



PO Box 558250
Miami, FL 33255-8250 USA
305-600-4655
Skype: HDinter
HDinter@GrandLifestyle.com
www.GrandLifestyle.com
www.GrandLifestyle.blogspot.com

Heinz Dinter, PhD
Editor & Publisher

May 16, 2007 • Wednesday

Dear Grace:

For two long days, Monday and yesterday, a miserable hangover kept me from doing productive things and being blessed with feeling good. It's awful. It's also a very ugly reminder of the great dangers we exposed ourselves to — and others. I do not want to wind up in jail, not even for a single night. I am quite sure, neither do you.

This life of “feeling good” with a bottle of wine by your side and no more friends to talk to is a life of hopeless yearning for the telephone to ring.

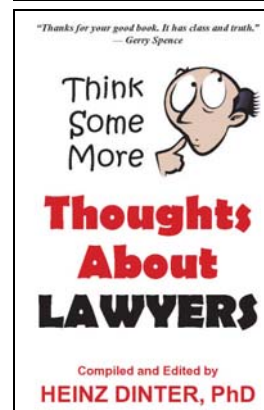
Dear Grace, my letter to you is not meant to share the detailed abomination of the Mother's Day weekend reckless passing of time. NO! I could pick up the phone and talk to you. Or I could come and visit with you. Neither option would bring any positive result because you would refuse to listen, switch to another topic or brush it off with “Let's not talk about it now.” I do know, however, you will read this letter. Hopefully, you will read it again and again to give my ardent plea a chance to reach you.

I also know you will be furious again. Then you will call me spewing forth words of great anger, vile threats of having your lawyers sue me for slander, your nephew and “friend” tune in on the same wavelength, and then you stop telephoning me. You see, dear Grace, we have been there before — more than once. The most recent such episode goes back 13 months. Let me pick up at that juncture on what I want you to read today because I do want to help you. YES, I DO WANT TO HELP.

Your nephew's visit in April of last year turned into a blistering disappointment. He didn't do what was then an absolute necessity — arrange for desperately needed medical treatment — and he did nothing to investigate the exploitation you suffer at the hands of those who were engaged and are paid by you to serve you.

I and others spoke up and, as a consequence, I suffered ugly telephone calls and written correspondence threatening legal actions for defamation. Yes, I dared to hint that family responsibility was neglected, possibly intended to expedite realization of ulterior motives. What did your nephew do during the past 13 months to guide you onto the road of recovery? We do know the answer, don't we? The facts speak for themselves. *Res ipsa loquitur.*

The Book Series of
Laughter and Thought
at GrandLifestyle.com



Read • Heed • Succeed

Then, earlier this year, shortly after New Year, you began telephoning me again. I did not respond until the latter part of April because your calls always turned to the invitation, “Heinz, you want to come over for a glass of wine?” I always made excuses for declining your invitation until two weeks ago when I accepted your invitation for lunch on Mother’s Day. The Friday before, you called again shortly before ten o’clock in the evening and invited me to come over for a glass of wine. I declined. We chatted with a brief interruption when you paid the maid who left shortly after ten. We chatted incessantly until nearly one o’clock in the morning that included a change in the schedule — we agreed I would come over today, Saturday, at 11:30 for lunch.”

I rang at the gate at the appointed hour. Voicemail answered. I rang again. Grace answered. “Why are you here?” “You invited me,” I responded. Long pause. Instead of the gate being buzzed open, the dial tone advised that you had simply hung up. I am familiar with the routine. A short while later you came downstairs and clicked the gate open.

We arrived upstairs; you apologize for the apartment’s disarray (the maid had left 13 hours earlier); then, “You want a glass of wine?” Not waiting for an answer, you poured two glasses from the half-empty bottle in the fridge. I placed the empty bottle in the near-empty garbage bin — it joins two empty bottles already resting at the bottom of the white garbage bag.

You look for more wine. There’s none. Two bottles of margarita mix won’t serve. “Let’s go get some wine,” you urge “Do we really need it?” I respond cowardly. I drive and you spend more than \$30 for two bottles of Sterling and a pack of Marlboros. During the drive, I observe the Jaguar’s condition: minor flaws requiring no immediate attention except for a deepening rust spot and complete lack of Freon.

We finish one bottle when you announce, “I need to eat something.” We drive into downtown Coconut Grove at two o’clock and have fajitas at Señor Frog’s. It’s been your favorite meal besides Pollo Tropical chicken and maduros for several years (the latter stands in for dining at home). You barely touched your food, limiting your lunch to two or three bites from the tortilla you used to encase bits of steak, green pepper and onions. Eleven margaritas later we left (you ordered number 11 and asked for a second glass to share).

Upon returning to your apartment, you opened the remaining bottle and we settled down to chat. We reminisced about the good times we had at the club (I had brought a Mother’s Day gift, an engraved, glass-framed group photo of our team visit to the Royal Palm Tennis Club), we chat, and chat. You talk frankly about life, your knee and hip pains, the cancer scare, and loneliness. “Nobody calls anymore,” you admit.

I attempt to steer the conversation toward positive matters, those that would help you turn your life around. You wrote such beautiful poems during your years with Eastern Airlines as a flight attendant. My favored one is “After the Kiss” and I published it in my Forty Love tennis newsletter. Do it again, Grace. Oh, I remember, you tell me again the good times you had when you were involved in the theatre and directed plays. Grace, do it again.

