

# THE DAILY RECORD

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## Good v. nothing v. hypnosis

I'm amazed at the inherent good all around us.

I wonder if evil is merely the absence of good.

If so, it is nothing, pure nothingness, or whatever existential meaning you wish to ascribe to it.

I also urge that we consider the epistemological implications of that possibility. (I have no idea what that word means, but I have been trying to find a way to use it in a column for months.)

The truth is, I can't really deal with a serious editorial or commentary at the moment. Too many of those have escaped onto this page from my brain in the last few months.

So, how about a complete *non sequitur*? Both my anniversary and my son's birthday are this week. As to the first, once again I will have to take my wife to the hypnotist to keep her from leaving me during the next year. After I first "convinced" her to marry me, I was certain that once a decade was enough, and I would be able to keep her around without annual "boosters" for the first decade. I then came up with the idea to get her to re-marry me on our 10th anniversary, which was 16 years ago, just to make sure she wouldn't fly the coop.

I just looked in the mirror, however, and I'm pretty sure at this point I should keep the hypnotist visit scheduled every year.

I have to keep her — can't live without her — so annual it is. No sense taking chances on something so important.

Besides, I'm not totally stupid. I know she'll read this.

Anyway, we were laughing today about the first time we weren't with our son on his birthday. He was 11, or 12, but 11 is better for the story, and one of his best friends had moved to California. He was invited to travel there on the week of his birthday, when he turned 12 — 13? — so we took him to the airport, and he was then given the onerous designation of UM, unescorted minor. My wife, who also coincidentally happens to be his mother, took it quite well, actually. It seems Seconal is a wonderful thing.

Not really. But it wouldn't have hurt.

She tried her best, unassisted by pharmacological support, taking comfort at the airport when we met the father of an 8-year-old girl who also was designated "UM" on the same flight. Trying to maintain her façade of unflappable calm, she immediately started commiserating with him, and then said — and I'm not kidding on this one: "Oh! They'll be on the same plane. That's great. Maybe they can sleep together."

The fellow said "I don't think so, lady. ... She's eight years old!"

He then graciously accepted her apology, and accepted her unrelenting explanation that she really meant to say "sit together." He also likely realized that I was desperately hoping she would survive until we eventually got word that our son landed safely.

A few days later, after our son turned 12, he decided he really should go to Canada to visit a relative. As you may have guessed, the border people were not about to let a lone 12-year-old through without a birth certificate, much less a passport, into the Great White North. Even back then he was quite a persuasive talker, however, and was undeterred.

"I'm a United States citizen," he explained emphatically.

They were amused, but not overwhelmingly impressed.

"I'm travelling on vacation, and I'm not a runaway," he persisted.

The border people liked his enthusiasm, and his intelligence, and his general chutzpah, for a kid who just turned 12. Eventually he agreed to sing "The Star Spangled Banner," and they finally folded and allowed him in. He had a great time. My wife didn't. I still think

the Seconal wouldn't have been such a bad idea.

Oh, for the good old pre-9/11 days!

Anyway, I'm pretty fed up with the things people do to each other that are not helpful, that actually are harmful, and that are evil — regardless of the definition. I am trying to better accept it by referring to it in the negative — as non-good, nothingness. I'm just taking it easy for this column.

You know, accentuating the positive, eliminating the negative, enjoying the fact that my wife is still with me, and that I have the chance to use this forum to tell her and my son how much I love them. I need to add that, out of all the good in the world, I'm convinced love is the goodest, the most wonderful, the greatest cure for nothingness, the greatest antidote for evil.

That's it! That's all she, ... er, I wrote.

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