

Towel Troubles

Written by Laura Packard

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I have just learned something life-changing.

As in a MIND BLOWN type of way. Almost as close, but not as significant, as the day you figure out there's a tiny fuel symbol that lights up on the dashboard of your car to tell you which side of the tank you need to pull up at the gas station beside.

This is important because there is nothing worse than saddling up in a hunk of metal beside another hunk of metal with an oversized, unruly hose that can only be of use if a small screen with confusing directions with weird prompts lets you.

Then, the ultimate kicker. You run your credit card and discover there is absolutely nowhere to put it. The nozzle of the hose, that is. No matter how far you stretch it. And in front of everyone, you must poke repeatedly at a button that really isn't a button to cancel your debit card, wrangle the beast hose back in, and take that drive of shame to find the proper metal to metal hook up. For me, this drive of shame could take two, maybe even three laps. Basically, I am saying when discovering that glowing orange icon changes your life, like molten chocolate cake, it can only be for the better.

Supposedly, this is a close second.

It turns out, there are real schools around the globe that have the authority to induct Towel Sommeliers into a professional circle of the crème da la crème of customer service. As in you get to be an inductee to THE special Forces of what to do with all types of towels, no matter how big, how thick, how thin or how holy. They also provide the gift of keeping the world properly and squeaky clean, coupled with the dignity to walk around your bathroom without being embarrassed when someone inevitably, and quite selfishly, sashays in with a single cup

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of coffee or a knock.

But back to the process of being able to qualify for this elite group of leading movers and shakers of Pima cotton rocket scientists; it's not easy to achieve rock star status. There are classes to take about fiber, thickness, and absorbency. How long will one stand up of the long haul draped next to your shower. How to clean, how to fold, how to walk away.

Then there are the towel exams. EXAMS, people. Do you need two No. 2 pencils, a water bottle, and a snack? Just asking.

Not to brag, but I have my own personal towel sommelier. Well, let's just say a wannabe, but a towel sommelier nevertheless. He was never schooled, officially, so let's just call him self-taught. And, he takes this towel thing, much like his recent UFO spotting in our backyard, very seriously.

Here are his parameters:

Washcloths are for wussies. As Charlie says, they should only be used to check the oil in your car or to put out small fires.

Dishtowels, however, unlike the rest of the bunch, are to be subdivided into two different categories. One should be draped over the kitchen sink only to be used for dirty hands and dirty dishes. The second dishtowel should be draped beside it only to be used only for clean dishes and clean hands. This is why I don't do dishes: to remain married.

Bath towels should be twice as thick and more comfortable than a down mattress cover. They must also absorb well, dry well, and be as long as the length of your body.

When he finally figured out how much these super plush towels cost, his blood pressure dropped, his cheeks drained all color. And then, he made a rookie mistake and asked for my

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help.

All I could do was direct him to the IKEA catalog on the coffee table. Straight up, I have zero opinions on towels because I am the only who washes them. Crisis averted.

And it was wonderful to see the absolute joy on his face. It was magical. He immediately ordered 30 in his favorite color, Slate Gray, as well as a bamboo basket for his favorite cactus named Boo.

Next, he waited by the front door for three days. I, the two kids, four dogs, and a cat, walked around him. The box finally arrived. His head was hung, and it was slightly awkward, but now we all had to walk around him and also a teeny shoebox. And I am not talking about a boot box. It was a box fit for sandals, women's, size small, four.

He finally opened it.

"Maybe they just need to breathe?"

The one strange exception to Charlie's perceived expertise is the beach towel. He's unapologetically indifferent, which seems fine on first thought but after a hot sec, contradictory.

He'll use a frayed at the edges, so thin you can see through it, holes as big as a crater, beach towel to dry himself off.

Maybe this is why he hasn't quit his day job. It's competitive out there in the towel world. Odds are slim.

Me? My attempt at achieving towel sommelier level is moot.

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Just don't leave a towel on the floor.