

Perfectionist makes life hard for rest of family



abigail van buren

• dear abby

DEAR ABBY: The letter from "Tina in Tennessee" brought back memories from my past. Tina was upset because her husband's son had come to live with them, and his messy bedroom made her angry. She excused herself by saying she was a "perfectionist," waving it like a banner, as though it made her behavior OK.

I, too, was a perfectionist. I made my four children's lives miserable

with my constant nagging and threatening. My crisis came one winter when, in the midst of a snowstorm, I made all of them stand on our windy back porch, strip naked from their wet, cold clothes, and wait until my floor had dried because I had just washed and polished it. It hit me like a ton of bricks!

For years, I had made my entire family miserable with my constant cleaning. I had been known to wake

up in the middle of the night and clean or go outside and do yard work. I always said the clean house was for "them."

The truth was, I didn't like myself. I cleaned house to prove to the world that I was all right.

What really needed cleaning was my SPIRIT, not the house. This may be too long to print, but I wanted to share this milestone in my life — the start of my recovery. — NO LONGER "MOMMY DEAREST" IN CATHEDRAL CITY, CALIF.

DEAR NO LONGER: You were perceptive to realize that you had turned the "virtue" of cleanliness into obsession and compulsion, to the point that it had become abusive to your family. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I, too, am the step-parent of a sloppy child. It used to drive me to distraction, until I realized the only person I could change was myself, and my harping and complaining only made ME the pariah in the household.

Now I close the door to his room and ignore it. When he's grown up and gone, I can change the carpet, paint the walls and "live happily ever after." — MARK IN GARLAND, TEXAS

DEAR MARK: A wise parent (or stepparent) carefully chooses his (or her) battles, because you can't win 'em all.

DEAR ABBY: My philosophy on neatness is that I'll never look back on my life and think, "Thank goodness I did the dishes every day. I'm glad I

spent so much time vacuuming." I will always wish for more time spent with my family and friends, enjoying the things I love.

I would hate for that woman to find herself looking back on her life, regretting a miserable relationship with the boy and his father over dirty clothes and candy wrappers.

She needs to reach a compromise. — NOT SO NEAT IN N.Y.C.

DEAR NOT SO NEAT: Your housekeeping may not win any awards, but you have your priorities in order.

DEAR ABBY: "Tina in Tennessee" should count her blessings. She has a wonderful stepson who is being bounced around like a pingpong ball through no fault of his own.

His father should rejoice in the opportunity to have a relationship with his son.

This is also Tina's chance to have a relationship with the young man. Tell her not to ruin it because of a messy bedroom. Shut the door! — A MOTHER IN MINNEAPOLIS

DEAR MOTHER: Good point. There is so little the boy can control — his bedroom is "his space," and it should not be turned into a battleground.

He should be praised for his strong points and given a little leeway. To quote a reader from Littleton, Colo., "Teens are 'neat' people, and it has nothing to do with the state of their bedrooms."