What about stretching? Grace, when I first met you and you were still a handful of years short of the excitement-promising 60, you always astounded me with your awe-inspiring agility, your lecturing me about the importance of stretching, and then getting me on the floor and making me stretch, feeling the pain and resulting benefit — me, the once well-trained gymnast.

Here's a wonderful opportunity I tried to interest you in, of combining return to a productive life and economic success by creating a program of teaching and promoting stretching, creating videos and more aimed at our generation, women (and men) in their fifties and beyond. You are perfect for the job with your agility, know-how, looks and personality — and you will outshine Jane Fonda and many others. I hasten to add that now, zeroing in on 65, you are even more qualified with even greater success potential. Ask Roxie, she will tell you.

The bottles are empty. "Let's get more wine," you announce. I drive and you fetch two more bottles of Sterling and a pack of Marlboros.

We chat some more. I leave; it's nearly two o'clock, with about a third of a bottle of wine left in the refrigerator.

It's Sunday, Mother's Day. You call at 10:30, reminding me we are going to have lunch at noon. I know you were looking forward to having lunch at the club. So I confirm to be at the apartment even though we had rescheduled to Saturday.

I arrive at the apartment. You look so nice, all made up and dressed in white with a hat adorning your head, ready to look for old friends at the club.

You pour from a half-full bottle with an unopened bottle sitting at its side in the fridge, the result of a trip to the store earlier this Sunday morning. Conclusion: since two o'clock this morning, you finished what we had left, gone shopping for two new bottles, and had already opened one bottle and helped yourself to three glasses of wine this Sunday morning.

We sat and chatted, even took an inventory of your medications and discovered you had a supply of Celebrex that had been prescribed a year ago, but you did not use because of the Celebrex scare then. You took a pill, and soon noticed the positive, pain-suppressing effect. You spoke again of all the friends who no longer stayed in touch. You even pointed out that the phone had not rung once all afternoon, contrary to years past. The bottles were empty now and you wanted more. Again, the store up the street happily obliged. Our plan to have lunch at the club was forgotten at this point and we moved to the pool downstairs, enjoying the warm breeze and inspiring view of Biscayne Bay, and kept on drinking Sterling.

The sun is setting and the last bottle is empty. You are hungry and want a Wendy's hamburger. I drive. On the way back you remember the depleted wine supply so we swing by the store and you fetch two bottles and a bag of potato chips.

We talk some more, mostly about the good old times and old friends, and continue drinking.

I leave shortly after one o'clock and focus on driving very carefully. I don't remember how and when I got home.

Five years ago, you agreed to enter a treatment program following doctor and treatment center visits. You will recall the abhorrent experience we had. You checked into the hospital. Unfortunately, you did not follow through with the program and then lived in fear a friend's stern message would arouse your nephew's conscience and turn his responsibility into action:

Without "Baker Acting" her I don't see much point in destroying her or ourselves. She did not benefit from that which she has attended, and apparently will not or cannot help herself.

Bottles of wine a day destroy brain cells. Grace is in a downward spiral. Left to her own devices she will eventually wind up hurting herself or others. Bringing her alcoholic drinks is only enabling the worst kind of behavior and preventing any hope of recovery. Friends don't do that; for her sake she needs to totally dry out and be in a rehab program NOW.

What I am doing is wrong — helping you in your excessive and health-endangering consumption of alcohol. I must not do that and I shall not do it anymore. Please, Grace, call me anytime and if you ask me for help I shall help, but I shall no longer join you in drinking binges or obtaining alcohol. **Your excessive drinking is the reason why your friends have turned away.** Your conduct is simply too much for them to understand and to tolerate.

Grace, you can do it. You can save your health — your life — if you really want to, and let others know how you did it, and even help those who need help. Please do it. Never once must your fortitude waver. You must do it for the sake of your peace of mind and your health.

Please take good care,



PS: The telephone rang at 4:42 yesterday afternoon. “Heinz, I am calling to say good bye.” My heart rate returns to normal once you start explaining. You will move back to Chicago, you say. You can't stay in Miami because you are lonely. You love your apartment; you love Miami, you say. “I'm just not happy because I have no one here,” you say. “I need to be around people who care for me. What can I do by myself?”

Grace, please recall the days when you demonstrated to be a charming hostess with your dinner parties and you were always a very popular doubles partner on the tennis court. Everyone I know you engaged in conversation spoke highly of you. “Grace is such a charming lady,” they always observed. Why no more? Your charm and congeniality washed away with wine and tequila. Stop the drinking and your friends come back. And, more importantly, they will help you regain your peace of mind without the evils of alcohol. I will help you, too.

“I really do love it here,” you confided in me. Then, Grace, make them all love you again. You have burnt many bridges. However, bridges can be rebuilt.

Let me ask you: Would I dedicate so much time and energy writing this letter if I wouldn't care what happens to you? But nobody can help you if you don't help yourself.

After the Kiss
Venture not towards thoughts of intrusion,
Thoughts of calm and independence.
Kiss warm lips that deliver passion,
Clinging taste of softness raping waves of thought,
Sense arousal, but be patient for after the kiss.