

THROWING IN THE TOWEL

I found a cryptic note in the laundry room the other day, pinned haphazardly to a well-worn bath towel on the floor. It said: “Dear lady of the house—I am your towel. And I’m throwing myself in.”

I couldn’t believe what I was reading! My towels and I have been together for a long time; a few have actually been with me since the beginning of my wedded bliss 21 years ago. What would cause my towel to give up a life of luxury in our home, I wondered? Why would one of these friends of the family, a dependable and loyal worker, ever consider abandoning its pampered life with us?

The note continued: “I signed on to perform standard functional duties as a bath towel in a normal household. I fully expected to be utilized once a week, washed and dried appropriately and returned to my safe haven in the linen closet.”

Uh oh. Something must have happened to push my towel over its frayed edge. I recalled one incident where *perhaps* the towel was used to wipe muddy dog paws. Could that be it?

I read on: “The terms of my contract with the Weisenburger Household have been violated egregiously. My daily work load has increased exponentially, and the duties I now perform are completely outside of my original agreed-upon job parameters.”

OK, I did once find that towel in the flowerbed. And I’m thinking that was the same towel that my son kept for several weeks in the trunk of his car where it proceeded to grow Penicillin cultures. And there *was* the time when the toilet in the guest bathroom overflowed and we used the towel (along with several throw rugs and some nearby curtains) to frantically stem the rising floodwaters...

There was more: “You are therefore notified that I am on strike and will not be returning to my duties unless and until the following demands have been met:

- 1.) My transportation route will consist only of round trips from the closet to the laundry room and back to the closet shelf. No detours to the teenage daughter’s bedroom floor will be tolerated (although I do enjoy the camaraderie with the other six towels there).
- 2.) The teenage son may not use me as a napkin at the dinner table. I still have spaghetti sauce stains from the last time.
- 3.) Let’s agree: Bath towels do not make good bird cage liners, oven mitts or campfire extinguishers. Need I say more?”

Then there was the final, devastating blow: “If these demands are not met, I will be forced to retaliate by sneaking Kleenexes into every washer load with me.”

Clearly, I have been remiss and should negotiate a new contract with my towel. I should pledge to make its life more predictable, to use it only for the specified purposes and to never again abuse it under any circumstances.

But I’ll probably just go hide the box of Kleenex instead.

Mary Beth Weisenburger lives in Putnam County and will probably need to replace her older, wiser towels with some newer, more naïve models very soon.