



I don't know why the Realsilk company died. It may have been from producing a product that was just too good. If so, what an ironic twist that would be.

We all have heard of planned obsolescence, and how merchandise is getting shoddier. We all like to think that we would go out of our way to support a company that put out a good, no-nonsense, high quality product.

But, if that's true, why did Realsilk die? About 16 or 17 years ago my mother gave me six pair of socks for Christmas. At first, I thought they were the most mundane kind of gift, like the tie or the after-shave lotion that defines you as over 35 and male, and which you never use.

BUT I LEARNED to appreciate the real quality of the gift. I had six pairs. They became old friends. I wore them. I washed them. I wore them again. Again and again I wore and washed them. And they did not wear out.

I couldn't wear holes in the heels. I simply could not wear them out. After eight or 10 years, I lost a couple, so I decided to buy some more.

It was hard to locate the salesman after so many years, but I finally found him and ordered some socks. And sure enough they wore ... and wore .. and wore.

SO THE OTHER day, for the third time in over a decade and a half, I wanted more socks.

But the Realsilk Hosiery Company, of Realsilk Square, Indianapolis, Indiana is gone.

Shoddy ought to die. Cheap and shabby ought to die. Instead they flourish.

Gouging oil companies and cereal companies who use cartoon characters to rot children's teeth are the kind of parasites who deserve to go out of business.

BUT NOT REALSILK. Not a company that made a product that was the very best that could be made, and sold it for a price that at the same time was high and completely reasonable.

The death of Realsilk is a lesson. It may tell you why automobiles wear out, and constantly need repair. It may tell you why you can't buy a camera and have it last your lifetime.

When you hear someone say, "They don't make widgets the way they used to" stop and think.

HE MAY be right.

It is my sad fate to have lived long enough to be able to say "They don't make men's socks the way they used to."

Damn!

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