

When noticing takes a bad turn

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Those of you who have been following this string for awhile know that one of my favorite activities is noticing. I notice when I'm on trips, when I'm walking around, when I'm talking to people or watching strangers talk.

I don't know where I'd be if not for my penchant for noticing. Certainly, it would have been difficult to have written many of the posts you've seen here. I believe that most of what people call artistic imagination is closely tied to simply noticing.

I love noticing. So it may come as at least a mild surprise that I'm bothered by noticing today and for the foreseeable future. Of course, it's not *my* noticing that worries me.

Mary is at home recovering from rotator cuff surgery and her activities – at least those of an active physical nature – are constrained for the next six weeks or so. But you see, my beloved is not given to sitting around twiddling her thumbs. The more sedentary she's forced to be, the more her mind works.

And therein lies the rub, from my point of view.

You see, Mary is no slouch at noticing. And I expect she'll do a lot of it in the next few weeks. But she won't be noticing glacial peaks or interesting people or much of anything outside our property. No-o-o-o... Mary will be noticing things around the homestead.

You see where this is going, right?

She'll notice things that need to be fixed. Walls that need to be painted, lamps that blink, loose doorknobs. Mary will pick up on the need for new wallpaper and floor covering, the as-yet-un-refinished hardwood on the main level, a patio in need of pressure washing and lawns in need of pre-rainy season treatment.

The dog house needs painting and some finish carpentry and there are several pickup loads worth of detritus awaiting runs to the dump. One tree needs pruning and another removal. I should really put an extra coat of paint on the front railing, and the gutters probably need some scooping. And all of these things fall within easy visual range of my spouse.

There is nothing – NO THING – more potentially damaging to my future status as a relaxed husband than a Mary with time to notice and ponder.

It's going to be a very long six weeks.

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