TUESDAY EVENING										APR. 29, 2003												
	6 pm	6:30	7 pm	7:30	8 pm	8:30	9 pm	9:30	10 pm	10:30		6 pm	6:30	7 pm	7:30	8 pm	8:30	9 pm	9:30	10 pm	10:30	
2	PBS	Manor House	"The Servants Revolt; Tough Love" (N) (L) (G)		No Greater Love (N) (L) (G)		News	Being Served	Charlie Rose (N) (L) (G)													
3	IND	MLB Baseball	Atlanta Braves at Houston Astros. From Minute Maid Park in Houston. (Live) (G)				★ ★ ★ "Most Wanted" (1997, Suspense) (PA) Keenen Ivory Wayans, Jon Voight. (L) (G)															
4	ABC	8 Simple Rules	According to Jim (G)	According to Jim (N)	Less Than Perfect (N)	NYPD Blue "Meet the Grandparents" (N) (G)	News (G)	(-35) Nightline (N) (L) (G)	(-06) Jimmy Kimmel Live Polyphonic Spree. (N) (L) (G)													
5	HBO	(5:45) ★ ★ "Ernest Goes to Jail" (1990) (L) (G)	(-15) ★ ★ "Ernest Scared Stupid" (1991, Comedy) Jim Varney, Eartha Kitt. (L) (G)	(-15) ★ ★ "Stupid" (1991, Comedy) Jim Varney, Eartha Kitt. (L) (G)	Freddie Prince Jr. (L) (G)	★ ★ ★ "Scooby-Doo" (2002, Adventure) Freddie Prince Jr. (L) (G)	News (L) (G)	(-35) Late Show (N) (L) (G)	(-37) Late Show (N) (L) (G)													
7	CBS	JAG "Meltdown" (N) (L) (G)	Guardian "Burton & Ernie" (Part 2 of 2) (D) (V)	Guardian "Burton & Ernie" (Part 2 of 2) (D) (V)	Judging Amy "CSO: Hartford" (N) (L) (G)	News (L) (G)	(-35) Late Show (N) (L) (G)	(-37) Late Show (N) (L) (G)														
8	NBC	NBC's Funniest Outtakes (2) (N) (L) (G)	Frasier (N) (L) (G)	Watching Ellie (N) (L) (G)	Dateline "Madonna" (N)	News (L) (G)	(-35) Tonight Show (N) (L) (G)	(-37) Late Night (N) (L) (G)														
11	TVLND	I Love Lucy I Love Lucy	I Love Lucy	I Love Lucy	I Love Lucy	I Love Lucy	I Love Lucy	I Love Lucy	MacGyver (L) (G)													
12	ESPN	Stanley Cup Playoffs: West Semi. -- Canucks at Wild			Baseball	Sportscenter (Live)	Baseball Tonight (Live)															
13	FOX	American Idol (ITV) Five finalists perform. (G)	24 "Day 2: 4:00 - 5:00AM" (N) (L) (G)	24 "Day 2: 4:00 - 5:00AM" (N) (L) (G)	Fox Report With Shepard Smith (G)	LAPD: Life on the Beat	LAPD: Life on the Beat	Paid Program	Paid Program													
15	MAX	(5:30) ★ ★ "Hollywood Ending" (2002) Woody Allen. PG-13 (L) (G)	★ ★ "Someone Like You" (2001) Ashley Judd. (L) (G)	★ ★ "Someone Like You" (2001) Ashley Judd. (L) (G)	(-15) ★ ★ "Under Siege 2: Dark Territory" (1995, Suspense) Steven Seagal. (L) (G)	(-15) ★ ★ "Under Siege 2: Dark Territory" (1995, Suspense) Steven Seagal. (L) (G)	News (L) (G)	(-35) Tonight Show (N) (L) (G)	(-37) Late Night (N) (L) (G)													
16	TNN	Highlander (L) (G)	Real TV (L) (G)	Real TV (L) (G)	Blind Date	Blind Date	Star Trek: Next Gener.	★ ★ ★ "Rocky" (L) (G)														
17	DISN	Boy Meets World (G)	Smart Guy "Dateline" (G)	Sister, Sister "Even Stevens" (G)	Sister, Sister "Lizzie McGuire" (G)	★ ★ "Blank Check" (1994, Comedy) Brian Bonsall, Karen Duffy, Miguel Ferrer. (L) (G)	★ ★ "Blank Check" (1994, Comedy) Brian Bonsall, Karen Duffy, Miguel Ferrer. (L) (G)															
18	LIFE	Final Justice (N) (L) (G)	"Death in Small Doses" (1994) Richard Thomas. (G)	"Death in Small Doses" (1994) Richard Thomas. (G)	Golden	Golden	Nanny (G)	Nanny (G)														
20	USA	★ ★ "Nurse Betty" (2000) Renee Zellweger. Premiere. (G)	JAG "Capital Crime" (N) (L) (G)	JAG "Capital Crime" (N) (L) (G)	Nashville Star "Duets" (G)	Nashville Star "Duets" (G)	Nash															
21	SHOW	(4:30) "Mr. Destiny" (G)	(-25) ★ ★ "Focus" (2001, Drama) William H. Macy. (L) (G)	(-25) ★ ★ "Focus" (2001, Drama) William H. Macy. (L) (G)	(-15) ★ ★ "Legally Blonde" (2001, Comedy) Reese Witherspoon. (L) (G)	(-15) ★ ★ "Legally Blonde" (2001, Comedy) Reese Witherspoon. (L) (G)	★ ★ "Domestic Disturbance" (2001) (G)															
22	TMC	"Money Talks" (G)	(-45) ★ ★ "Snapshots" (2002, Romance) Reynolds, Carmen Chaplin, Julie Christie. (L) (G)	(-45) ★ ★ "Snapshots" (2002, Romance) Reynolds, Carmen Chaplin, Julie Christie. (L) (G)	★ ★ "Two Ninas" (1999) Cara Buono, Amanda Peet. (L) (G)	★ ★ "Two Ninas" (1999) Cara Buono, Amanda Peet. (L) (G)	★ ★ "Bio-Dome" (1996) Pauly Shore. (L) (G)															
