



Dear Uncle Mike,
Are you pro-life or pro-choice?
Angela W., Rhododendron

Dear Angela,
Before answering, Uncle Mike would like to point out that, with all due respect, it's none of your business. This said, we go on, approaching the issue through the back door.

After much soul searching, Uncle Mike has decided he is neither anti-life nor anti-choice. A situation without choices is worse than a day without sunshine. It is a day without free will having grown fond of making his own decisions, Uncle Mike would miss the opportunity to make bonehead mistakes. Oh, the choices he's had and the decisions he's made... but we digress.

Uncle Mike stands foursquare behind the notion that what's inside his body is his... a principle applying to both fetuses and involuntary urine samples. Anything less and liberty is a charade.

As for being pro-life, who is not? Those who are not would, by definition, be either dead or making arrangements. A woman who decides to abort her unborn child is not anti-life. She is simply, for one reason or another, unable to meet the demands of raising a human being. Given the results of indictable parenting displayed on the nightly news, such decisions are not necessarily immoral.

Regarding death per se, believing in the conservation of matter and energy, Uncle Mike has no end of trouble pinpointing the nanosecond when a living system stops being alive. Change and decay don't qualify. On the quantum level (the proverbial bottom line), death is a misinterpretation of the data. Life, as they say, goes on. In a closed (if infinite) universe, there is no place else to go.

Finally, Uncle Mike questions the logic of true believers who gun down doctors (aka agents of the devil) in parking lots. A growing mountain of evidence from physics and bioelectromagnetics points to the comforting view that the universe is itself alive, each bit of it conscious and evolving.

To believe that human life is more sacred than any other is to indulge in fuzzy thinking. Uncle Mike (who loves children and would wish them all born into a best of all possible worlds) wonders if those milling angrily in front of Planned Parenthood clinics a) eat meat, b) support armed conflict in which strangers slaughter each other at a distance, or c) have any adopted children.

Dear Uncle Mike,
I'm 23 and my boyfriend and I have been living together for a year. He wants to get married. I'm not so sure. I know I love him, but I don't know if I know enough to know if I want to make that kind of commitment. Is everyone this uncertain? My mom reads you, so I figure you're older and might have some good advice.

Cold Feet in Neskowin

Dear Cold Feet,
You hunch is correct. Uncle Mike is 'older'. In fact, deliriously so. Paddling happily against the currents of fashion, Uncle Mike is in no hurry to be young again. He did that, and it made him very tired.

Is everyone uncertain? One would hope so. Those certain of everything make poor dinner companions. Is everyone uncertain about marriage? Aside from characters in poor novels and those entirely ignorant of human nature, Uncle Mike thinks yes. And for good reason.

Here's what marriage is, booblah. An oath between two people to love, honor, and cherish each other... until death. It means vowing friendship in the face of eating and sleeping with each other for, say, fifty years. It means putting another person's interests on a level at least

equal to your own, and maintaining this posture for better and a worst that's impossible to imagine. And then there are the kids.

Having been married once, and parented several times, Uncle Mike is now happily unattached but would not have missed a minute of pair bonding -- even the insanity and hysteria. As for advice, one might as well flip a coin. Given a good attitude, and the certainty that we learn more from our mistakes than we do from our successes, there are precious few failures in life.

Dear Uncle Mike,
A while back, you printed a cure for hiccups. I was so impressed, I wrote it down. Now I can't find the piece of paper I wrote it down on. Could you give it to me again?
Ted C., Lincoln City

Dear Ted,
Uncle Mike sincerely hopes you've not been hiccupping (or hiccoughing) steadily, waiting for his reply. If so, listen carefully. You are very sick and should go to the hospital.

Having no medical credentials, Uncle Mike can only report what he witnessed in a saloon. A woman who said she'd been hiccoughing for four hours (between Seattle and Portland) sat down and asked the waitress for a bottle of bitters. She slobbered some onto her napkin, stuffed the napkin in her mouth and sucked on it. Two minutes later, she was as cured as anyone returning from Lourdes.

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