

Why does alcohol affect an

valuable questions and answers" in *The Athenian Mercury Oracle*, printed in 1703: "Athenian Mercury"

in 1703:

Week One
Brain

Q: Why is thunder more terrible in the night time?

A: In the dead of night, noises are rendered more distinct and consequently more terrible by the universal stillness everywhere else.

Q: In what space of time do you think the whole mass of blood circulates through the body!

A: 'Tis probable in much shorter time than many have imagined... It will be circulated six or seven times over through the heart in the space of an hour.

Q: My father had a dog, which he kept a great many years, in which time I had two brothers and one sister that died. And it was observed that this dog—always the day before they died—went about a hundred yards from the house and laid his nose towards the church where they were all buried, and howled in a strange, hideous manner for an hour or more at a time. And when my father died, he did the same. Now it seems as if this dog had some prophetic, or what to call it, knowledge in these matters.

A: We can't tell you what to make of hundreds of such instances as these, some of which we ourselves are assured are true. All we can say is, that there must be something in it not natural, since what power in nature has a dog more than any other creature to foresee (or rather foresmell) such accidents?

Q: If I [am thinking of committing] any great and enormous crime and sin (as adultery), but do not personally and actually commit it, am I guilty of the crime and sin?

A: Though our thoughts generally proceed from the habit of our

minds, upon which account we are the more guilty if they are disorderly, yet our inclinations likewise having great dependance on the temperament of our bodies, a bare disposition is much less culpable than an act; but where... there wants nothing but an opportunity to complete it, the crime is the same in the sight of God Almighty.

Q: Is it proper for women to be learned?

A: All grant that they may have some learning, but the question is of what sort, and to what degree? Some indeed think they have learned enough if they can distinguish between their husband's breeches and another man's... Others think they may pardonably enough read, but by no means be trifled with writing. Others again, that they ought neither to write nor read. A degree yet higher are those who would have them read plays, novels, and romances—with perhaps a little history, but by all means terminating their studies there, and not letting them meddle with philosophy... because it takes them off from their domestic affairs and because it generally fills them of themselves ... 'tis a weakness common to our own sex as well as theirs... We see no reason why women should not be learned now. For if we have seen one lady gone mad with learning... there are a hundred men could be named, whom the same cause has rendered fit for bedlam.

Q: What is the cause of the winds, and whence do they come, and whither do they go?

A: We read that the heathens pictured Aeolus, the God of Wind, standing at the mouth of a cave, having a linen garment girt around him and a Smith bellows under his feet.

Q: Why does leaning on the elbow and compressing the external corner of the right eye cause objects to appear duplicated?

A: The reason why objects are seen double ... is from an alteration of the plain. When the plain is double, it receives a double picture, just so the eye, if anyone dares venture to compress it so violently, will be raised up on a ridge and make two plains, and consequently paint two images on the retina, or optic nerve.

Q: If the light of the moon is borrowed from the sun, why are they so differing in complexion?

A: Sir, we beg your pardon, if we tell you, your curiosity might easily have been satisfied by almost anybody else, for everyone that has but a very little knowledge of nature, and the system of the world can tell you, that the contrary question might with the same reason have been demanded, why the light of the sun and moon are so like in complexion, the vast distance betwixt them, and the inaptitude of the moon for reflection of light, being a gross earthy body, would have been an answer to the last, had the moon been made of a very fine polished hard metal, the reflection of the sun's light from it would have been too glorious and bright for the eye to have beheld it, and that it so proper for reflection as it is, may answer yours.

Q: Dancing, is it lawful?

A: Dancing seems in some sort *natural*: It's difficult not to leap for joy and the whole body seems almost necessarily to follow the motion of the spirits and blood ... this natural way of expelling mirth, which is also a healthful exercise to the body.

Q: What is anger?

A: Anger is a passion of the irascible appetite caused by apprehension of a present evil, which may be repelled, but with some difficulty.

Q: Why don't moon beams convey warmth as the sun beams do?

A: From these reasons, as we imagine: The first is, the great distance the moon is from us, and consequently the rays of the sun are reflected very weakly: No doubt but were we upon the moon, we should find the rays reflect from it all around its atmosphere as the rays of the sun falling on the Earth reflect a great heat, especially from walls and sides of houses... The second reason may be the roughness and porosity of the moon's body, which is not so apt for reflection as if it were smooth and close. And, last, because of the *globosity* of the moon; for being round, it reflects the sun's rays every way, and does not collect them so strongly for any one place.

Q: What's love?

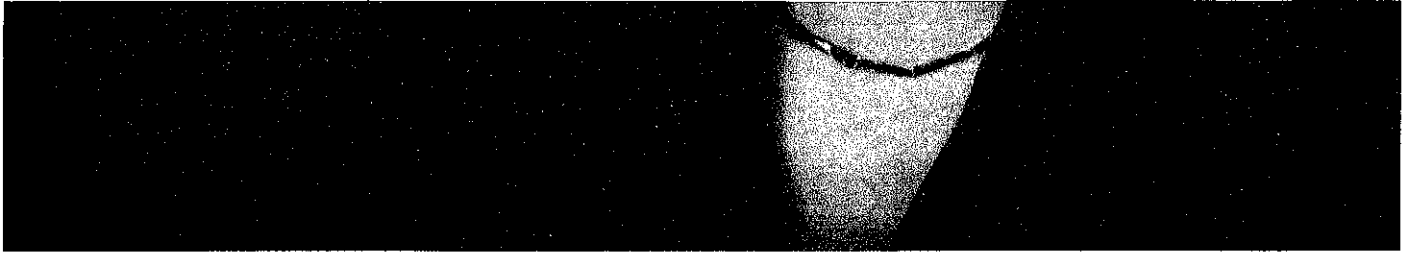
A: Love, and you'll know ... We'll give you the best description we can of that passion, which we have some reason to know ... 'Tis a mixture of friendship and desire, bounded by the rules of honor and virtue ... Love, being a medium between pure friendship and perfect desire, 'tis warm enough to keep friendship from an ague, but not so furiously hot as to set all on fire.