23	MTV	Dismissed	Greatest Video Stars (L) (G)	Greatest Video Stars (L) (G)	Direct Effect (L) (G)	Punk'D (L) (G)	Punk'D (L) (G)	Punk'D (L) (G)	Punk'D (L) (G)													
24	DISC	Salmon: A Dangerous Journey	Ten Million Wildcats Australia's feral cats. (G)	Ten Million Wildcats Australia's feral cats. (G)	FBI Files "Deadly Paradise" (G)	FBI Files "Deadly Paradise" (G)	New Detectives: Forensic Science	New Detectives: Forensic Science														
28	TNT	NBA Basketball Playoffs			NBA Basketball Playoffs: Lakers at Timberwolves	NBA Basketball Playoffs: Lakers at Timberwolves	Inside NBA	Law-Order														
30	FXSP	NASCAR	Pregame	MLB Baseball Cincinnati Reds at Colorado Rockies. (Subject to Blackout)			Rocky Mt. 54321	Rocky Mt. 54321														
32	FAM	★ ★ "Au Pair" (1999) Gregory Harrison. (G)	Who's? (G)	Who's? (G)	700 Club (G)	700 Club (G)	Caroline Rhea Show (N)	Caroline Rhea Show (N)														
33	NBC	News (G)	Ent. Tonight	NBC's Funniest Outtakes	Frasier (N) (L) (G)	Watching Ellie (N) (L) (G)	Dateline "Madonna" (N)	News (G)	(-35) Tonight Show (N) (L) (G)													
34	NICK	SpongeBob	Amanda (L) (G)	Cosby	Cosby	Cheers (L) (G)	Cheers (L) (G)	3's Co. (L) (G)	3's Co. (L) (G)	Cosby	Cosby											
36	A&E	Biography "Patrick Stewart: Make It So" (N) (L) (G)	Cold Case Files Woman's body hidden in a refrigerator. (G)	Cold Case Files Woman's body hidden in a refrigerator. (G)	Third Watch "The Long Guns" (L) (G)	Third Watch "The Long Guns" (L) (G)	Biography "Patrick Stewart: Make It So" (N) (L) (G)															
38	SCIFI	Miracles (N) (L) (G)	★ ★ "Crop Circles: Quest for Truth" (2002) (G)	★ ★ "Crop Circles: Quest for Truth" (2002) (G)	Medical Detectives "Woman's death." (G)	Medical Detectives "Woman's death." (G)	What Were You Thinking? (G)	Prophets: Seers of the Future (G)														
39	TLC	While You Were Out	Home Savvy (G)	Home Savvy (G)	Medical Detectives "Woman's death." (G)	Medical Detectives "Woman's death." (G)	What Were You Thinking? (G)	Prophets: Seers of the Future (G)														
40	FX	24 (L) (G)	Buffy Vampire	Buffy Vampire	★ ★ "True Lies" (1994) Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jamie Lee Curtis. (G)	★ ★ "True Lies" (1994) Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jamie Lee Curtis. (G)																
45	FMC	(-01) ★ ★ "Johnny Dangerously" (1987) (G)	Hollywood	Hollywood	(-03) "The Secret Life of an American Wife" (G)	(-03) "The Secret Life of an American Wife" (G)	"An Unmarried Woman" (G)															
49	EITV	Gimme a Break: THS	Anna	Anna	Price of Fame	Howard S. (L) (G)	Howard S. (L) (G)	Wild On... (L) (G)														
51	TRAV	Thrill Parks	Secrets	Secrets	Secrets (N)	Thrill Parks	Secrets															
53	WB	Friends (L) (G)	Everybody-Raymond	Gilmore Girls "Keg! Max!" (N) (L) (G)	Smallville "Witness" (N) (L) (G)	News (L) (G)	Friends (L) (G)	Will & Grace (L) (G)														
54	ESPN2	Stanley Cup Playoffs			Baseball	Billiards: Nine-Ball Final	Interruption	NHL 2Night	NBA 2Night													
58	HIST	Japanese War Crimes & Trials: Murder-Sun	Hitler and Stalin: Roots of Evil (N)	Hitler and Stalin: Roots of Evil (N)	Modern Marvels "Tunnels of Vietnam" (G)	Modern Marvels "Tunnels of Vietnam" (G)	Ship of Gold (G)	Japanese War Crimes & Trials: Murder-Sun														
59	HLTH	Doctors Diaries (L) (G)	Workout	Bodies	Health Specials (L) (G)	Doctors Diaries (L) (G)	Workout	Bodies														
60	UNIV	Las Vias del Amor	Entre el Amor y el Odio	Entre el Amor y el Odio	Ver Para Creer	P. Impacto	Noticiero	En las Mejores Familias														
62	HGTV	Ground	Landscap	Room	Decorating	House	Curb	Ground	Landscap	Room	Decorating											
99	WGN	★ ★ ★ "Bull Durham" (1988) Kevin Costner. (L) (G)	(-05) MLB Baseball Chicago Cubs at San Francisco Giants. (Live) (L) (G)	(-05) MLB Baseball Chicago Cubs at San Francisco Giants. (Live) (L) (G)																		

