

Dear friends

You should listen carefully when your spouse says something. One evening in January, we were watching a movie. Something happened at the screen, and at the same time, I shifted my position a little. Marisol said something that to me sounded like: "Did you follow?", and I replied: "Yes, of course." To which she said in a very upset voice: "Here, right at my side!? And don't even apologize!". What she really asked was: "Did you fart?" and got the reply: "Yes, of course."

To Oslo, 323 km one way, to deliver ten slices of ham

When Annika went back to Oslo after Christmas, I packed some leftovers from the Christmas food so she would have in Oslo. The things were put in wraps of plastic, except for some things, among them some slices of the Christmas ham, that I put into plastic boxes. Everything was put in a paper bag. Annika's car was away for reparation, so I drove her to Göteborg to pick up her car. After she had got it, I handed over the bag with food, we said goodbye, and went away. She towards Oslo, and I home.

When I came home, I found that the the box with ham was still in the kitchen. I tried to call Annika, without result, so I started considering trying to overtake her (impossible), or go to Oslo to give the ham. I decided to wait for next morning before deciding what to do.

Next morning, I decided not to go to Oslo just to bring ham. Rather, I needed to go to the food store to buy some things. Picked an empty paper bag and looked for my wallet. It was not to be found. A minute later, Annika called from Oslo. She had found my wallet in the bag with food. I had put that there instead of the ham. She said that she had wondered if I made like Josef according to Gen 42:25. I needed the wallet, but sending it by mail is too unsafe, so the only way would be for me to go to Oslo to get it. And then, I could deliver the ham at the same time.

I prepared for departure and entered to car. When I switched the motor on, I noticed that the fuel level was low. Merely 10 liters remained. Now, I had a problem, so I went in again to think. I could not fill fuel, as all my credit cards were in Oslo. I could not buy a ticket by train or bus to Oslo for the same reason. The plane was in Skövde for the annual inspection and service, but perhaps I could get it and fly to Oslo. There was enough fuel in the tanks for flying Skövde - Oslo and back. So I called the service center. "No, the aircraft is not ready for flight. Perhaps in a week or two."

A quick calculation showed that I could possibly reach Oslo with 10 liters, if I could keep the fuel consumption below 0.31 L/10 km (=above 78 miles per gallon), a tough goal in winter when oil is thick, and lubrication in wheels etc is like clay. Well, I packed the ham into the car and went away. Put speed limit to 70 km/h even on the motorway. I guess that other drivers wondered what was happening. The road was not icy, so this could not be the reason. A short time after I passed the boarder to Norway, the warning light for low fuel level lit up. I still had 120 km to go, but it looked like I would do it. Finally, I was at Annika's street, and the car was still running. I went up to her, handed over the ham, got my wallet, and together we went to a nearby gas station and refueled the car.

#Metoo - perhaps

Many persons dislike the security checks at airports. Although, I am happy about them, I also considered them a bit annoying. Not any more. From Marisol, I have learned a clever trick that makes me look forward to screening with some expectation.

Sometimes, it happens that I have forgotten some metal in a pocket when passing the metal detector. Keys or something. Then they make a manual inspection. Sometimes also passengers are randomly chosen for such inspections. A few years ago, there was a man who carried a bomb inside his

underwear, and women have been found with explosives in their bras. Since then, the manual inspections have become much more accurate with touching and feeling in such regions of the body. The difference between this and sexual harassment is merely that one is legal, and the other is not.

This once happened to Marisol. She was taken aside. Usually, people are investigated by security guards of the same sex, so a woman started to check Marisol. Then she said to the woman checking her: "There is a very handsome male guard over there. Couldn't you ask him to do this check instead of you?"

Great! Next time this happens to me, I will check for the prettiest female security guard and ask for being examined by her instead of the guy in front of me. This could really be an extra bonus during the journey.

Sailing adventure

Our boat used to be in the river Norde Älv. Not the best location due to tsunami effect at the river mouth when the wind blows from west, as it usually does. And once when they took the boat out of the water for the winter, they dropped it. Fortunately, nothing was damaged. Obviously, an excellent construction.

We have been fortunate and got a place at Öckerö. An attempt to sail to Öckerö with headwind failed. After three hours, we had covered only one fifth of the distance in the high waves and strong headwind. Going back was a business of 20 minutes.



A couple of weeks later there was a day with perfect wind and I sailed the boat to Öckerö. The trip was excellent, with good wind. It was a day that was neither cold, nor hot, and the two hours at sea were very relaxing. Sailing when it is as best.

Just outside the harbour, I took down the sail and used the electric motor to enter the harbour and go towards my place. Earlier we always had a motor fueled with gasoline. To start that one, I had to do some initial adjustments and then pull a string to start the rotation. Sometimes, it started after one or two attempts.

But often it was like: Prprprprpr, prprprprpr, prprprprpr, prprprprpr, prprprprpr, prprprprpr,..... I used to say that this motor was rather like some equipment at a gym. So we named that kind of exercise, together with some other, "Emrén's gym".

The electric motor never does in that way. Simply turn the handle to "Forward", and the motor starts driving the boat in the desired direction. When I was approaching our place in the crowded harbour, I turned the handle to "Backwards", to stop the boat and avoid the expensive yachts in the harbour,

Nothing happened! The boat continued without any sign of slowing down.

Backwards, max power!

