

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy
Wednesday, 22 February 2017 06:29



Better than Real Life: A Movie

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I just saw you at the Beaufort International Film Festival and wanted to know what you thought of what you saw there.

Celluloid Sarah

Dear CS,

Firstly, we are so lucky to have people like Rebecca and Ron Tucker who lead the charge and pull this wonderful festival together year after year. It is a spectacular event.

As for what I saw at BIFF: *Almost Paris* knocked my socks off.

I showed up because anything with the word “Paris” in it is something I want to see. I never read synopses or reviews until after I have seen something, and am so glad I saw this unprepared. It is a magical movie, but it isn’t about Paris. Well, not really.

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The film takes a very ordinary family in an ordinary part of Long Island in the aftermath of the housing bubble crash and manages to take their successes, their failures, their hopes, dreams and disappointments, and weave them into a real and touching peek at LIFE in capital letters.

We got to see what true love looks like, in at least six different forms: Parents, children of all ages, siblings, spouses, friends, and heroes. We witnessed an authentic struggle for integrity,

One of the things I liked most about this movie is that it took what appears to be a very black and white subject – the damage caused by sup-prime loans – and broke it down to something much more complex than declarations of “good” and “bad.” We experience the pain of people who asked for and received loans that they should have known were too good to be true, and the people who gave them those loans, knowingly taking an enormous risk from which they could benefit greatly. In the end, everyone suffered.

There were no big bad loan givers or stupid and greedy loan takers in this film. There were just people convincing themselves of what they needed to believe to move closer to their dreams.

The other thing I loved about this movie, besides the great script and fine acting, is the message that your dreams don't have to come true exactly like you imagined them. You can still find joy and even happiness by adjusting the circumstances. As my almost 101-year-old neighbor likes to tell me, “There is always a way.”

Please go see *Almost Paris*, which will surely be coming to a theater near you in the future. It is too good not to make it to the top.

Sick at Heart over Stupidity

Dear Aunt Bossy,

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I am so disgusted with the stupid people in our country who elected this maniac to be president. I have marched, protested, and will continue to. I write letters, call my Representatives and Senators. I have devoted my life to change and support any action that results in that. The problem is that I have a difficult time dealing with everyday activities and my sleep has been altered. What do you suggest?

Angry

Dear Angry,

The first thing you should do is always ask yourself if your activity is moving you closer to your goal, which I am assuming is justice and peace. Try to answer that question calmly and honestly without thinking about “the stupid people.” They just get in the way of your thinking.

Certainly writing, calling, and expressing your opinion is a positive action, as long as you stick to facts, which is not getting any easier in our world. Marching feels great and puts you in touch with people who agree with you, but, other than that, doesn’t do anything to change the minds of people who think very differently than you do, so you might want to use that energy to reach people one on one and exhibit your love of humanity and peace with your everyday actions.

For example, I am certain that “Will and Grace” and “Modern Family” and, yes, even Milo, have done more to encourage gay rights than any march. Having a competent doctor of a different color or sex has done more to crack racism and sexism than any lecture from someone who is “open-minded.” Human experience is what changes minds. Nagging, not so much. (At least according to my husband.)

The one thing you should do for yourself is to be sure you interact with people who are “stupid people” and put your political opinions aside to focus on what is good about them, and there is good about them. Putting people in the “stupid people” category hurts you more than it hurts them because it creates hate and tension, which are quite destructive to both your body and your mind, and surely makes it difficult to deal with people and get some sleep.

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When you talk to people whom you feel are utter idiots, try to feel a bit sorry for them because they are obviously not as smart and sophisticated as you are. Realize the only way you can “teach” them is by example. For instance, if you rage about what racists you assume they are, replace that by letting them see you actually reaching out to and including or helping a person of a different race on a regular basis. If you get purple with rage at income inequality, be certain you pay anyone who provides you a service more than required, and that you tip like you just won the lottery.

If you preach love, act loving. And, don’t even think about preaching hate. It will eat you alive. The worst thing you can do is to try and convince others they should be afraid or hate. That is like going to work with the flu.

One more thing, and this comes from the righteous side of my skull: Never forget that you do not know, personally, the President you hate, just like you do not know Hillary or Obama. You certainly do not have to accept or agree with what our political leaders do, but don’t think you can assign their motives. You don’t know. Neither do I.

People are complex creatures, and those who are willing to or want to run something as big as our country, are in a category that the rest of us really can’t understand. We can react to what they do and love or hate it, but loving or hating them is an emotional hobby that leads to either giddy delusion or mental destruction.

Love and, if you must, hate people you know. That is the only thing that will change your life, and change, after all, does begin with you. You get to choose to make that positive or negative, and, trust me, those things blow back into your soul like a strong wind at sea.

If right now you are saying to yourself, “But he is evil and I hate him and everyone else must hate him too” you better get busy saving up for a doctor or a cemetery plot. Feeling like that can’t possibly lead to health, growth or happiness.

Good luck.

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