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If you get involved, you may miss the train

Blood is the same color despite the hue of the skin serving as a container. I was nearly 20 when I discovered that simple fact.

It was a typical New York rush hour. As I made my way down the stairway of the Times Square subway station, it became evident everyone was making a slight pause when approaching the bottom step and gingerly sprinting over something.

Too soon I saw the reason for delay. A black woman lay on the subway platform, just at the foot of the stairway. Her eyes stared vacantly into a world we cannot see since she no longer lived in this sphere. Blood, a vivid, red streamed from her fractured head.

"Do something!" I screamed as people pushed passed me into the waiting trains.

"Are you crazy?" someone retorted. "And miss my train?"

"What's wrong with you?" another yelled. "Don't you know better than to get involved?"

MOMENTS ELAPSED that seemed like hours.

Finally, a policeman heard my shouts above the roaring trains, and he began to prevent traffic from stepping over the body while he radioed for assistance.

More than 20 years have passed. My 20-year-old daughter, Evelyn is now a student at New York University, riding the same subway trains.

Recently, as she sat on the subway, a man about the same age as herself rose from his seat with an abruptness that signaled a problem. Rhythmically, he began to throw himself back and forth against the glass window. His body increased its intensity and each thud became louder.

Horrified, Evelyn watched, knowing any second the glass would shatter and he would be able to hurt his body from the speeding train.

All around, people continued to read their newspapers, oblivious of the young man banging himself

to and fro against the glass. They continued reading despite the sound of glass bursting into fragments and the screams of agony the man now emitted.

In an instant, he would gain the final momentum to throw himself into the narrow concrete tunnel streaking by.

A STUDENT sitting beside my panicking daughter, leaped from his seat and grabbed the emergency cord.

"Don't do that!" a woman shouted. "That's only for emergencies!"

Brakes screeched, jolting passengers from their seats. Now no one read the paper.

"Do you know you're going to make us all late for work, young man?" a middle-aged man garbed in uniform grey flannel yelled at the student.

Evelyn observed the same fact as I had years before. Gushing down the dark-skinned arms of the victim was bright red blood. Everyone bleeds the

same.

A subway conductor entered the car to find the cause of the emergency stop.

"Since you stopped the train, you'll have to give me permission to resume," he told the student.

"He'll bleed to death if we don't get to the next stop for medical assistance."

Permission granted, the train moved on. They all returned to reading their newspapers, ignoring the hysterical, bleeding man.

MY DAUGHTER CAN be proud of her generation. They risk involvement.

Meanwhile, those of us over 40 must remember the question asked in the beginning days of humankind, the days of Adam and Eve.

"Am I my brother's keeper?"

The answer hasn't changed. Unfortunately, neither have we.

No — neither have we.



Sheila
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A short course in 'Supermarket Psychology'

When you go grocery shopping with your children, you are automatically enrolled in a course called Supermarket Psychology. Just having a baby in your wagon entitles you to free lectures from anyone you meet in the store.

Some topics that will be covered include use of a pacifier, toilet training, and breast-feeding and bottle-feeding. Not only will this type of information be given freely, but you and your child will be fully scrutinized. Questions and general recommendations will be shared, from sex to surgery.

I am blonde and our daughters all have dark hair. This makes me an ideal candidate for Supermarket Psychology. With each baby, these public specialists have asked, "Where did she get that dark hair from?" (Funny, the nurse who prepped me in the hospital never asked that question when she visited us in the nursery.)

When queried, however, I just answer, "I dye her hair brown."

Once I actually was asked, "What is the nationality of the father of that child?" To that I simply replied in a whisper, "I don't know, there were so many!"

IT IS IMPORTANT not to be intimidated by the many well-meaning strangers who give free advice. It is also important to be prepared with answers.

If you choose to reply in a humorous vein, I suggest you smile a lot, always remembering such retaliatory weapons as raw eggs and frozen roasts are easily available.

When asked, "Why does that little girl still have a pacifier?" I have answered (smiling, of course), "She was born with it and I didn't know I was supposed to take it away."

If your heir is still in diapers, it's difficult to avoid a confrontation on this subject when your wagon is full of toddler-size disposables and your darling's bottom resembles an overstuffed pillow.

Of course, you can always sneak out at night and murmur something about how great they are under newspaper while you are paper training your puppy. Since it is a known fact that a generation ago most infants were toilet trained before today's babies can even sit up, it's best to be prepared with a statement on this matter. The one I used is, "As long as she changes her own diapers, it's no problem."

infants developed skin allergies as a reaction to most foods, our pediatrician recommended breast-feeding until our daughter was 2 years old.

I asked him if he was aware of any psychological problems from older breast-fed children. He told me of a little boy who went up to the wrong mother in the supermarket and started unbuttoning her blouse. As far as he knew, it upset the woman a lot more than it did the boy.

When my daughter was 2, I weaned her onto a bottle. (Why a bottle? Because a 2-year-old can't pour a Thermos in the car.)

A few months later, when confronted with "How long are you going to keep that big girl on a bottle?" I simply mused, "But she's only been on it for three months."

BREAST-FEEDING AND bottle feeding are leading topics in check-out lines. When one of our

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