

## REAL SWINGERS .

Vivian Woodruff

(1) By spending many fair-weathered afternoons at various parks in St. Louis County, I have observed that we swingers can be grouped into three main categories: the soarers, the twist and turners, and the crooked curvers. These three types of swingers have a variety of qualities which contribute to the uniqueness of each group and help one to recognize the three specific classes.

(2) The soarers are always the group with suntans, good muscle tone, and shiny white teeth. They like to swing as high as possible, for this gives them a sense of power and control. No soarer would begin to think of allowing a companion to give him a push to get started. He enjoys the trial of getting to great heights by his own physical strength. A soarer feels he has accomplished something when he surpasses the other swingers. The physical fitness that this hard-working swinger achieves is important to him. He believes that a strong body is as important as a strong mind. He approaches the park swing to accomplish something. He is no lazy swinger, out to dillydally back and forth. He mounts the swing, grits his pearly whites, and starts his strong legs pumping.

(3) Frank, my brother, is a soarer. Trying to swing higher and higher, he puts all his energy into the task. With a look of triumph, he rises above the other swingers. Still, he continues pumping, flexing his calves and straining onward. For him, swinging is manual labor, requiring strength and stamina. He is the first one to achieve the widest arc

and the last one to come to rest.

(4) The twist and turners are almost the complete opposite of the soarers. A twist and turner finds swinging a relaxing and enjoyable activity. He plops into a "comfy" sling-type swing and sighs a deep sigh of contentment. He twists round and round, winding the two chains together until they are tightly bound. He then picks up his feet and lets the chains spin themselves back in the opposite direction. Gazing at the blue sky and puffy white clouds, the twist and turner lets the hours pass by. He shuffles his feet in the dust underneath the swing, smiles dreamy smiles, and thinks pleasant thoughts. He does not consider swinging a strenuous exercise, but rather a type of lounging. No muscle power or endurance is necessary to qualify as a twist and turner.

(5) My friend Kari Henkelmann, who is a twist and turner, would never dream of swinging more than three feet above ground level. She seems to have a phobia of reaching the sky if she pumps too hard. She is afraid to swing above the lowest three branches. She would rather stay near the earth where she has no chance of falling off the swing. She can close her eyes and let the sun warm her upturned face without the fear of falling. Swinging, to her, is something that eases tension and relaxes the body as well as the mind.

(6) The crooked curvers are my favorite bunch of swingers, probably because that is the category into which I fit. We crooked curvers have one unique characteristic that sets us apart: no matter how often we try, we cannot swing in a straight back and forth motion. The swing seems to have a mind of its own, determined to bang into the supporting poles of the swing set. We are never able to pull evenly with both arms or pump evenly with both legs. One leg gets ahead of the other, and the slower one never seems able to

catch up. The swing rotates in circles or swings from side to side, never reaching those perfect arc-movements that come so easily to other swings.

(7) I have tried many times to correct my own curving by keeping my legs parallel, not leaning too far back, and by having someone else push me. Nothing works. I feel like an oversized magnet, attracted towards the poles and the other swingers, destined to smash into them. My body acts like a boomerang, always going back to the same pole or person. All I can do is smile sheepishly after the collision and apologize for upsetting someone's swing or banging into a pole. But, being the dedicated swinger I am, I continue trying.

(8) Whether one is a soarer, twist and turner, or crooked curver, an afternoon at the park is not complete for a real swinger unless some of that time is spent on a swing.