

RUSTY LUCAS
P.O. Box 422
SANDUSKY, OHIO 44871-0422

February 22, 2004

St. John's Bay
c/o JCPenney Company, Inc.
6501 Legacy Drive
Plano, Texas 75024

Dear St. John's Bay:

I have a coat made by your company that I bought at J.C. Penney's a few years ago. It is my most favorite winter coat that I have ever had. But earlier this winter the zipper broke on it. This is the kind of zipper that is a double zip -- the upper zipper slider goes up and zips it all shut, and then the lower zipper slider is there to unzip it back up from the bottom to provide leg room for when I sit down or get into the car.

Now, the zipper itself didn't break. What happened is that the fabric that connects the edge of the coat material to the long skinny guide piece at the bottom of the zipper came loose, so now the upper zipper slider will not catch onto the zipper teeth and my coat will not zip up at all.

This wouldn't be a problem, but for some things that happened to me years ago as a child. You see, I was the butt of many jokes as a child. I was always on the receiving end of wedgies and having my pants pulled down around my ankles in school. It got to the point where I would just leave my pants unzipped all the time to make it easier on them and less painful for me. (It really hurts to have your blue jeans yanked down without first being unzipped). I used to wear long shirts that I left untucked to cover up my frontal area to disguise the fact that my pants were unzipped. I also often wore break away suspenders to keep my pants up, but to avoid the painful yanking them down.

After a while, they stopped doing those things to me because it wasn't fun for them anymore I guess. But it still took me close to 15 years to cure myself of this problem of not zipping up. I am happy to say that I have pretty much been able to zip up my pants for the past 4 or 5 years. It took a lot of counseling and conditioning to get to this point.

But you can see my dilemma! Now I am unable to zip up my St. John's Bay coat because of the problem I mentioned at the very beginning. I just got the coat about two winters ago, and I have not abused the zipper, but the fabric frayed and I don't know what to do about it. I am afraid that I will fall back into my old habits and undo years of therapy!

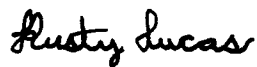
See, the coat also has four small patches of velcro on the edges that act as a double fastener when used in conjunction with the zipper -- one at the very top and one at the very bottom and then two more at my chest and belly. I have been using that to close my coat up this winter, but that is a lot like wearing long shirts and breakaway suspenders. It only masks the real problem.

Can you help me at all? Can you fix my coat? I do not want to have to buy a new one, because I really like this coat and it is still in very fine shape except for the bottom of the zipper. I got it on sale at J.C. Penney's but it was still almost \$100.00. Please let me know where I can mail my coat to get the zipper fixed.

I have tried journaling about my problem like I used to do in therapy, but I really am afraid that it will not help. You see, when I was leaving my pants unzipped on purpose, I still had working zippers that I COULD zip up during moments of clarity. So that was a key part in breaking myself from the condition I had. But in THIS situation, even when I WANT to zip up the coat, I am unable to. That really isn't good for me. So please let me know if you can help me in any way. I do not want to have to go back to intensive counseling if I can avoid it.

By the way, are you named after St. John the Baptist, or St. John the Apostle, or St. John Bosco? I have a bet with a few friends and I stand to make out quite well if you supply me with the right answer. (I know that St. John Bosco worked as a tailor and shoemaker for part of his life, so HE is my choice).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rusty Lucas".

Rusty Lucas

p.s. Do you have any free promotional baseball caps with the St. John's Bay logo on them that are free? I decided that I should start wearing baseball caps in the summertime when it is hot out and I would like to have a summer hat that counter-balances my winter coat.