Q: Is there, do you think, a large part of the world still left to discover?

A: Yes.

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Dear Abby

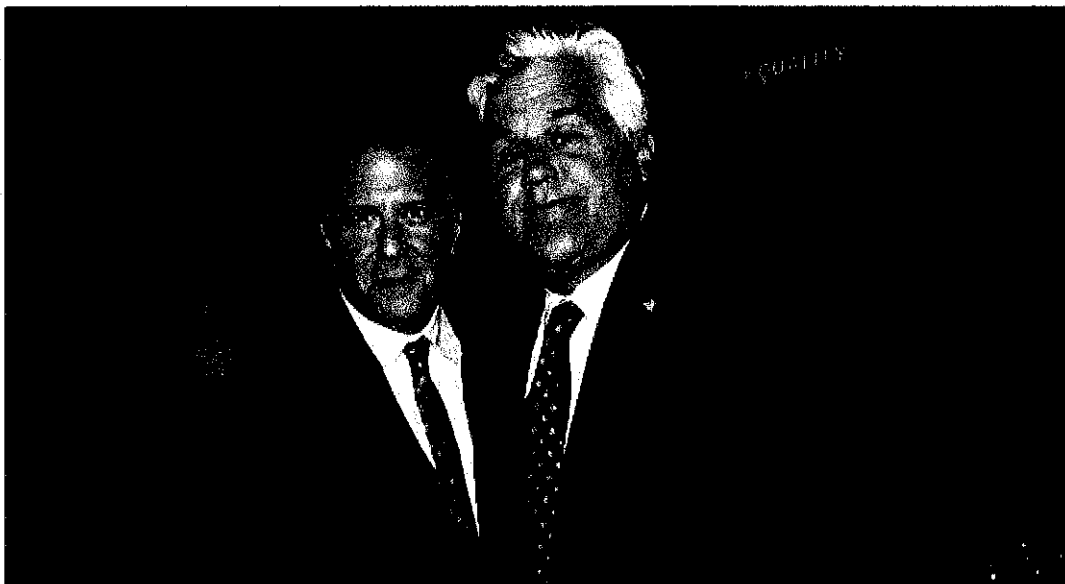
Dear Abby: My son-in-law "Kirk" has issues with closing doors, kitchen cabinets and refrigerator doors. Three times my daughter has had to throw out food because it spoiled. He doesn't close cereal boxes, bags of candy or chips, either.

My husband and I tolerated Kirk's behavior until a recent visit to our home. He again left the door to our garage open, where our inside cat could have escaped. He was rough when opening our recliner, and he also didn't turn the cap all the way down on the seltzer bottle, but I know better than to shake the bottle before checking the cap because I once spilled orange juice everywhere after he failed to tighten the cap.

My daughter says she has known Kirk for 15 years, and he isn't going to change. She says he doesn't focus on the task at hand but is thinking about something else.

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My husband and I feel he doesn't respect our home when he behaves this way. After my daughter spoke to Kirk after his last visit, she has brought our granddaughter over twice, but he stayed home. I feel like both of them think we are making much ado about nothing. — Open-And-Shut Case In Virginia

rd before post
Dear Open-And-Shut: Has your daughter or son-in-law actually said that to you? You were not wrong to speak up, and it's not much ado about nothing. It is consideration for the property of others. You should have drawn the line after the first time your immature and inconsiderate son-in-law left the garage door open. Address the matter directly with your son-in-law, and consider seeing them at their house instead of yours.

Dear Abby: My mom insists on giving my oldest child, "Jim," less money than the other grandchildren because he's my stepson. Jim is 19, and I am the only mother he has ever known since he was 2 1/2. I'm still married to his father, and Jim is part of the family.

I realized what she was doing only last Christmas, when she gave Jimmy \$100 and the other 12 grandkids \$500 each. (This included my two younger children.) When I asked her why, she couldn't give me a straight answer. Now I'm no longer sure she's going to leave him an inheritance when she's gone, and I feel crummy about the entire situation. — Lost In The South

Dear Lost: I don't blame you for feeling crummy because this is a sad situation. Bear in mind the money your mother is gifting is hers to do with as she wishes. However, you and your husband might consider equalizing it in your own estate plans when the time comes. Have the two of you already talked with an attorney about wills, advance directives, etc.? If you haven't, now may be the time to discuss the subject.

Andrews McMeel Syndication

Topics

Abby, Kirk

From the book: *Dear Dorothy Dix*
Doubleday 1952

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Dear Dorothy Dix

In giving advice on love versus finances, Dorothy could be just as down-to-earth. When a young man and a girl wrote asking if they should start their married life on insufficient funds, she replied:

The happiest marriages are generally those in which a man makes just enough money for pleasant, comfortable living. In such cases the couple are not afraid to have a baby because they know they can support it, and the wife doesn't have to work but can stay home and build a household. They can work up in life together.

Nevertheless poverty can be as dangerous as riches. If a wife sees nothing except bills and bills, certainly there is trouble ahead—disillusion, bitter wrangles, recrimination and tears. So many tears . . . Why not wait a little while longer?

