

Test Driving *Instead*

by Michelle E. Jarvie

I consider myself an adventurous person. So, when looking through the usual feminine supplies found at the store, I was shocked to see a box that promised an alternative to tampons that works for up to 12 hours. The product is appropriately named "Instead." I decided to buy it and test drive this product through a whole period.

An *Instead* is basically a disposable Keeper Cup. It is composed of a pink rubber ring that sits underneath your cervix, with a clear plastic baggie that hangs down and catches all your menstrual fluid. Don't worry about how it stays there. Your vagina contracts naturally, and once inserted properly, the vagina constricts, forcing it up against your cervix.

Insertion was the big intimidating factor for me. I have had friends shock me with stories of diaphragms flying across the room like Frisbees during attempts to insert them. So, I was terrified with visions of the *Instead* jumping out of my hands and suction-cupping onto my bathroom light. Fortunately, the package provides great insertion directions, and the *Instead* really inserts much better than a tampon does. It slides in easier, with much less resistance, especially on those low flow days.

Instead should get the highest of all performance ratings, over tampons and

pads. This thing stayed in place and was much more comfortable than tampons. Additionally, it can hold a **lot** more fluid than either, and can go, on average, twice as many hours as a tampon before needing change-out. Because it worked with my vaginal muscles, and not against them, the *Instead* didn't make my cramps worse, like tampons sometimes do. However, on my heaviest day, I did notice a sensitivity of my cervix, which made me insanely irritable that day. I took a 12-hour rest from the *Instead*, switching to something else, and was fine to use it again after that.

Removal is the major drawback of this product. There is a definite knack to it and it took me until the last day of my period to be able to remove a blood filled baggie from my vagina without spilling it everywhere. To be honest, if I hadn't promised myself I'd test drive this thing for one whole period, I would have quit. On the bright side, I am infamously uncoordinated, and if I can master the special skills required for neatly changing-out an *Instead*, any girl can. A final happy side effect of this test drive is that I have developed a deeper relationship with my cervix.

Overall, I recommend *Instead*. Just make sure you change-out at home until you've mastered (or is that mistressed?) it.

continued from front side

A Rush to Language

absurd idea in that feminism's many battles often focus around questioning and changing cultural traditions. This calling for change is what I suspect Limbaugh claims as a re-emerging third Reich.

The troubling aspect of the term "feminazi" is this insidious connection to Nazi movements. No feminist philosophies—not even those that work on the extreme margins of feminism—share any attributes of Nazism. Feminists do not wish for the extermination of lives or of individual rights. Feminists do not strive to create castes of undesirables. Feminists do not demand the public destruction of texts. Feminists do not advocate Stalinist purges. **Feminists do offer criticisms of what might be perceived as the status quo**—which is what Limbaugh claims to do—but this criticism does not necessarily lead to "othering."

What Rush wishes to illicit by using a term such as "feminazi" is fear. If he can demonize a movement that challenges his ideology

in intelligent and productive ways, then he can cast that demon out by turning it into a boon of all that is un-American.

To be as fair to Limbaugh as he is to feminism, I'll claim that he is a talky version of Pol Pot. He has no genuine interest in dissent or in differing opinions. His goal is to scare people into not challenging what is supposedly given, and he thrives on herding people into his own cells of "undesirables" for verbal purification.

Language is not neutral, and it is rarely, perhaps never, pure. Language has a multitude of external effects: violent, loving, funny, offensive, boring, didactic, or outrageous. We often do not have control over linguistic effects on the world around us. Although utterances may be ephemeral, the effects often are not. Maybe Rush's recent brush with narcotics (I like to think of him now as OxyContin Rush) will offer him an intervention into his own practices and language. And maybe all of us can learn to be clearer and more careful language users.

Eating a Tangerine: A Review of Thich Nhat Hanh's *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, translated by Mobi Ho Beacon Press (1987)

review & photo by Raka Bandyo

One might ask what is meditation and mindfulness? What does mindfulness really have to do with my body? What difference does it make if I am washing my dishes so that I can get on to the next task, or if I realize the feel of the warm water rushing over my skin? How can observation of the emerging clean surface of my dirty dish help my body? What does my body have to do with peace for humanity? What does eating a tangerine have to do with mindfulness? Why when I am eating should I silence my thoughts? What is the proper way to eat a tangerine?

I must admit that I have not put much thought into the devouring of one of my favorite fruits, not until I read the miracles of mindfulness. Thich Nhat Hanh, whom Martin Luther King, Jr. nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, awakens the passion and senses of the body to our every interaction. He reminds us that there is much to appreciate in the simple task of eating—the smell of orange inspiring salivation, the various textures, chewing each piece until it dissolves in our mouth and its nourishment is spread throughout our body. Each bite deserves our complete attention. "A tangerine has sections. If you can eat just one section, you can probably eat the entire tangerine. But if you cannot eat a single section, you cannot eat the tangerine."

Each moment we are awake and aware we have the opportunity to reach peacefulness for humanity and ourselves. In the *Miracle of Mindfulness*, Nhat Hanh reminds us about the importance of each action and interaction. He challenges us to take joy in each little moment, pay attention to each second passing, treat our own body and self as a sacred temple. He offers insight into the practice of mindfulness in our everyday, and he teaches compassion and understanding of self and of others. He proves that when we can treat ourselves properly, when we are conscious of our breathing, when we find focus in each of our tasks, it is then that we have more to offer others. His book describes a path each of us can take that turns away from anger, disease, and suffering and that starts with purification of self.

