

Spit like a Baseball Player

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You're never too young, too cute or too feminine to learn to spit like a baseball player.

Life is a complex, disorganized mess and I'm doing my best to try to bring order and balance to a chaotic universe. Daughters, for instance.

I am the father of three daughters and two sons. Regarding daughters, it's not enough that they have tea parties for their little stuffed animals or that they know how to patch a sucking chest wound, in the midst of incoming automatic weapons fire. That's all girl stuff. And being a good cook? Pizza and chicken wings practically grow on trees. They're a phone call away, so forget that.

What a girl needs in order to attract a good husband are two things. They need to be able to split firewood and spit like a baseball player. Oh, and they also need to know sports stats and be good at fantasy football. So that's three things. Or four. Whatever.

When my daughter, Sunhwa, was 17, there wasn't much she couldn't do. She home-schooled and got a job washing hair in a salon. She gets good tips and always has money. Sometimes uses some of it to buy her father chicken wings. She's good with priorities that way.

I taught her how to split firewood.

For you daughters out there, the trick is to hit the log in the very same place whack after whack. This "fatigues" the wood, causes internal disunity within the log and eventually causes it to split. First a little, and then wide open. Sunhwa has been chopping wood with me for several years and is better at it than any of our other kids, with the exception of David who has sheer muscle going for him. Hwa is patient, she is willing to work at it and pay the dues until the log surrenders.

Recently we chopped wood and I taught her how to spit like a baseball player. I told her, "I can always find you a nice husband at gunpoint, but if you want to win his heart you need to know how to spit like a baseball player." Being able to do this completes the atmosphere, rounds out the whole package of the wood chopping experience. It takes some time to learn how to pull all that saliva together and hock a loogie the right way.

I had to remind her that giggling ruins it.

After we had been at it a while, Taeko the Wife came out to watch us chop. Hwa put on the big leather work gloves, grabbed the wood maul, cleared her throat, brought up the stuff and jettisoned a glorious wad. Then she stepped up and hit the log with a sharp, satisfying whack, sending two chunks of wood flying across the yard in opposite directions.

Taeko said, "Oh my God!" She turned and quickly walked back to the house.

"Honey," I called after her. "Want me to teach you how to spit like a baseball player?"

"No thank you," she said.