

AGEABLE ANGST

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When I am not glaring at an unmoving TV screen as I forcefully press numbers on my portable phone, I'm attempting to place a call with the TV remote. Or I'm trying for the umpteenth time to make George Forman's dad-gummed top grill plate fit into the shallow slots it's got to go in before I can use it again. It always takes me five or six runs at this before I get it right and I often just leave it hooked on one side and wait until the next morning.



Then, for no apparent reason, it slips right in after only one or two tries. Why couldn't it have BIG slots to fit into so you couldn't miss? The bottom plate is a piece of cake and I love to cook on this grill – until it's time to wash it and put it back together. I know the designer could have made this easier.

When you know you're out of touch with so much – Facebook, YouTube, My Space, Twitter and more in this too-technical culture, it's aggravating when things you like to use in the kitchen add to your problems.

I do a little e-mail, but I still like to send and get old-fashioned letters with costly stamps on them. I guess it's my fading eyes, but I can't tell digital TV from my old TV and I don't know "high-def" from low-def or what that even means. Other people have mentioned that text messaging is destroying the ability to use the English language. I never intend to try it. What's already happened to the language is bad enough when a phrase like "That's my bad," is used instead of "That's my mistake, my big lie, or my foolish remark."

What kind of kindergarten language is "That's my bad?" but I read it several times in the dialogue of a new mystery I just finished.

Two more words have crept in to describe what used to be called a vicious assault by one or more (usually more) people who beat, kick and otherwise inflict horrific damage on a single helpless victim. "Beat-down" is now used to describe these all-too-frequent hateful acts that are usually captured on video. One of the characters in the mystery, a teenager, said of a boy he didn't like, "He needs a beat-down."

And when a list of drugs you take, or have taken, gets longer, it's a real downer to squint nervously at some TV ad for a drug you hope you never took, first showing the glowing people who are now on it, (Blank has changed my life!) followed by a list of the side effects: "nausea, diarrhea, dizziness, heart attack, blurred vision, stroke, kidney failure,

liver damage, muscle weakness, deafness and/or death,” and an advisory to “stop taking immediately if you have any of these symptoms.” Well, if you’re dead, it won’t matter.

And (no disrespect intended) Robert Browning’s lovely lines “Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,” are a load of – something that rhymes with sap.

*Read more ‘Writer’s Corner’ at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>