

MidWeek

Free Stuff, Happy Ratio, Acting Nice

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By Katie Young

Nothing is ever really free, right?

I don't know about you, but every time someone tells me I'll get something for free, I'm suspicious. My first reaction is always, "OK, what's the catch?"

I suppose I have that mentality because society is such nowadays that most things do come with a catch. You might get a free cooking pan, but you have to listen to a three-hour presentation on timeshares first. You can get a new alarm clock, rice pot and three magazine subscriptions, but you have to sign up for two years on a new phone plan.

"Be wary of anything that comes too easily," my friend Steven always says. He believes in that age-old mantra that nothing worthwhile ever comes without some work.

So many of us are in a rush these days and can't be bothered by a winning deal that sounds too good to be true. We've been trained to think that everything is a scam because a lot of it is. But there is still some truly "free" goodness out there.

I did win a free make-over/makeup lesson through a bridal store recently and it was only because the lady was persistent

and called me three times to make an appointment that I finally gave in and met up with her. It went well- I got my make-over and wasn't pressured to buy anything.

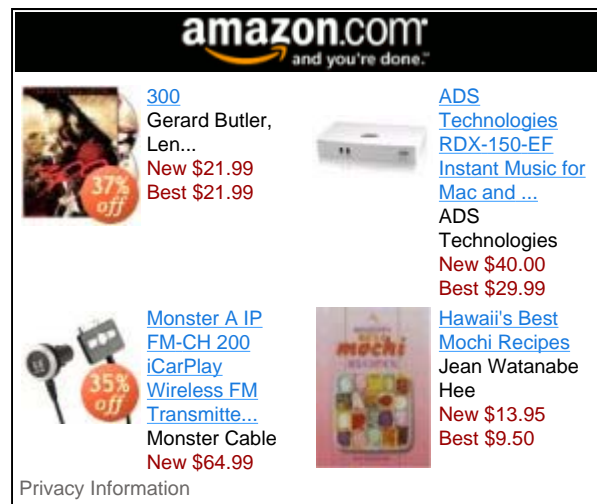
Disney is also marketing its "Year of a Million Dreams," where you might just be approached on the street and offered a fantastic dream package! No joke.

And *MidWeek's* Mystery Shopper feature gives one lucky shopper the chance to win a shopping spree if they answer the representative's question correctly. (Hint: You have to read *MidWeek* to answer correctly - but, hey, we come free too.)





So don't always run away when someone approaches you with a deal that puts you in the winner's circle! You never know - it might just be on the up-and-up. So be cautious, but also be open to the possibilities!



Ahealthy ratio. Dr. Brad Klontz, a clinical psychologist and president-elect of the Hawaii Psychological Association, says studies have proven that in successful, healthy relationships there is a ratio of positive to negative statements. That ratio is 5 to 1. For every one criticism you give you partner, you should be giving them five positive ones.



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“Research has shown that when relationships start to fall below that ratio, they are heading for trouble,” he explains. “Sarcasm, ridicule ... those things will destroy a relationship. Putting the other person down or discounting them will destroy how that person feels about him- or herself.”

Remember that the next time you feel compelled to spout some negativity directed at your love. It might be easier for many of us to poke fun or take a negative jab at our significant other, but don't underestimate the power that positive words can have on your partner and your relationship.



On being nice ... We all probably have someone in our lives who we feel less than thrilled about. Maybe it's a co-worker with a bad attitude who we have to see every day, or our significant other's annoying friend with whom we have to spend vacations because they have been friends for years.

It's not exactly a fun situation to deal with, but most times we are forced to put on a good face so we don't create any unwanted friction. You could speak up, say what's on your mind every time you get bothered, but in some situations that might only make matters worse. There are some people - like them or not - that you just have to deal with in your life.

For many people, having to “act” happy and polite when they don't want to is an irksome task, to say the least. They get deeply bothered by this nuisance in their life.

I think letting yourself get so disturbed by something beyond your control is only a needless stress in your life. I know it is difficult for me, however, to stop myself from letting those things get to me. But taking the high road - taking a deep breath and letting the irritation go, knowing that this unpleasant moment will pass - is a lot easier and better for your mental well-being than stewing about something over which you may have no control.

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