→ A woman of forty-one, engaged to a man of the same age, raised the question of marriage between people of different tastes:

I love him, but we usually do not care for the same things; in fact we are as far apart as the poles in our likes and dislikes . . . Still, I'm sure we love each other. Does anything else matter?

Miss Dix did not reply as the correspondent obviously anticipated:

Yes, indeed, a lot of other things matter besides love when a man and woman in their maturer years contemplate matrimony . . . Congeniality, for example, which is the very bedrock of a successful marriage . . . At forty-one, I think I would go all out for companionship in a mate, for as we get along in years it is not easy to adapt ourselves to others and change our tastes and habits. Marriage lasts for a long time, and it seems longer if you are married to someone who bores you.

Many times in her letters she stressed such congeniality as the basis of marriage. To a boy and girl in their early twenties, she suggested a test: "Don't marry unless you can sit together for three or four hours at a time and enjoy talking of things entirely removed from the subject of love. Though you may not believe it, talk of love begins to pall after marriage."

A more unusual problem was presented by a woman who signed herself "Widow in Distress" in a letter which began:

X I am a woman of sixty and my husband is dead. I have fallen violently in love with my son-in-law, who is thirty-nine. This fellow and my daughter are not happy together. I have sensed it for many months. He says he loves me and would like to marry me, divorcing my daughter. I feel that my soul will not rest at ease until he is my husband. Do you think it is fair to my daughter? Wouldn't we all be happier?

→ Dorothy's answer showed the anger she must have felt:

You will certainly be a widow in much greater distress if you commit the folly of eloping with your son-in-law. After all, you're sixty, old enough to be this man's mother, and I urge you not to befool yourself into thinking this flare of belated passion makes you young again.

I advise you to leave your daughter's home at once—but not with your son-in-law. Flight from him, not with him, is your only salvation, and the only way to save your daughter's home and marriage, and yourself a lot of grief, and your son-in-law from making a laughingstock of himself.

No fool like an old fool, says the adage, and I think you would be wise to take that to heart.

Surprisingly often, Dorothy Dix received letters from men complaining that their wives had failed to keep pace with them mentally. As one told her:

X My wife hasn't had a new idea since we were married. She reads practically nothing but the society page and the cooking columns. She isn't interested in anything outside her home. Since the first baby was born she talks about practically nothing except the children. She makes a comfortable home for me, fine meals, a well-maintained household, and she's surely faithful. But I'm bored almost beyond endurance. What can I do?

Dear Dorothy Dix

Dorothy gave him her answer:

→ Nothing, except take your medicine like a man and make the best of it. It is futile to hope you can change your wife's pattern, or make of her the mental companion she was never cut out to be, and cannot be no matter how much she wanted to, or how hard she tried.

For an intellectual man to marry a dull and stupid woman is one of the greatest of tragedies. What greater loneliness than for two people to spend their lives close together in body yet miles apart spiritually? But there is no turning back in life, and my advice to you is to concentrate on your wife's good points as a homemaker and mother, and find escape in a mental world of your own

Despite the volume and variety of answers that she gave, Dorothy Dix never became convinced that her point of view was the only possible one "I guess everybody thinks sometimes what a wonderful world it would be if only he could run it," she told a friend. "But if I ever reach the day I think I'm right about everything, promise me you'll shoot me!"

Frequently Dorothy would worry about a letter for several days before she was quite sure how to answer it. She would move it from one side of the desk to the other, cover it up for an hour, then return to it. She knew that whatever she decided might settle a life, for good or bad. There was the case of Irma, a married woman of forty-nine who was falling in love with a man twelve years her junior. Irma wrote:

I married when I was about seventeen, and my husband has been insane for sixteen years. I take care of him in the hospital and I've been seeing him each week. I've been very lonely, and this young man comes like sunlight into my life. He tells me he loves me because I have been so faithful to my husband, and says if we were married he would like me to continue my visits if I wished . . .

He is a rough sort of fellow, and we don't seem to be alike in a lot of ways. I fear I couldn't keep up with him, he is so strong. And what makes me hesitate is that he knows so many so-called sporty women. [But] I can't seem to find out anything but good about

him, tho' he rules his men with a rod of iron, and explodes when I tell him about our difference in age.

In sad understanding Dorothy Dix gave her reply:

In only a few states, Irma, is divorce granted for reasons of insanity, and there's a terrible lot of red tape to go through besides. But, being the sort of woman you are, I do not think you would take advantage of any legality that would free you from the poor stricken creature you promised to stand by "in sickness and in health till death do us part."

Moreover, even if you were free, at forty-nine you are too old to marry a man twelve years your junior. For at middle age the cards in the game of love are stacked against us. We are set in our ways. We have been to the circus and ridden on the merry-go-round and we want to settle down and rest. To marry a man twelve years younger than yourself under any circumstances would be a great risk; it is an even greater one in your case because you and the young man are so dissimilar in type. No, Irma, you had better go on being lonely. It is at least more comfortable than being sorry.

Dorothy was more amused than worried by the dilemma of a seventeen-year-old who had been "thinking seriously of marriage and needed information." For two years she had been wearing "falsies" . . . "as I am somewhat undeveloped. I am very self-conscious about it, and for this reason I back out when marriage is mentioned. Should I tell the boy I love about my false breasts beforehand, or should I get married and let nature take its course?"

Dorothy Dix curbed her sense of humor and answered seriously:

Since you love your young man, marry him. Women have always worn aids to the figure—bustles, "symmetricals" to help their legs, padded hips, tight corsets and ruffled underbodies. Don't men, perhaps your friend included, wear padded shoulders and coats tailored to give a hint of development that may not always be there?

