

Who's So Helpless Now?

I heard a popular talk show host make the assertion that humans are the most helpless of mammals at birth. While that sounds good on its surface, he's full of mammalian excrement.

Most helpless? How about mouse and rat babies, which come out of the mother without fully developed eyes? They don't finish developing for at least another week. Or, since marsupials are mammals after all, kangaroo newborns, which emerge as "preemies" at birth, crawl to the teat, latch on and finish developing in the pouch.

Let's look at a non-mammalian species—birds. Baby birds leave the mother's body as an egg! What's more helpless than an egg, for Pete's sake! Even when they hatch, the chicks are naked, with no eye development.

About the only mammals that are not as helpless at birth are the plains/savannah mammals. Why's that? The herd is *always* on the move, thus newborns have to move with it. Therefore, their offspring experience a form of "delayed gestation," developing enough to allow them to get up on shaky legs and catch up with the herd. In comparison with the adults, they rank among the largest newborns in the mammalian world. Otherwise, they, too, need to get sustenance from the mother, just like any other mammal.

Like many people, whatever the subject, this talk show host fell victim to the "too broad statement" syndrome. Whatever the subject, you must analyze just what the speaker, or writer, is promulgating. Whatever the reason—ignorance, lack of information, or just plain deception—we, the audience **MUST** analyze what we are hearing/reading.

Try using the above suggestion the next time you listen to a talk show, the news, or any other program. Does it pass the veracity test? Even if you don't know for sure, if it sounds too pat, or too hinky, it probably is. Check out the facts. This applies if the subject is climate change, gun control, economics, politics, evolution ... *anything*. In this day of fast and accessible information, courtesy of the Internet and all means of electronic media and devices, to be an easily fooled dupe is inexcusable.

A wise man once said, "If we don't stand for something, we'll fall for anything." Though it technically doesn't apply to the above situation perfectly, we need to be sure we have our personal opinion "ducks" lined up before we accept what we hear, or attempt to refute it. Ronald Reagan said, "Trust, but verify." As far as I'm concerned, it's a good way to operate.

Think about it.