



## Senior Moments

with Emma Edwards

### How about common sense?

Here we are, once again, in confinement due to an influx in COVID-19 cases, with the Delta variant being the chief culprit.

Sometimes I let my mind wander to the “what ifs.” I have a fertile imagination, as my family will attest, and so the “what ifs” can multiply. But I have learned it does me no good.

As I have said before and I will reiterate here: I feel that God has given each of us what could be called common sense and it’s there if we care to use it.

Common sense is defined as “sound judgment in practical matters” such as a common-sense approach.

Synonyms include good sense, acumen and sensibleness.

Have you noticed how some signs on products show manufacturers assume we have no common sense? Here are a few I ran across recently:

Warning label on package of fireplace logs: “Caution; risk of fire.”

On an iron: “Do not iron clothes on body.”

On a fishing hook: “Harmful if swallowed.”

On a hair dryer: “Do not use while sleeping.”

On a baby stroller: “Remove child before folding.”

A riddle that has been around since before you and I were born gets me every time. See if you can figure out what common sense would tell you.

Riddle: You are in a dark room with a candle, a wood stove and a gas lamp. You have only one match. What do you light first? (Answer is at the end of this column.)

My next thought is wheth-

er I sometimes lack common sense. Was I – or were you -- born with common sense?

Why do we need signs such as this: “Please be aware that the balcony is not on ground level.”

From what I have studied on the subject, I’ve concluded that we’re not born with common sense. It is something we learn beginning in early childhood.

I like Thomas Edison’s statement, “*The three great essentials to achieve anything worthwhile (in life) are, first, hard work; second, stick-to-itiveness; third, common sense.*”

Dare I tell you I think we seniors possess more common sense the older we are?

I can’t help it. One more warning.

On a Superman Halloween costume: “This costume does not enable flight or super strength.”

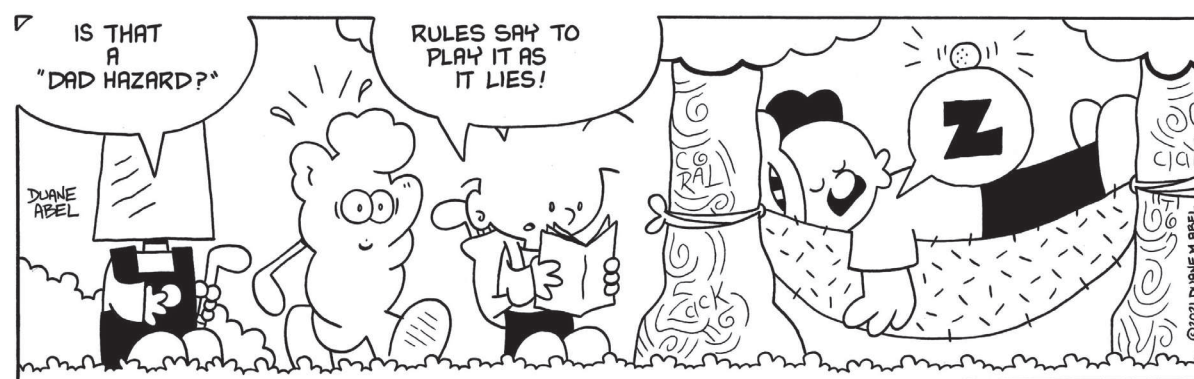
Perception enters into the answer of what is common sense.

I like to think I use common sense with my kitten named Holly, who has suddenly grown into an opinionated cat. Sometimes I get annoyed with her take on life and am tempted to open the door and toss her out. Then what we call common sense reminds me that traffic is heavy in my area of Warrenton and Holly does not know what a car is except for fun trips in her carrier to the vet’s office.

Likewise, common sense tells me to wear my mask and not gripe and complain. Oh, and here is the answer to the riddle in the middle of the column: The match is what should be lit first.

ZED by Duane M. Abel

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## Here’s to Your Health

by Dr. Emily Pirmann, pediatrician

### Get kids mentally ready to return to school

Back-to-school time is often exciting for kids. They get to see their friends again, meet new teachers, and learn new things.

But last year’s topsy-turvy school year may make some kids anxious about returning to school in the fall, according to the Child Mind Institute.

As a parent, you can help your kids cope with these stresses and worries. Here are a few ways to prepare and reassure them that going back to school will be safe and fun:

- Get rock solid on the rules. There are no guarantees. But steps like wearing masks, social distancing and hand-washing can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 when kids head back to the classroom. Make sure they know what will be expected of them, and reassure them that the rules are there to keep them safe.

- Start a familiar routine. Before school starts, get them used to a daily schedule that matches what they’ll have on school days. For instance, set regular times for:

- Waking up and going to sleep.

- Eating breakfast and lunch.

- Taking a nap if they need one.

- Picking out the next day’s clothes.

- Flex their social muscles. If it’s safe to do so, arrange play dates with a friend in their social bubble before school starts. Having a familiar buddy when they go back to the classroom can help them ease back into in-person interactions.

- Set the tone. Stay calm and positive when talking to your kids about their worries. Reassure them that their feelings are normal. Then focus on what they can do to feel better and how you can help.

- Manage your own stress. Remember, that the new school year is a first for you, too. Recognizing and managing your own stress and anxiety can help model good

behavior for your kids.

- Ask your children’s teachers how you can best reach them. Many teachers use email or school apps to communicate with parents. By establishing open communication with the school and teachers, you will be able to voice your concerns and questions early, so they can be addressed.

- Be on watch. Kids show stress and anxiety in different ways. They may act out, withdraw, or show other changes. If these signs last more than a few weeks into the school year, talk to their doctor. In some cases, counseling might be helpful.

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