X Dorothy was less gentle with another girl who wrote to protest the way the people in her small town peered at her from behind their blinds, checked on her goings and comings, and then whis-

Dear Dorothy Dix

pered about her. Wasn't gossip a terrible thing? she asked. Dorothy replied:

You're wrong. Gossip is an influence for good—an invisible policeman that enforces law and order, and keeps the feet of weak people on the path. We may quiet the voice of conscience, Louise, but not the voice of the neighbors. It is the fear of "they'll say" that often makes us curb our appetites and stick to standards of conduct set up by society. Think what would happen if we could do as we pleased and get away with it. There would be many more philandering husbands and wives, many more neglected children, badly-kept houses, wife-beating husbands and virago wives.

Those who are down on gossip and feel the world should cover up their shortcomings are unreasonable. Why should others be more careful of your reputation than you are yourself? If you do not care enough for your good name to protect it, why demand that service of the general public? There is no chaperone so efficient as Mrs. Grundy, and the only way to escape being talked about is to be so exemplary in behavior that you are a dull subject for conversation.

The longer Dorothy Dix continued her work, the greater became the number of her male correspondents. Eventually it approached fifty per cent, partly because wives quoted her remarks to their husbands. In her earlier years the majority of her women correspondents were between twenty and forty, most of them "married or to be married or hoping to be married." Later her readership, male and female, was extended in both directions to include teenagers and those over sixty.

American youth became more articulate, and so did the older folk. She felt gratified as she saw this change, for it indicated that she had become useful to many more people. "And I'm pleased," she said, "when the day's mail runs the range from high-school essay paper to bond stationery. Too much of one or the other, and I might worry."

Now and then she received notes intended to disturb or alarm her, including threats of revenge. The mildest told her she was a silly, doddennng fool, or a cynical woman who did untold harm. A

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more at her coed college dormitory. Dave says, "I'm wearing the same thing people wear at the beach."

Maybe I'm prudish, but their underwear is *not* swimwear. Almost everything is visible in these outfits. My first husband never left the bedroom unless he was fully dressed. Shouldn't there be even more modesty between Barbara and her stepfather?

—Worried in New Jersey

Dear Worried: Barbara sounds like a seductive little wench, and your husband has popcorn where his brains belong. Tell your daughter to knock off the striptease, and let your husband know you will not tolerate any more semi-nudity.

Dear Ann Landers: My wife and I have been married for 16 years. In that time, I have watched her children from a previous marriage grow to adulthood. I have been present at the births of 10 grandchildren.

Here's my problem. I love my wife's children dearly, and I tell them so frequently. However, I have yet to witness any show of affection from any of them. Instead, I get subtle reminders that I am not, after all, their real father. It has reached the point where I wish no further contact. My heart has been broken too many times. My wife says I am being silly. What do you think?

—Stepped-on Dad in Calif.

Dear Dad: Your wife knows you better than I do, so I would accept her assessment.

Cool it, Dad. Apparently, your stepchildren are uptight and unable to show affection. I feel sorry for them. They will miss so much joy in life. I suggest that you settle for what there is and don't push for more.

Dear Ann Landers: With the ever-increasing number of blended families, some of your readers may have the same problem I've been experiencing: how to address new relatives other than by first name.

I have invented some words that could be incorporated into the language. They may take a little getting used to, but after a while, they will come naturally. This is what I propose:

Stepson—ston

Stepdaughter—staughter

Stepfather—stather or stad

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Stepmother—stother or stom
 Stepgrandfather—stampa
 Stepgrandmother—stamma
 Stepbrother—strother (or stro if you are close)
 Stepsister—stister or stis
 Step cousin—stousin (or stuz if you are close)
 Stepaunt—staunt
 Stepuncle—stuncle

What do you think about this, Ann? Once you get the hang of it, it could be terrific.

—Ray C., Tulsa

Dear Ray: I am aware that new words are added to the language on a regular basis, but somehow, staughter and stampa don't quite do it for me. As for stuncle, I wouldn't touch that one.

Just because the idea didn't grab me, Ray, doesn't mean that some of my readers won't warm up to it. So, on behalf of those who want to try it out, I thank you.

★ **Dear Ann Landers:** Here's a new one for you. First, let me say I am divorced and the father of three wonderful children. I love them very much, and I try to spend as much time with them as possible. At present, I am with them about three days a week.

Recently, my ex-wife asked that my present wife, "Babette," watch the children every day after school while she works. This means until 6:30 in the evening. It seemed like a great idea to me since the children get along very well with Babette, and our home is a pleasant and familiar place to them.

The problem is that Babette believes that she should be paid the same as any other child-care provider because she is performing a service for which my former wife has paid others in the past.

My former wife feels that Babette is obligated to watch the children for free because they are, after all, my children and she is now my wife.

Babette says it's not so much the money but the idea that my ex-wife is just trying to take advantage of her.

I love my children and am in the middle of a battle between these two women who are not crazy about each other to begin with. Do you have a solution?

—Between a Rock and a Boulder in Colorado

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Dear Rock or Boulder, whichever seems more comfortable: I can understand Babette's resentment because she feels your ex-wife is taking advantage of her. However, in my opinion, she should be willing to take care of the children without being paid. After all, they are your kids, and she is their stepmother, not just a person sent by an employment agency.

I suspect this may be Babette's way of sticking it to your first wife. Not only is her behavior ungenerous, but if she loves you, such mean-spiritedness will not do much to enhance the relationship. Is there an unbiased third party who can talk to Babette?