The small mindful moments that I have spent reading this book have relaxed me. It is a lucid introduction to wisdom. The language is kind and gentle, the stories short and enlightening, and the practices simple. Through the reading of this book I feel like I have learned how to slow time and enjoy its passing. The words I could and should read over and over again. His daily practices and meditations, I pray will be incorporated into every person's life beginning with my own.



Resources

Barbara Kettle Gundlach Shelter	Legal Services of Northern Michigan
..... 337-5623 482-3908
domestic violence shelter; 24-hour crisis line	Office of Student Affairs.....
Career Counseling..... 487-2313 487-2212; 487-2465
Counseling Services..... 487-2538	Office of Residence Life..... 487-3404
Dial HELP..... 482-4357	On-campus emergencies..... 123
Crisis intervention: a gentle, helpful voice,	Society of Intellectual Sisters (SIS)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week	http://www.sos.mtu.edu/sis/
Employee Assistance Program 482-2299	Promoting sisterhood primarily amongst
Houghton Community Health Center	African-American women and scholarship
..... 483-1860	among members
Keweenaw Pride..... pride@mtu.edu	Society of Women Engineers
an MTU group for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,	mmsasucc@mtu.edu
Transgendered or Questioning Students, Staff,	Western UP District Health Department ...
Faculty, Community Members, Friends, and 482-7382
Allies	

ANNOUNCEMENT:

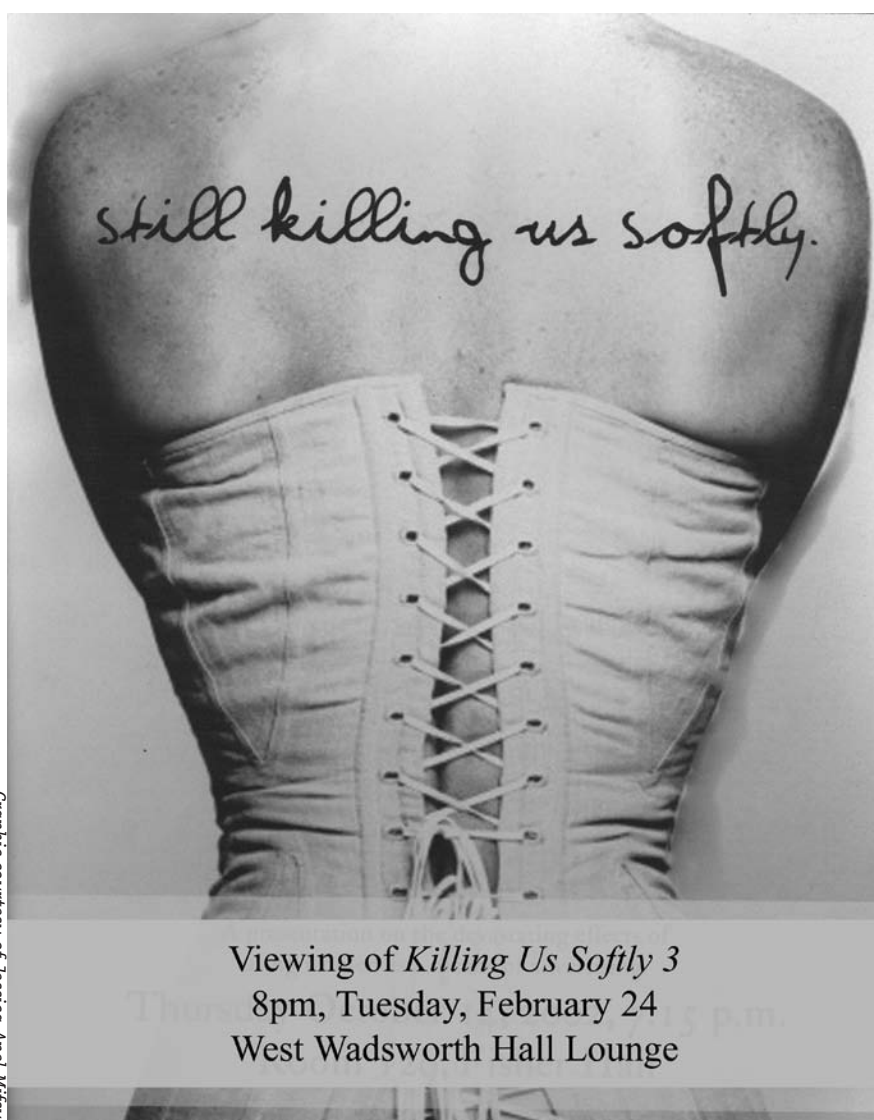
On February 24, 2004, at 8pm in the West Wadsworth Hall Lounge (main floor), there will be a viewing of Jean Kilbourne's "Killing Us Softly 3" followed by a discussion about the video.

The Media Education Foundation has said, "Jean Kilbourne's pioneering work helped develop and popularize the study of gender representation in advertising. Her award-winning *Killing Us Softly* films have influenced millions of college and high school students across two generations and on an international scale. In this important new film, Kilbourne reviews if and how the image of women in advertising has changed over the last 20 years. With wit and warmth, **Kilbourne uses over 160 ads and TV commercials to critique advertising's image of women.** By fostering creative and productive dialogue, she invites viewers to look at familiar images in a new way, which moves and empowers them to take action."

THANK YOU to the CCLI for help on this issue.

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CORRECTION: In last month's issue we misspelled scientist Azadeh Tabazadeh's name, which a smart reader caught for us, and for which we most humbly apologize. Thank you. —tbt



Graphic courtesy of Jessica Apel-Mijstus

Viewing of *Killing Us Softly 3*
8pm, Tuesday, February 24
West Wadsworth Hall Lounge