

Put Me in, Coach

*By Dennis Payton Knight*

When it comes down to it, there is no substitute for the substitutes ready to fill in in an emergency, and often the substitute turns out better than the real thing. Lemonade substitutes well for water, or even better, ice cream instead of milk in my coffee.

An accomplished cook doesn't blink an eye when she discovers an ingredient is missing, even while up to her elbows in the ingredients she has already poured in the bowl. For instance, according to AllRecipes.com, half a banana and a half teaspoon of baking powder will replace a whole egg. If you replace shortening with butter, the cows will feel more important and your cookies will be even better. Applesauce will substitute for an equal amount of vegetable oil in a baking recipe, but it's lousy for popping corn.

If you are missing a screwdriver, heat and soften the case of an old plastic pen, then insert it into the screw head and hold it there until it hardens. If you need to perform surgery on your iPod, don't hack and mar it with a screw driver, use a guitar pick or expired credit card. I've also heard nail clippers make good wire cutters.

In the bathroom, baking soda makes great toothpaste and you can use it as a shampoo, too. To condition hair use egg yolk and olive oil. For hair gel, make a thin mix of gelatin. But only use Knox gelatin, as Jell-O will make you feel fruity and strangely hungry for bananas.

People substitute for other people frequently, sometimes on a temporary basis, but more often permanently. At the top in America, the substitute in waiting is the Vice President. In royal circles princesses and princes are the substitutes sitting on the bench. In the Army colonels are ready to step in for generals, and it goes all through the chain of command down to privates for corporals.

I should not admit this, but as a school boy I too often celebrated a substitute teacher as a welcome relief when I hadn't done my homework or even cracked the book the night before. Substitute teachers are even better than the real thing because they seldom read the lesson plan and they don't come cocked and loaded with pop quizzes.

Now to the important stuff. The Denver Broncos would not have gone to and won the Super Bowl in 2016 if it hadn't been for a substitute quarterback running in to win one game and several more, keeping the team in contention. When he faltered, waiting on the bench was the fellow he had replaced, coming back in and leading the team to the championship. Hooray for substitutions! But just two weeks later substitute number one has moved to another team and substitute number two, the guy who started out as starter number one, has retired. Now our beloved Broncos are looking for substitutes for both of them. Put me in, Coach.