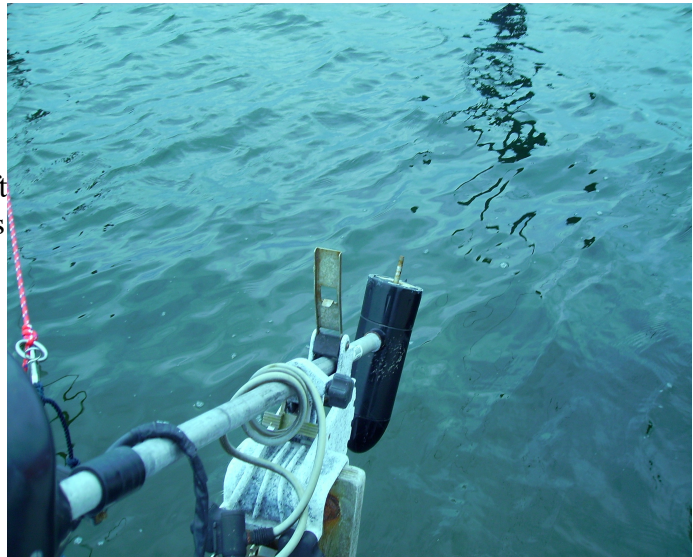
Still nothing happened.

I was approaching the very expensive vessels at good speed. Fortunately, a sailing boat has a very effective rudder, so I could avoid a collision. When the boat stopped, I checked the motor.

I could not see any propeller!

I had lost that important piece of equipment. So I had to row the boat. Being alone in the boat, this is tricky. Normally, one person would steer, and one, or preferably two, persons rowing, one at each side of the boat.

Now, there was no one steering. So I had to do two strokes at one side, go over to the other side, do two strokes there and so on. I had some 30 meters to my place, but the wind was exactly from that direction. So while I moved from one side to the other, the wind caused the boat to drift backwards. I had to work hard during 45 minutes to reach my place. Definitely a hard workout at Emrén's gym.



Finally, I was close enough to get hold of one of the poles to which to tie the boat. When it was securely fastened, and I had got my breath back, I lifted the motor to investigate. And of course, I again found the the propeller was gone. And the empty axis rotated as it should when I turned the handle to give power.

Paris

As you know, we Swedes are known for doing as we are told to. Is there a que, we obediently place ourselves at the end, and keep our place. If the authorities tell us to eat 6-8 slices of bread every day, we do so, even perhaps while grudging. If a sign tells us not to spit on the floor, we do not.

This kind obedience got into action when Marisol and I visited Paris during the summer. The trip started by a flight that was delayed several hours, so we arrived after midnight. (Emrén Airlines would have been faster.) When we finally found the Metro, the last train had already departed. So we continued looking for a hotel at the airport. The first was full, but we got a room at the second. Then it was between 2 and 3 in the night.



Tour Eiffel naturally was on the to-do list. The first attempt failed. When we arrived, and had waited for 45 minutes, we understood that we would have to wait another five hours in 30 C, before we could hope to go up. So we decided to arrive before they opened next day. This worked, and we had to wait less than one hour before we could enter the elevator. Once at the top, we admired the magnificent view. Suddenly, I noticed a sign, and as an obedient Swede, I pointed it out to Marisol, and we obeyed the sign, as every Swede would do.

Cover

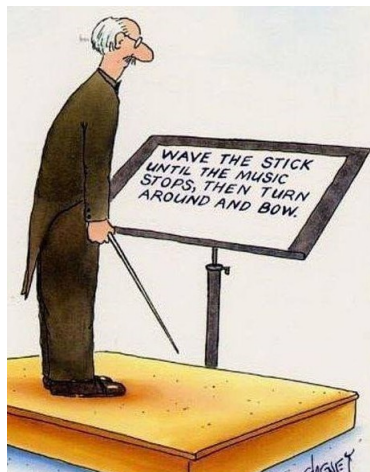
Last year, it became obvious that the cover of our boat had got too much of vintage. There were a few minor holes, and at the end of last summer, it ruptured in two ways. So in November last year I took it to a sail maker's shop, and ordered a copy of the old cover - but without holes and ruptures.

In February, I got an SMS from the sailmaker, that the cover was ready. At that time Marisol was in Sweden, so we went to Öckerö together to pick up the cover. When we arrived to the shop, we parked and stepped out of the car. While we walked the few steps to the door of the shop, something felt unusual with my feet. I looked down, and found that I had been a bit hasty when we left from home. At my right foot I had my sandal as I should. But my left foot still had a slipper.



Conducting

Being involved in music most of my life, mostly in choirs, I have seen numerous conductors. Most of them very skilled. And I have always been a bit curious about how it would be to conduct music.



This year, I got the opportunity, as there would be a one week choir course in Ljungskile at the Swedish West coast. One could be there either to improve singing skills, or to learn conducting a choir. So I took the chance. We were seven in the conductor class, and I was the only one with no knowledge or experience. The other were professional musicians, had been conductors for decades, and most of them were heads of one or more choirs. But everyone was kind to me although most of what I did was mistakes. And the teacher, Reibjörn Carlshamre showed patience like an angel. But gradually, I learned the secret that conductors have hidden during centuries. From the audience as well as from singers and instrumentalists. I have decided to leak the secret. When we stood in front of the choir, during concerts, everyone thought that the paper in front of us was the scores. It was not, as you can see from the picture.

Now, I have found that there is a continued course too, and I will join that next year.

One does not have to wave the stick! At least not if one is Leonard Bernstein, and conducts the filharmonic orchestra of Vienna. In this clip he conducts without even moving the stick. Simply look angry, or happy, raise an eyebrow, give a nod or a smile. <https://youtu.be/kke4SyaP25c>

Finally, Remember that right usually is right - even with feet.

Now, God bless you, and

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Fröhliche Weihnachten und ein gutes neues Jahr!

Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année!

God Jul och Gott Nytt År!

Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo!

Allan Emrén and Marisol del Mazo