When I printed that letter, I had no idea it would create such an uproar. Stepmothers and ex-wives all over the country wrote to let me know how they felt. A radio talk-show host did an entire show around this column. Here's the follow-up I did on it:

Dear Ann Landers: I couldn't believe your answer to "Between a Rock and a Boulder in Colorado." The writer wanted to know if it was fair to ask his wife, "Babette," to take care of his children from a previous marriage. Babette said OK, but she wanted to get paid. The ex-wife insisted she should do it for free. You agreed.

Taking care of three children every day from 3:30 through dinner is a huge responsibility. You said asking to get paid might be Babette's way of sticking it to the ex-wife. I believe it's the other way around. It's the ex-wife's way of sticking it to Babette. It looks to me like the ex is looking for free child care. And *you* fell for it. Dumb-dee dumb dumb.

—Been There in Auburn, Ky.

Dear Been There: You would not believe the avalanche of mail I received on this subject. Keep reading:

Dear Ann: You blew it. Would you ask your mother, father, sister or brother to watch your three kids on a regular basis, 15 hours a week, without offering to pay them? And if Babette *does* resent this, as she rightfully should, how will she treat these kids? Don't print my name, please. I prefer to be

—Anonymous in Colorado

The most spirited responses came from the listeners of a Los Angeles-based radio call-in show hosted by Dr. Laura Schlessinger. Dr. Laura sent me dozens of responses. Here's a sampling:

From Karen in Calif.: Ann Landers is *wrong*. Time is money. You get nothing for nothing these days. Babette should be paid for watching those kids.

XYZ: Ann is right. The second wife should *not* be paid. If Babette has no interest in children, she should not have married a man who has three.

Gina D.: I thought slavery was abolished in 1863, or did the Emancipation Proclamation not include wives? Babette should be paid in cold, hard cash.

Erica: You don't pay parents for watching their own children. This is the family Babette became a part of when she married. She is a step-mother, not a baby-sitter. Blood is thicker than water.

Eileen P.: My vote is against Ann and for Babette. Why doesn't the father change *his* work hours so he can do some baby-sitting? After all, they are *his* kids, not Babette's.

Mary D.: I agree with Ann. How are these kids going to feel when they learn that Babette is being paid to take care of them? Has anyone thought of that?

Hershey, Pa.: Maybe the husband and the ex-wife would consider deducting the cost of child care from the support payments. That way, everybody gets a break.

Kimberly in San Diego: All three are idiots—Babette, her husband and the ex-wife. No one seems to want the kids. They are more concerned with money. Too bad. I feel sorry for those children.

Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.: It would be nice for the kids, and good for the marriage, if Babette took care of the kids, but she is not *obligated* to do so. To ask to be paid is downright tacky. The ideal solution would be as follows: "Pay" Babette by putting money into the kids' college funds. It would be the same as outright payment but less crass, plus, the kids wouldn't have to know that Babette was paid to be with them.

So, dear readers, you've just read an ounce of responses off a glacier. Make up your own minds. I'm sticking to my original response. Babette should *not* be paid.

From the Best of Ann Landers
26 / ANN LANDERS 1996, Fawcett Colum

Every in-law we have talked to feels as we do except a few people who don't mind being called by their first names. Do you have a solution to this age-old dilemma?

—Nameless and Placeless

Dear N. and P.: In the absence of an ideal salutation (which I am unable to produce), I suggest that each family make up their own. In my own dear family, all four sons-in-law called my father "Mr. A.B." (the initials of his first and middle name). It was the perfect solution.

Did you know that when sisters marry, the husbands of said sisters are not even remotely related? I'll bet you thought the boys were brothers-in-law. Well, so did I—but I know better now. Dozens of readers have told me.

I will explain it as it was explained to me:

Princess Margaret is a sister-in-law to Prince Philip, because she is his wife's sister. But Margaret's husband, Anthony Armstrong-Jones, is no relation whatever to Prince Philip. They are just a couple of nice boys who married sisters.

Figuring out how family members are related is the least of in-law problems. As every couple knows, in-laws can boost or bust a relationship.

Eight Ways In-laws Can Break Up a Marriage

1. When a son or daughter lets you know he or she plans to marry, show open hostility to the person of his or her choice. After all, marriage means less love and attention for parents, and they have a right to resent it.
2. Expect your married children to spend every Sunday and holiday at your home. Act hurt if they have other plans.
3. If your married children have problems with their mates, encourage them to come home to you. Let them know your home is still theirs, no matter what. Listen attentively to all complaints and point out additional faults that may have gone unobserved. Remember, one drop of water after another can wear away a rock.
4. If your married children are having financial problems, rush in with the checkbook. If you are having financial problems yourself, borrow if necessary, but let them know they will never have to do without anything as long as you are around.

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- 5. If a married child has a drinking problem, keep telling him his wife drove him to it. It will make him feel better. Everyone needs someone to blame.
- 6. If your married child gets an opportunity for advancement that takes him to another city, tell him family life is more important than money, and if he leaves, God will punish him for not obeying the commandment "Honor thy father and thy mother."
- 7. If there are grandchildren, smother them with gifts. If the parents object, tell them to keep out of it. After all, grandchildren are to be spoiled. Sneak money to the kids secretly if you have to. They'll love you for it.
- 8. If your married child has a difference of opinion with his mate, get into the act and fan the flame. Family loyalty is a beautiful thing. If you work at it, you can turn a minor argument into a major hassle and break up the marriage.

