

The Lighter Side

The Late Night Infomercial Junkie

My wife Fredi, who is also my office manager, best friend and harshest critic, has become a late-night TV infomercial junkie. The condition, initially dismissed by me as transient and non-consequential, has become increasingly serious.

It started innocently enough. One night, while eating a quick supper at the kitchen table, I noticed a very odd-looking, bulky contraption on the counter. I was sure that it had somehow turned up during a frenzy of spring cleaning, hidden in the dark recesses of a neglected attic closet.

“Are you throwing that out?” I innocently asked.

“Are you serious?!?” exclaimed Fredi, “that’s my brand new, all purpose TORPEDO BLENDER!”

My wife went on to explain that she had ordered it at 2 AM in the morning, the previous week, while watching a health-food show on late night television. “Just look at it,” she purred, “it not only dices and slices and blends all of your fruits and vegetables into a quick and easy tasty blend, but also preserves all of the whole grain goodness and nutrients often lost during ordinary processing!”

I asked how much it cost us. “That’s the real beauty of it,” explained Fredi. “For only an initial down payment of \$19.99, and six easy monthly payments of \$19.99, we not only get the TORPEDO BLENDER, but six extra attachments that are good for carrots, celery, and raw fruits, too. And, by ordering immediately, I also got, completely free-of-charge, a six month supply of mixing spoons, straws, and matching drinking cups.”

“You mean to say,” I asked, “we paid \$140 for this?”

“Plus shipping and handling,” muttered Fredi.

Over the next two weeks, we kept getting strange, new shipments to the house, almost on a daily basis. We now own a supply of plastic protective coverings for storing dresses and coats safely in a closet, a two-year supply of healthy, anti-oxidant fish oil supplements, and very uniquely-shaped vacuum cleaner attachments for accessing hard-to-reach areas under beds and behind window treatments.

“Do we actually have a vacuum cleaner?” I asked.

As the shipments of these late-night bargains continue to fill our household, it’s hard not to get caught up in Fredi’s enthusiasm or in the marketing expertise of these late night salesmen.

The other morning, I found myself telling a patient, “You would really benefit from Invisalign orthodontics. And, if you act right now, I will include, at no additional charge, a complimentary Invisalign consultation for your twin sister, free bleaching and whitening, two free refinements, one mid-course correction, and absolutely free of charge, one year’s worth of retainers!”

The patient was overwhelmed by my generosity. “Wow! All that for that one low price?” exclaimed the patient.

I muttered, “Plus shipping and handling.”