

10/16/84

# Ann's had impact

Dear Readers: Several weeks ago I printed a letter from a generous reader who told me how I had changed her life. When I thanked her for the kind words I asked readers who had profited from my advice to drop me a line and let me know how I had helped them. I was unprepared for the avalanche that followed.

Since today is my 29th anniversary as the author of the Ann Landers column, I ask your indulgence while I engage in a bit of self-serving rhetoric. I print these excerpts at the risk of being arrested for practicing medicine without a license.

Ann Landers



From Beaumont, Tex.: You did more than change my life. You saved it. Eleven years ago you printed the warning signals of cancer and pleaded with your readers who recognized a symptom to see their doctor at once. (I hadn't had a physical in four years because I hated them so.) I took your advice and within 48 hours my breast was removed. Today I am well and feel like a million. If it weren't for you I would not be alive.

From Seattle: I wrote you in 1966 about my 6-year-old son who was driving me crazy. He was incorrigible in school and a hellion at home. Spanking made him worse. You told me to take him to a neurologist and have him tested. Sure enough — the boy was hyperkinetic. Medication changed the child's life, and mine, too. Today he is in Yale law school instead of the penitentiary where I thought he would surely land.

From Newark, N.J.: Five years ago you told me, "It's not what you are eating, it's what's eating you." I took your advice and sought counseling. My ulcers and migraines are gone and there are not enough words to thank you.

From Omaha: Your relentless campaign against cigarette smoking finally got me, a three-pack-a-day man, to quit smoking — cold turkey. My brother, who smoked as much as I, wouldn't quit. He died in 1980. I feel certain your column saved me from lung cancer.

From Manhattan: Your informative items on Alzheimer's Disease made me realize why my mother suddenly becomes hostile, angry and impossible to please. I am no longer hurt and defensive and she is in a nursing home getting the care she needs.

From Dallas: A few years you printed a column headed "The Silent Killer — High Blood Pressure" and urged your readers to get their blood pressure checked. I did — for the first time in 10 years. The doctor said I was within inches of a stroke and put me in the hospital at once. I sent you a dozen roses.

From Chicago: For 10 years I lived with an abusive, lazy husband who cheated on me and lied constantly. You told me to ask myself the famous Ann Landers question, "Would your life be better with him or without him?" I did and the answer came up "without." I threw the bum out and am now married to a real gem. That one question saved me from a life of hell.

From Portland, Ore.: When I learned my husband was a transvestite, I nearly died. You advised me to ask myself if my life would be better with him or without him. I added up the pluses (great husband, terrific father, lovely provider, faithful and kind) and decided I'd be better off WITH him. So now I let him dress up in his wig and heels and chiffon dresses when the kids are asleep and we play "girlfriends." It no longer bothers me — in fact, I enjoy it. That 20-cent stamp was the best investment I ever made.