

Letters continued from p. 35

As a therapist specializing for 12 years in work with remarried couples, I have studied the backgrounds of well over 500 divorced and redivorced adults (no twins). Over 80 percent of them report a significantly dysfunctional childhood, most involving parental addictions of some sort. Such childhoods usually involve unintentional care-giver abuse or neglect, or both, and produce shame, guilt, fear of abandonment, distrust, and other symptoms in the child.

As adults, these people unerringly pick each other as marital partners again and again, unless they stop denying their early trauma.

Addictions serve to numb intrapsychic pain, which I believe is frequently inherited and — without parental recovery — often passed on.

I've read that some persons may have a genetic predisposition to *addiction*, rather than just to alcoholism. If so, the interactive inherited "characteristics" promoting divorce are (1) benign ignorance and denial of family dysfunction; (2) parental shame and associated feelings; and (3) "addictive" genes.

Peter K. Gerlach
Oak Park, Ill.

On cosmic bubble sculptures

The honeycomb that Wang is investigating ("Honeycomb found in galaxy nearest us," SN: 11/21/92, p.342) is indeed beautiful, but is its formation so mysterious that it requires exotic jets and stellar winds for explanation?

A simpler explanation might involve a supernova that triggered the formation of similar-sized stars in that area. A second supernova cleared out the bubble on which the star

cluster borders, and the radiation and heated gas from that explosion triggered the supernova of the "20-odd bubbles that form the honeycomb."

With so many stars up there, such a formation doesn't seem unlikely.

James David Jones
Sewanee, Tenn.

The researcher believes that the highly uniform, spherical shape of the bubbles might require a special mechanism.

— R. Cowen

Stress and the potbellied carp

The mechanism by which "Carp grow potbellies to foil predatory fish" (SN: 11/21/92, p.341) is suggested by Havel to be a response to a chemical secreted by pike.

Data from other vertebrates, including humans, suggest that stress initiates a specific response from the body that involves the nervous and endocrine systems. Being cautiously anthropomorphic, I would suggest that the carp's role in the predator-prey relationship induces a level of stress which precipitates nervous and endocrine changes that are adaptive over the short term — a potbelly.

W. William Hughes

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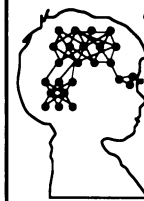
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