see her (that could be in doubt as her put-downs mount), then start making suggestions in either-or form: "Wanna meet up? I was thinking Bar X or Club Y." You can list 2, 3, 4, whatever works without getting ridiculous.

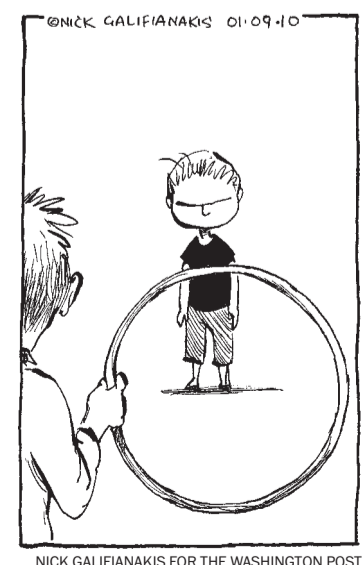
If all of them get a "no," then you can go one of two routes: Ask for a suggestion, not get it, and then say, "Oh, well, if you change your mind on the ones I suggested, lemme know." Meaning she's in or she's out.

Or, you can say, "It's hard to find a place to meet up when you shoot down all my suggestions. I'm trying to spend time with you, not pick the perfect bar."

In other words, either drive around her, or drive right at her. There are merits to both — it just depends on how much you want out of it all and how close a friend you want to be.

Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays on www.washingtonpost.com/discussions.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com.



NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL



"All these little white-haired people around me are standing and I couldn't," she recalled. When did Snow White finally realize the need to check herself into rehab? (George Vary, Bethesda)

REPORT FROM WEEK 847

in which we asked you to choose a sentence from a Washington Post of that week and supply a question it might answer: It may be clear from the results below which handful of people seem to have pored over every last story in The Post that week, sending literally hundreds of entries.

- 2 the winner of the bottle of Beauzeaux wine: "Because I am committed to saving lives, saving money and saving Medicare, I am committed to fully closing it, once and for all." What New Year's resolution did Vice President Biden make about his mouth? (Russell Beland, Fairfax)
- 3 Adjö, Saab. Can you really type with your eyes shut? (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)
- 4 In a few cases, the payoff from a bust can be huge. Why did the Miss USA officials agree to finance Carrie Prejean's surgery? (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

REDUCED SENTENCES: HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Someone will test your knowledge, skill or intelligence. What's the least of your worries if you want to become a reality TV star? (Tom Kreitzberg, Silver Spring)
- When she was taken down to be restored in 1993, it took a helicopter to move her. Is it going to be a lot of trouble to bring Miss Taylor to the Kennedy Center Honors? (Peter Metrinko, Gainesville)
- I didn't even look at my watch. What's faint praise from your lover? (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)
- President Hamid Karzai is to convene a three-day conference on corruption Tuesday. Where can I attend Rod Blagojevich's "Tips From the Pros" workshop? (George Vary)
- The 11 players and one substitute were reported missing over the weekend. Where the heck is the Redskins' offense? (Jeff Contompasis)
- They think they're at the top of the world. Just how stupid are penguins? (Russell Beland)
- There is no reason a pancreas should ever be thrown away. What's one of the justifications for funeral home gift shops? (Kevin Dopart)
- This is nuts. What IS this delicious dish they call Rocky Mountain oysters? (Beverly Sharp, Washington)
- "Tough enough to actually

- change behavior." What is the new motto for Nike golf clubs? (Jeff Hazle, Woodbridge)
- "I want to be official." Alex Ovechkin, what will you do when your playing days are over? (Kevin Dopart)
- A. One weighs 20 grams and has brown fur. Q. How do you know those women over there are fashion models? (Chris Doyle)
- The holiday is here, there isn't much cheer, but at least we're still here. What verse launched Hallmark's new line of cards, Refrigeratorbox Greetings? (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)
- He pushes the kitchen chair in. Does your husband do a lot of household chores? (Russell Beland)
- "We're going to make, you know, some adjustments and things like that." What was the detailed plan that Secretary Geithner put forth to solve the financial crisis? (Michael Seaton, Bowie)
- His parents were separated. What euphemism did King Louis XVII use to describe the fate of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette? (Russell Beland)
- "Whether I win or lose, I've got to look at myself in the mirror the next day, and a word that's important to me is integrity." Why on earth did you get "integrity" tattooed backward on