WEDNESDAY EVENING										APR. 30, 2003												
	6 pm	6:30	7 pm	7:30	8 pm	8:30	9 pm	9:30	10 pm	10:30		6 pm	6:30	7 pm	7:30	8 pm	8:30	9 pm	9:30	10 pm	10:30	
2	PBS	Manor House	Events are being organized to celebrate the British Empire's colonial success. (N) (L) (G)	National Geographic "Skin" (L) (G)	News	Bless Me, Father	Charlie Rose (N) (L) (G)															
3	IND	Seinfeld (L) (G)	Seinfeld (L) (G)	Ripley's Believe It or Not! (L) (G)	★ ★ ★ "K-9" (1989) (PA) James Belushi. A narcotics agent and a unique police dog join forces. (L) (G)	★ ★ ★ "K-9" (1989) (PA) James Belushi. A narcotics agent and a unique police dog join forces. (L) (G)	Worst-Case Scenario															
4	ABC	My Wife and Kids	George Lopez (N) (L) (G)	Bachelor (N) (L) (G)	(-06) Extreme Makeover (N) (L) (G)	(-06) Extreme Makeover (N) (L) (G)	News (G)	(-35) Nightline (N) (L) (G)	(-06) Jimmy Kimmel Live (N) (L) (G)													
5	HBO	(5:30) ★ ★ "The Mothman Prophecies" (2002) Richard Gere. (L) (G)	(-45) ★ ★ ★ "The Fifth Element" (1997) a woman who may save Earth from disaster. (L) (G)	(-45) ★ ★ ★ "The Fifth Element" (1997) a woman who may save Earth from disaster. (L) (G)	Bruce Willis. A cabbie finds	Bruce Willis. A cabbie finds	Six Feet Under "The Opening" (L) (G)															
7	CBS	Star Search (ITV) (Live)	60 Minutes II (N) (L) (G)	60 Minutes II (N) (L) (G)	48 Hours Investigates (L) (G)	48 Hours Investigates (L) (G)	News (L) (G)	(-35) Late Show (N) (L) (G)	(-37) Late Show (N) (L) (G)													
8	NBC	America's Most Talented Kid (N) (L) (G)	West Wing "Life on Mars" (N) (L) (G)	West Wing "Life on Mars" (N) (L) (G)	Law & Order "Kid Pro Quo" (N) (L) (G)	Law & Order "Kid Pro Quo" (N) (L) (G)	News (G)	(-35) Tonight Show (N) (L) (G)	(-37) Late Night (N) (L) (G)													
11	TVLND	Brady	Hap Days	Sanford	Gilligan	Griffith	Leave	I Love Lucy	Flying Nun	MacGyver "Blind Faith" (N) (L) (G)												
12	ESPN	Stanley Cup Playoffs			Stanley Cup Playoffs: Western Semi. -- Stars at Mighty Ducks	Stanley Cup Playoffs: Western Semi. -- Stars at Mighty Ducks	Sportsctr.															
13	FOX	American Idol A finalist is eliminated. (G)	Bernie Mac "Nut Job" (G)	Wanda at Large (G)	Fox Report With Shepard Smith (G)	Fox Report With Shepard Smith (G)	LAPD: Life on the Beat	LAPD: Life on the Beat	Paid Program	Paid Program												
15	MAX	(5:30) ★ ★ ★ "Virtuosity" (1995) (L) (G)	(-15) Love Thy Brother (L) (G)	★ ★ "A Walk to Remember" (2002, Romance) Shane West. (L) (G)	(-15) ★ ★ "Kissing Jessica Stein" (2001, Comedy) Jennifer Westfeldt, Scott Cohen. (L) (G)	(-15) ★ ★ "Kissing Jessica Stein" (2001, Comedy) Jennifer Westfeldt, Scott Cohen. (L) (G)																
16	TNN	Highlander (L) (G)	Real TV (L) (G)	Real TV (L) (G)	Blind Date	Blind Date	Star Trek: Next Gener.	"Best of the Best" (L) (G)														
17	DISN	Boy Meets World (G)	Smart Guy "Dateline" (G)	Sister, Sister "Even Stevens" (G)	Sister, Sister "Lizzie McGuire" (G)	★ ★ "Blank Check" (1994, Comedy) Brian Bonsall, Karen Duffy, Miguel Ferrer. (L) (G)	★ ★ "Blank Check" (1994, Comedy) Brian Bonsall, Karen Duffy, Miguel Ferrer. (L) (G)															
18	LIFE	Unsolved Mysteries (L) (G)	★ ★ "Road Rage" (1999) Yasmine Bleeth. (G)	★ ★ "Road Rage" (1999) Yasmine Bleeth. (G)	Golden	Golden	Nanny (G)	Nanny (G)														