★ **Dear Ann Landers:** You've covered this a number of times, but here's another point of view to consider.

Let us quit criticizing whomever it is our children choose to marry. My son, "Don," and his wife, "Sharon," live in another state with their two children. I visit them for five or six days a year.

Sharon is a lousy housekeeper, and I do mean lousy. Don is also a slob. It's up to him to keep the lawn mowed and the garage clean. Both are a disgrace.

I presume Sharon is a good wife. They seem happy. I know she's an excellent mother, involved in every facet of their children's lives. She is also honest and outgoing. I really do love her.

The reason I am writing is because so many parents today seem overly involved in the marriages of their children. I believe this does more harm than good, and I hope you'll back me up.

—A Reader in Monroe, La.

Dear Monroe: I'm with you. And now I wonder how many copies of this column will be mailed to the appropriate people.

{ **Dear Ann Landers:** I am about to bail out of a five-year marriage to a woman I love a great deal. The problem—my sister-in-law.

A year and a half ago, my wife's sister, "Rose," was widowed. Her husband was killed in a car accident. They had no children. Since that

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unfortunate event, Rose has been with us for dinner almost every night and on weekends. She goes with us on vacations and to social events to which she is not invited, but my wife gets her included. I do not dislike my sister-in-law, but I am tired of having her around.

My wife knows how I feel, but she says Rose needs her now and she can't let her down. When I suggested that she (my wife) talk to a counselor about this unusual attachment, she flatly refused and called me crazy. Last night, I told her I was seriously considering divorce because of her sister's constant presence. She slammed the bedroom door in my face. I slept on the couch.

Am I selfish, as my wife claims? I cannot bear the thought of living like this for the rest of my life. Please advise.

—Excess Baggage in N.C.

Dear E.B.: Your wife's devotion to her sister is admirable, but when it begins to threaten her marriage and she refuses to do anything about it, the situation requires a closer look.

Now is the time to find out if your wife prefers her sister's company to yours. I suggest that the two of you make an appointment with a marriage counselor and determine if your marriage is worth saving. If your wife refuses to go, go yourself and get some professional advice.

Dear Ann Landers: I am married to a kind, considerate, thoughtful man. It's the second marriage for both "Ben" and me. We are in our 50s.

Ben's children are in their 20s. He has given them cars and paid their golf fees, and he continues to hand over spending money and buy them luxuries. Nobody works. They are all in college (for which their father pays, of course).

When I point out that his kids are taking advantage of him, Ben becomes sullen and uncommunicative. Our marriage would be perfect if it weren't for this problem. What should I do?

—Clear View

Dear Clear: Lay off. Your husband knows you are right, but he can't help himself. His relationship with his children was established before he met you.

The principal reason for the failure of second marriages is kids. So watch it, dear, lest you become a statistic.

Dear Ann Landers: My family situation is unbearable. My 15-year-old stepdaughter, "Lottie," has been living with my husband and me for 18 months. She left her mother's house by mutual agreement because she could not get along with her mother's live-in boyfriend. Before this, she used to visit us twice a month, and to be perfectly honest, I did not look forward to seeing her.

I cannot say anything good about having this girl around. She is rude and sneaky, has flunked several classes and has no interest in school. Her friends slink in and out of our home and are an unwholesome-looking lot. I have found evidence of pot smoking. To put it bluntly, I am fed up to the teeth with this girl and the way she has disrupted our lives.

My husband's head is buried in the sand. He says, "She is just experimenting. It's a stage she is going through. She only yells at us to show off to her friends." Ann, I wasn't raised this way. I barely speak to Lottie, and I am losing respect for my husband. I have tried therapy, but neither my husband nor Lottie will go.

I think Lottie should go back to her mother. I don't want to break up my family, but I can no longer tolerate this girl's daily tirades. Our home is like a war zone.

I'm sure Lottie doesn't want to leave. She has her daddy conned. My husband says his ex-wife is not fit to raise their daughter. Where do I go from here?

—Losing It Fast

Dear Losing It: Lottie is clearly in charge, and this has got to stop. You must insist on family counseling, which means all three of you. Believe it or not, the girl wants an authority figure to take control.

I urge you to deep-six the therapist you were seeing. It sounds like he or she was zero effective. Good luck.



Dear Ann Landers: My new husband, "Dave," and my 21-year-old daughter, "Barbara," have become buddies. I think the way they dress around the house is entirely too suggestive. Dave wanders around in his jockey shorts, just like he did when he lived alone. At night, Barbara will flounce around in the living room, or even in our bedroom, wearing only a towel or an oversized T-shirt and perfume. I've voiced my disapproval, but neither sees anything wrong. Barbara tells me she sees

From: dearabby@uexpress.com,
 To: sstich9083@aol.com,
 Subject: Dear Abby Thu, June 4, 2020
 Date: Thu, Jun 4, 2020 3:14 am



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Dear Abby



Woman Runs Low on Patience for Friend's Drama-Filled Life

- June 04, 2020 -

DEAR ABBY: My friend "Kate" has had a lot of trauma in her life, and she feels things very deeply. She has experienced assault, the suicide of a close friend, the death of several family members, discovered she can't have children, and managed to escape an abusive relationship, all in the last five years or so.

