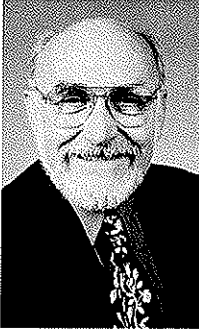


Commentary The primrose plays at night



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[The primrose plays at night](#) Bill Hall The Lewiston Tribune | [0 comments](#)

I hesitate to say this, but I am an evening primrose. I bloom at night.

My wife is a daylily. She blooms at dawn.

She is early to bed, off to Sleepyland at mid-evening, marching to the drum of drowsy chickens.

I awake slowly each morning, still stunned by sleep, my brain at a low ebb. Words are hard to remember.

My wife is a day person. Her time tendencies run at odds to mine. She begins her day popping out of bed wide awake, immediately in full command of her brain with the words pouring out of her at a peppy pace, confusing a groggy husband still running on half a brain.

She's up and about two or three hours ahead of me. And when I do rise, she comes at me, hungry for conversation, asking me as I try to regain consciousness what I think are the principal steps required to bring peace to the world.

I look at her, wondering who that woman is asking me questions, what language she is speaking and why she is helping me make the bed.

My best hours are at the end of the evening, from around 9 to midnight - when she is either fast asleep or starting to look stunned and almost criminally bored by my fast-flowing recommendations for peace in the world. She is having trouble remembering words like dog and house and beans.

Like many couples, we both have our stupid hours and our episodes of smarts - but at opposite ends of the day. However, in a strange way, that works. She is our brain early in the day and I am that noble organ at night.

Ordinarily, a Western manly man like me wouldn't begin a newspaper column by comparing himself to an evening primrose, a deceptively delicate little pink flower. But that flower is tougher than you may know, an alley weed that will thrive in sorry soil without much to drink. Best of all, the evening primrose and daylilies are perfect symbols for night people and day people.

The evening primrose is one of those flowers that keeps its petals folded by day and then opens them at dusk. Even more remarkable, they open their blossoms with astonishing quickness. If you visit them on YouTube, you will find several videos showing - in real time - how they snap instantly open before your eyes.

The primrose and I don't really get moving until evening. But when we do, we snap fully awake and it's suddenly showtime.

Daylilies prefer the daytime spotlight. They adore the sun and become beautiful because the sun adores them.

The evening primrose takes advantage of night life - depending on moths and bats to help pollinate the flower.

The daylily and day people are energized by the heat and the light of the sun - not to mention the presence of pollen-distributing bees.

A world in which different creatures sleep at different times tends to help us share the limited space of a crowded globe. Imagine the chaos if everyone in New York City slept and worked at the same hours of the day. The subways would be clogged. The supply of hot dogs would be overwhelmed.

(And then there are the sloths, those inert creatures who just hang all their lives from tree limbs, sleeping 20 hours of each 24. What is the point of an animal like that? What a waste of flesh and fur.)

So how did it happen that I am an evening bloomer while my wife flowers beautifully during the day?

I suspect there was once a time when every cave contained some specialization. Somebody during those times had to keep watch all night at the mouth of the cave and keep the fire fed. Over countless generations, those genes became the natural source of night people.

The daytime hunters and gatherers fed the cave people on night watch and became the origin of day people.

You day people have fed us all these years. And we night people have saved you from the dark forces of the night.

We should learn to appreciate each other, expressing our mutual gratitude and affection late in the day and just before dusk.

But don't give day people an evening primrose. They'll never stay awake long enough to see its instant blooms unfurled.

Hall may be contacted at wilberth@cablone.net or at 1012 Prospect Ave., Lewiston, ID 83501.