- your forehead? (Russell Beland)
- "I can get him in that range in no time." What did Hansel hear Gretel say as she cut a deal with the hungry witch? (Beverly Sharp)
- Offer to e-mail her some photos of other pieces you've done. What advice would you not give Tiger Woods on how to reconcile with his wife? (Pete Morelewicz, Washington)
- "I get angry," Debbie says. I hear Debbie's anniversary is coming up — what does she usually get? (Russell Beland)
- "It's one of those things that can't hurt." What are the most common last words besides "hold my beer"? (Kevin Dopart)
- And that is why Democrats here are steaming. Ever notice the heat rising from manure in the winter? (Russ Taylor, Vienna)
- And Last: "We're inventing ways to lose." Why do you guys keep sending in this stupid stuff? (Beverly Sharp)
- See more honorable mentions from Week 847 in next week's column.
- Next Week: Up and addin', or Har Extensions

Online discussion Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style Conversational at washingtonpost.com/styleconversational.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 851: Going to the shrink

"The Bearable Tightness of Boeing": An accountant hunkers down with his laptop on the 737 to Albuquerque and really doesn't feel all that uncomfortable.

"The Medium-Size Lebowski": A cult film about duckpin bowling.

In this era of downsizing and the momentary fad of at least pretending to live more modestly, Loser Stephen Gold of The Invitational's Glasgow Bureau suggests this contest:

"Downsize" the title of a book, movie or play to make it smaller or less momentous and describe it, as in the examples above. Do us all a favor by checking your title online to see if it's already a widespread joke, in which case you may inflict it only upon your loved ones.

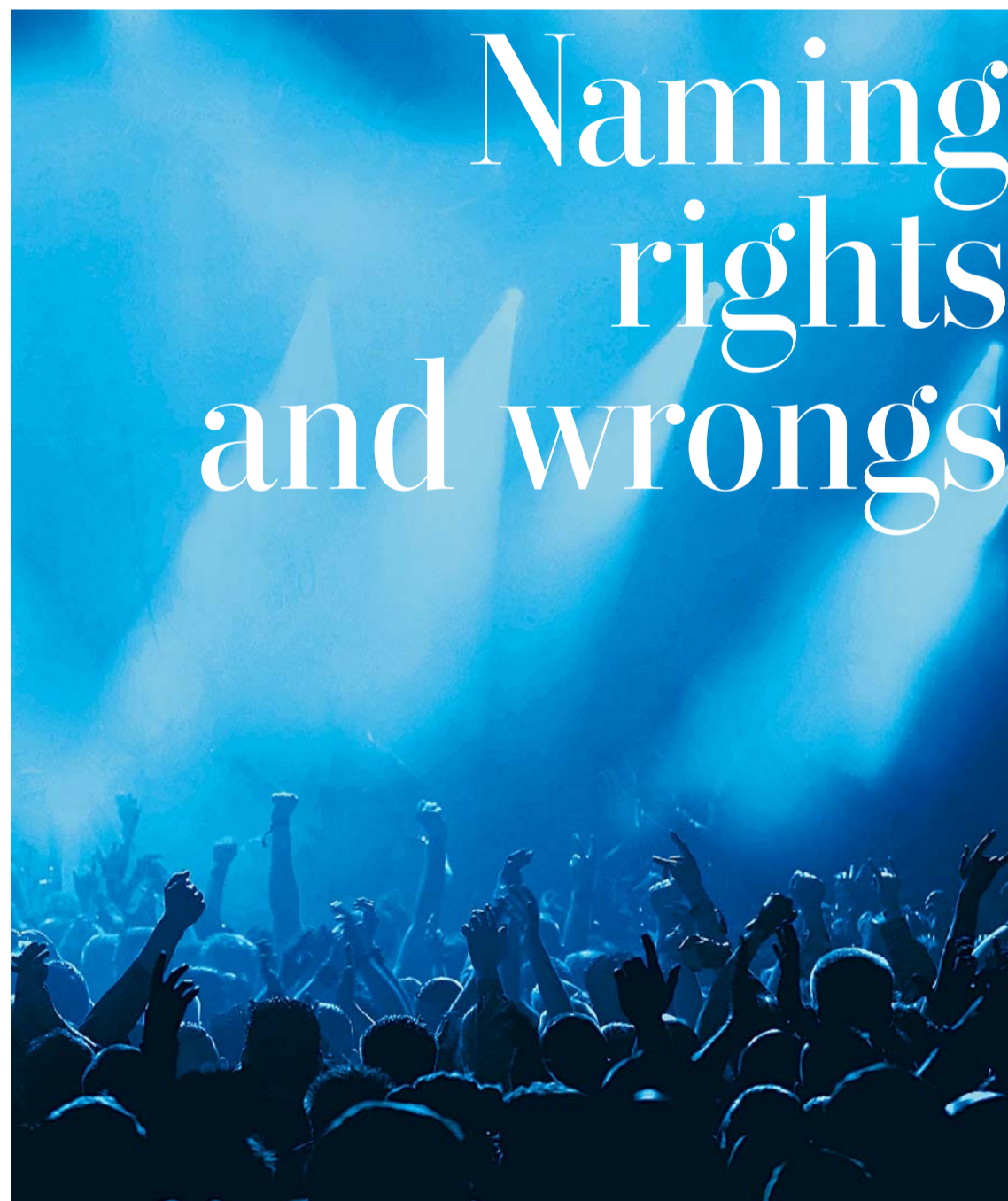
Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a doll, that is supposed to depict Eleanor Roosevelt but we think looks kind of like Adrian Fenty if the mayor had a shock of gray hair and big gray eyebrows and a fox pelt around his neck. A