Kate does all the things people are supposed to do when coping with grief and is doing very well. The problem is me. I find it hard to be around her because of all the drama. Intellectually, I understand none of this is Kate's fault. She isn't being attention-seeking or deliberately causing drama. But I find myself becoming impatient with her ongoing discussion of feelings. I'm not someone who feels deeply or is easily traumatized. Bad things happen,

I get over it and move on. How can I learn to be the patient, caring friend she needs? -- TRYING TO BE A BETTER FRIEND

DEAR TRYING: Quit being so hard on yourself. You are and have been a good friend. It's important that you not allow Kate's burdens to "sink" you. The two of you are very different people, and you should explain that to her as you have to me. If her trauma and drama become more than you can healthfully absorb, step back and tell her you will talk with her later, tomorrow or when it is convenient for you both, which will allow you time to come up for air.

Read more in: Friends & Neighbors | Death | Abuse

Friend Is Offended By Adherence to Quarantine Guidelines

- June 04, 2020 -

DEAR ABBY: I am self-quarantined for a number of reasons because of the virus. I am 87 and live alone. My daughter is very concerned that I not become ill because her husband is in treatment for cancer. Obviously, she doesn't want to have to come care for me and endanger her husband's already reduced immunity.

A friend called to ask how I am doing. I told her I was self-quarantined, and she asked if I needed anything. I told her I didn't have eggs, but it was no big deal. She said she would bring me some. I sent her a text and asked her to leave them on the porch, and she said, "You mean you won't let me in the house?" She said she isn't sick and can't understand why I'm doing this. I tried to explain that you can be contagious without symptoms, but she was still insulted.

I thought everyone in the world knew the basics of quarantine, but apparently she's still taking it personally. She hasn't called for three days, and I'm heartsick. Advice? -- SHUT IN IN ARIZONA

DEAR SHUT IN: In spite of the fact that the federal, state and local governments are releasing information on a daily basis about the importance of social distancing and self-quarantining, there is still confusion in the minds of some of the public. Your friend is a perfect example of this. You are doing what you're doing for the right reason, and I hope you will continue, not only for your son-in-law's sake, but also for your own.

Read more in: Friends & Neighbors

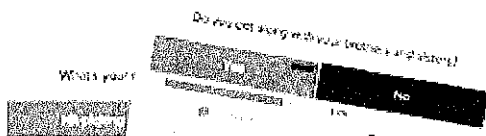
Texts From Late Wife Upset Man's Current Wife

- June 04, 2020 -

DEAR ABBY: I've been married five years, and I just discovered that my husband still has several text messages from his late wife. He thinks I shouldn't be upset about it. Am I wrong for asking him to delete them? -- FEELING BETRAYED IN THE SOUTH

DEAR FEELING BETRAYED: Yes, you are! Do not compete with a deceased spouse. Hanging on to mementoes is a way many people grieve. If the texts hold significance for him, let him have them. You're his wife now, and that's what matters.

Read more in: Marriage & Divorce | Death



Join the debate. **Vote Now** on the *Dear Abby* Poll of the week.

Dear Abby

by Abigail Van Buren

Gourmet Cook Objects When Husband Alters Her Carefully Crafted Meals

February 17, 2020 - Letter 2 of 2



DEAR ABBY: I've been happily married for 34 years, and my wife and I are supportive of each other. She's a gourmet cook, and I'm an OK one. She takes extra care when she cooks. She wants her meals to be exceptional, and I appreciate it.

Sometimes she will cook something like an awesome enchilada casserole or pork loin. When she serves it, I like to add lots of other toppings, like sour cream and hot sauce or BBQ sauce. I don't do it with everything -- just with certain dishes. I always taste the food first, but I know how I like my food, and I season it the way I like.

She wishes I would eat her food the way she prepared it. She insists that by altering the dish, I ruin her creation, which is disrespectful. I disagree. I should be allowed to enjoy my food the way I want and not be made to feel bad about it.

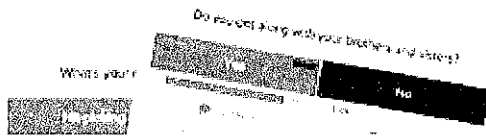
Why would she want me to enjoy my meal less by not fixing it up the way I enjoy? We both agreed to seriously consider what you have to say about this. --
RECIPE FOR DISASTER IN TEXAS

DEAR RECIPE: Your wife feels creative pride in the meals she prepares for you. When you alter them with "lots of" sour cream, hot sauce or BBQ sauce, she may feel that somehow her creation was a failure. Reassure her that her meals are excellent, but not everyone has the same palate. It may have something to do with the geographic region in which a person was raised, or the household in which someone grew up.

If you need certain dishes spicier in order to enjoy them, perhaps your wife should consider altering the seasonings in a portion of what she prepares to suit you. If she can't do that, she shouldn't blame you for doing it. To each his own.

Read more in:

#Death



Join the debate. Vote Now on the *Dear Abby* Poll of the week.

Dear Abby

by Abigail Van Buren

Altering Wife's Perfect Dishes Is Blasted by Sympathetic Cook

May 08, 2020



DEAR ABBY: Regarding "Recipe for Disaster in Texas" (Feb. 17), I have to say I disagreed with your response. Although Michelin won't be awarding me any stars, I consider myself a good cook, and I strive to make unique, flavorful meals for my family. My husband frequently feels the need to doctor my recipes, and I think it's disrespectful of the time and care I took in preparing the meal.

He insists on combining ingredients that don't belong together. He puts cheddar cheese on spaghetti Bolognese and ranch dressing on chicken teriyaki. He knows this isn't appropriate, and he would never ask for this modification in a restaurant.

