

SINGLES/SUSAN BARBIERI

## Three-Month Rebound Usually Follows Relationship



**T**HERE IS a common phenomenon that occurs immediately after the end of a long-term relationship. Anyone who has a wrenching tale of post-relationship love gone bad knows what it is. It's the "three-month rebound."

The three-month rebound happens when you are at your most vulnerable and confused. Feeling emotionally wobbly, you look to steady yourself quickly by latching on to someone. You dive headlong into a transitional love affair, anxiously searching for the equilibrium to which you're accustomed. At first, the relationship is incredibly stimulating. You're ailing, and this new person seems to have healing power. He or she seems like a safe port in the middle of your personal thunderstorm.

It seems that three months is the average life span of the transitional relationship. At the end of three months comes the moment to fish or cut bait, as the saying goes. Too often it's "cut bait" time. After three months, reality sets in and each person can see more clearly. The relationship seems to lack long-term potential. You decide you

need some private time after all.

Or maybe the other person decides to end it. Perhaps she or he was only looking for short-term fun to begin with. When "love" (or, more accurately, "lust") burns like a quick-blazing comet, somebody is bound to get scorched.

In retrospect, you may regard your three-month rebound as an example of temporary lack of judgment or a blip in your personal history you would just as soon forget. At best, you may look at it as a nice little fling that never was destined to be anything but a nice little fling. Either way, there's no sense in mentally flagellating yourself over it.

So you wind up alone. Is that so bad? After experiencing the three-month rebound, you may admit that you could benefit from some time to regroup and become more comfortable as a solo operator. You sense that you'll have more to offer someone when you're less desperate and vulnerable.

Finally, you learn that you are more resilient and more self-reliant than you ever imagined. A Boca Raton, Fla., woman

writes: "We cannot expect another person to give us happiness, we must gain it from our own sense of self. After all, what someone gives, someone can take away," she says. "If each of us derives a sense of well-being from within, nobody can take that away. It's ours to keep." Well put.

Memorize this sentence and believe it: Being alone is better than being in a relationship that's wrong for you.

**DISPATCHES FROM THE HINTERLANDS:** Mating season has arrived in picturesque Doylestown, Ohio (population 3,500), as evidenced by all the dead opossums and rabbits at roadside, writes a single mom with a wry-bread sense of humor who reads this column in the Akron Beacon Journal. She suspects that the poor frenzied critters suffer from "diminished capacity" at this time of year and neglect to exercise due caution in the presence of moving vehicles.

(Write to Singles, The Orlando Sentinel, MP-6, 633 N. Orange Ave., Orlando, Fla. 32801.) Orlando Sentinel

PERSONAL SAFETY/ERIC LACITIS

## Sales of Personal Chemical Mace Are Soaring

**I**F YOU WANT to find out what really concerns America, flip through the cable TV channels, the ones that run those "infomercials," the advertisements pretending to be talk shows.

Running those ads costs millions of dollars of airtime. The companies know very quickly if they've got a product that sells. If that 1-800 number isn't ringing off the hook, the ad is yanked.

All of which means that if you keep seeing a particular infomercial over and over again, it's tapped into our consciousness. I don't think many of us would admit watching this stuff. But you and I know better, don't we?

In recent months you may have noticed a new kind of infomercial, besides the ones about not going bald, losing weight, cashing in on the real-estate boom and taking out

stains with the magic of Didi Seven.

It is the infomercial for Mace. I wouldn't be surprised if the word "Mace" was recognized by 90 percent of Americans, mostly from hearing about it in news stories and word-of-mouth. It is a product that instantly produces an image of a confrontation. This is the first mass-market advertising for the chemical. Previously, it was sold in gun and outdoor shops.

"Unfortunately, personal safety is a serious concern today, but you don't have to feel defenseless ...," the ad says. "Just aim, spray and walk away ... your personal equalizer."

When was the first time you heard of Mace? If you're middle-aged, maybe it was when a cop sprayed you during a Vietnam demonstration. Mace was new back then. If you're younger, in your 20s, maybe it was also in an

encounter with a cop, although the demonstration was probably about a different issue. Times do change. The last time I saw police use Mace was this past fall at a University of Washington football game, as they went after students taking down a goal post.

I was curious how the Mace ad was doing. I called Personal Security Inc., of Bennington, Vt. "Sales are extremely strong. We're talking about selling close to 300,000 last year, and sales this year are running 60 percent over that," said Jim Kardas, the marketing director.

Mace is actually a chemical called chloroacetophenone. It's sprayed in liquid form, in squirts up to a dozen feet long. It doesn't have to hit you in the face. In the chest will do. Within a second or two, it has evaporated enough to cause "profuse and uncontrolled learning, shortness of breath and a painful burning sensation."

The rights to it are owned by an Ohio firm called Def-Tec. It sells Mace only for use in law enforcement, from small canisters to the "fogger" version that looks like a fire extinguisher. Prisons prefer to order the fogger.

Three years ago, Personal Security bought the "civilian" rights to Mace. It believed this was a product whose mass-marketing time had come.

Besides the infomercial, it also put together some magazine ads. You may not have seen those, since they appeared in publications such as "Nursing 89." You place ads where your market is. Nurses do work late shifts.

Not surprisingly, the infomercial for Mace has a lot of testimonials from women, such as:

"My husband and I like to walk, but sometimes he works late. Now that I carry Mace, I

don't worry about walking late."

The infomercial keeps repeating how Mace is "humane." Presumably, women feel more at ease with a humane weapon.

The ads explain that even if you Maced somebody straight in the eye, they wouldn't be permanently hurt.

The ad shows the little canister of Mace attached to a key ring, so it's handy. The commercial shows a demonstration on how to spray it.

The assailant is, of course, a man. He is dressed in dark clothing, wearing wrap-around sunglasses. Squirt, squirt. Run to safety.

As I said, infomercials are good way to find out what concerns America.

We want to keep our hair, and clean out stains, and retire in Hawaii after making a fortune in real estate. And we're calling that 1-800 number for Mace.

Seattle Times



6/NORTHEAST WOMAN

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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