NOT SUCH A FOX: For second prize, a first lady.

non-Loser mailed it to us, pleading for anonymity because Mrs. R had been a gift to her daughter.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Loser Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their First Ink). One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Jan. 18. Put "Week 851" in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published Feb. 6. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's results is by Tom Witte; this week's honorable-mentions subhead was submitted independently by Chris Doyle and Roy Ashley.



BIGSTOCKPHOTOS.COM

BY CHRIS RICHARDS

Concert promoter Live Nation has apparently re-branded Nisan Pavilion, its 25,000-seat mega-venue in Bristow with a new name: Jiffy Lube Live. Yes, really.

A spokesperson for Live Nation would not confirm the name change, but Live Nation's Web site now refers to the Washington area's largest concert venue as Jiffy Lube Live.

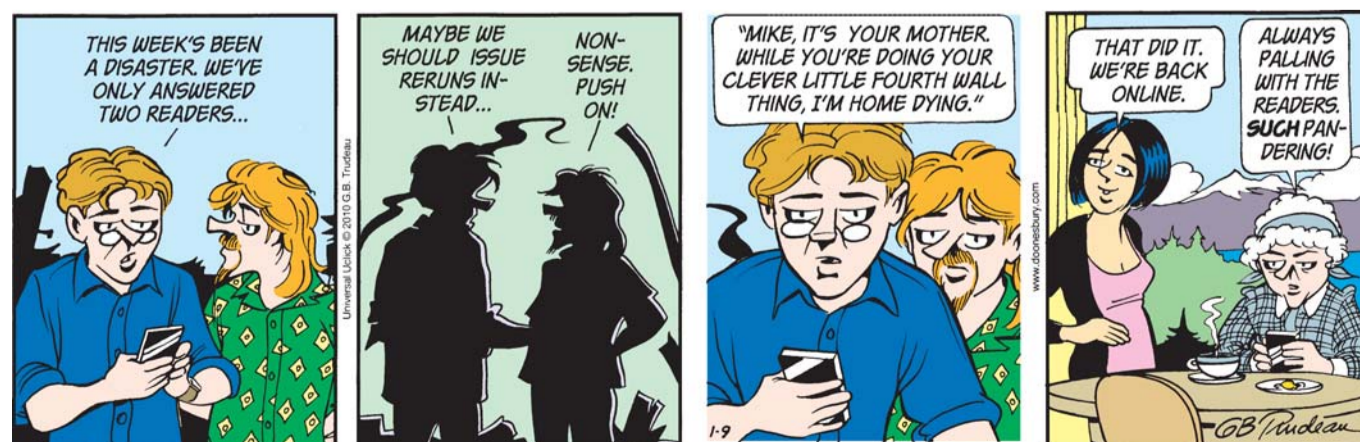
Jiffy Lube Live. Jiffy Lube Live! What if other music venues in the Washington area had such ridiculous monikers forced upon them? Here are just a few of the possibilities:

The Barns at Wolf Trap	The Dress Barns at Wolf Trap
Velvet Lounge	Velveeta Lounge
Iota	IKEA
State Theatre	Quaker State Theatre
HR-57	Heinz-57
Galaxy Hut	Pizza Hut
Love	eHarmony
The Red & the Black	The Red & the Black & Decker
Black Cat	Friskies
Rock & Roll Hotel	La Quinta
Kennedy Center Millennium Stage	Eastern Motors Whereyourjobisyourcredit Stage
Verizon Center	Gilbert Arena

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ON WASHINGTONPOST.COM Other name changes you'd like to see? Leave a comment at washingtonpost.com/clicktrack.

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