"Recipe" should learn to appreciate that his wife is preparing meals for him. If he can do better, he can take over the cooking. -- FLAVOR QUEEN OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR QUEEN: I enjoyed the responses to that letter about a husband reseasoning his wife's gourmet meals to her distinct displeasure. Some of the online comments made me chuckle, so I'll share them, too. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: While I was in the military, it was normal to add salt, pepper and ketchup to everything without tasting it first. The habit has followed me for 50 years, no matter where I am. I tell the host that it's normal for me and to not take it personally. Mac 'n' cheese needs ketchup; veggies, potatoes, eggs and watermelon need salt; most everything else needs pepper. For me to taste something, it has to burn my tongue. -- VIETNAM VET IN MISSOURI

✓ DEAR ABBY: That wife sounds like an oversensitive control freak. Personally, I can't handle peppers, but I do like lots of cheese and sour cream on my enchiladas. My wife, who does the majority of the cooking, knows my preference, so she does me the honor of putting more of that on my enchiladas. I also like to dip my fries into mayo instead of ketchup, so she obliges. This is what we do for people we love. We don't threaten, "My way or the highway, Bub!" -- G.S. IN ABBYLAND

DEAR ABBY: I laughed when I was told to substitute "healthy" plain yogurt for sour cream. It never tasted anything like sour cream to me. Then I got some Greek yogurt and realized it works just as well. (It's an excellent protein source, and many older adults need more as we age.) Now I add plenty without feeling guilty. -- ONLINE LOVER

✓ DEAR ABBY: My husband jokes that he has Mexican taste buds but a white guy stomach. Thank heavens we have separate bathrooms. -- C.K. ON THE NET

DEAR ABBY: I know when my husband gets out the Tabasco that the meal is not quite to his liking. I don't usually mind, because I don't cook just for him. I cook for the entire family. (And, just for reference, he thinks I'm an amazing cook.) -- P.M. ON THE WEB

DEAR ABBY: Oh, yes -- Tabasco sauce. My dad had so much of it in his lifetime, he should have been McIlhenny's pitchman. I can see the ad now:

Announcer: What do *you* have Tabasco with?

Man: I have it with chili!

Woman: I have it with eggs!

My dad: I have it with a straw.

-- "ABBDICT" A.C.

Read more in: |

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Lifestyle > Relationships & Advice

Miss Manners: Who is the rude theatergoer in this tale?

A whole row is annoyed by talking and seat-changing – but who is the true culprit?

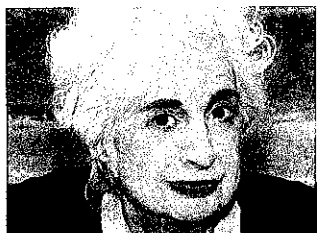
By JUDITH MARTIN, NICHOLAS IVOR MARTIN AND JACOBINA MARTIN | United

Feature Syndicate

May 23, 2020 at 1:30 a.m.

X

DEAR MISS MANNERS: I saw a wonderful show recently, but the first act was nearly ruined by a seating problem.



Judith Martin

I settled into my seat at 7:25 with the help of an usher. During the overture, a mother and daughter arrived and sat in the two open seats on my right. After the show started, another mother and daughter arrived and made their way to the sole remaining seat on our row, on my left.

The woman to my right loudly hissed at me, “You’re in the wrong seat.” I ignored her. She then said, louder, “You’re in their seat.”

I also encourage, if financially feasible, the neutral-setting dodge. At least until the kids grow out of the feral stage, move your visits/vacations to a kid-friendly attraction built for the kind of punishment toddlers dish out. Grandma's treat! No one else has to know you're primarily treating yourself to a house untrampled by savages.

If that's not realistic, then -- again, as finances permit -- they can stay at a hotel or rental near you, framed as a gift to them. "There's a pool!" Or, as an act of sympathy: "I realized a house full of heirlooms sets kids up for failure." (It does, by the way.) "So, less pressure on you and the kids, plus more privacy for you and [husband]. It's hard to be a parent in front of an audience. I remember well."

Or, discuss options with her: "Un-childproofed house, lesson learned. I'm sorry. Any thoughts on Plan B?"

If your daughter ever gives you a clean shot at the larger issue by, say, bringing up her concerns about bonding in a non-defensive way -- I am not hopeful -- then please take it, using the we're-all-parents-here position. "You have to say no to your kids sometimes, right, even if it's just hot stoves and busy streets? So that tells me every good parent-child bond happens despite a lot of saying no. I'd argue *because of it*. Don't you think?" Just two parents talking, not parent dictating to child about parent dictating to child. It may seem counterintuitive to ask when you most want to tell, but defensiveness says she already (rightly or wrongly) feels cornered. You'd best leave her room to get out.

Dear Carolyn:

I have a full-time job and try to do extra freelance artwork as I can, usually after work. My wife is a stay-at-home grandma watching the grandkids, the 10-month-old all day and the 3-year-old when she gets out of school. I'm sure that is not easy.

But she will give me a call about something else and always throw in, "What's your ETA?" If I say I need to get something done, she'll counter with something like, well I've had a stressful day, these kids ... then I feel guilty and go home.

I've got nothing to hide, there's no other woman, I'm not stopping for beers on the way home, but I'd be a little more Bohemian.

-- Drawing a Blank

I'm sure you would like to be, understandably.

As would I.

As would, I'm guessing, your wife. Who is on her second go-round at one of the most exhausting jobs there is.

Are you "sure that is not easy," by the way, because you shared the workload with her equally of raising your kid(s), or are you at least somewhat projecting?

Maybe your wife volunteered for this against your wishes. Maybe you both failed to account for the variable of being older. Regardless, the fact of your marriage has you in this together. Don't prioritize your concern over hers: You *both want some freedom*. And deserve some. Bring it up when you're ready to see that.