Aging 30 Years in Half a Second

Recently, I did the annual New Year's cleaning. I love getting rid of stuff. Like most, it happens on a warm Saturday afternoon after the garage sale. We sold 174 items and ended up with around 35 dollars. I was amazed that so many of people don't want what *we* don't want. By the end of the day, I was paying people to take what's left over. *"I'll pay you 50 dollars to take the sofa that's parked in the garage. Please? I know it's mauve. But mauve is back! I'll even throw in the inflatable Santa Claus!"*

After a Saturday of lifting a refrigerator, an entertainment center, my son's barbells and various other items, I woke up the next morning and grabbed a shirt out of the closet and the next thing I knew a shock of electricity shot through my back. I aged 30 years in half a second, as I tried to get up. I looked at myself in the mirror. It was a pathetic sight. I was stooped down and to the right at a 60-degree angle. I had the posture of the Elephant Man. What happened? The day before, I was robust, vigorous and almost impressed with the deftness of my herculean prowess and the next, I'm bent over like an extra on the set of the Golden Girls after attempting the feat of lifting a shirt from the closet. I went to church like that because I didn't have time to draft a small group leader replacement. Our group was very understanding and prayed for my restoration, but evidently these demons require much prayer and fasting.

Monday, I found a chiropractor who could squeeze me into the schedule. I am not a frequenter of chiropractors, but I've been before. I've learned through the years that there are different schools of thought when it comes to chiropractors. (Or as my grandmother called them: "the choir-practors.") Some

of them have a little tool that pokes you in the spine after they hook you up to a something akin to an octopus with electrical suction cups. I've been to others that wanted to sign me up for a lifetime supply of supplements containing things like lamb's hair extract, acacia seeds and aromatic wild caught salmon oil. For me, I don't think you've actually been to a chiropractor until he puts you on a plank of wood and you hear bones popping as he plunges his knee in your thoracic vertebrae. That's when I know I got my money's worth.



It's been a few days and I'm walking normally now. I've learned a lot since then. I've learned that it's the little things that often trigger the hidden pain of over-exertion. I think that's true in marriage. It's often not the actual disagreements we have that bend Darlene and me out of shape. It's sometimes the guy tailgating me on the way home that incites my contrarian mindset. And sometimes the best thing I can do to keep my marriage and my back healthy is a little daily stretching. It's not a macho as weightlifting but it's just as important.