

Day of the Dead

I arrive in Guatemala on The Day of the Dead, November 1st. I'm curious about this holiday, so I go to the **cemetery** to see what's happening. What I find is quite interesting.

The **atmosphere** is like a party. There are people everywhere. Families are sitting around the **graves** of their dead **ancestors**. They clean the graves and add fresh flowers. I walk through the cemetery and admire the beauty of all the colorful flowers.

There is also color in the sky, because many kids are flying **kites**. Some families are having a picnic next to the graves. They eat, drink, and chat together. People laugh and smile.

In the United States, cemeteries are always **somber**. We certainly never have festivals or parties next to graves. We don't laugh or play music or fly kites in cemeteries either.

I **find that** I prefer the Guatemalan **approach**. I like the way they remember and celebrate those who have **passed away**. I like that they acknowledge death, instead of denying it the way Americans do. I like that there is life, as well as death, in their cemeteries.

Guatemalans call it "The Day of the Dead", but it is also a day to appreciate life.

A Kiss

Carlos buys a new car. It's a very expensive car. It's a **huge**, blue, fast car. While driving down the street, Carlos sees a girl on a bicycle. She has long blond hair and is beautiful.

He yells to her, "**What's up?**" She **ignores** him. He yells, "**How's it going?**" She **keeps** going and ignores him.

you. I'll take you to an expensive restaurant."

The girl turns, gets off the bike, and looks at him. She says, "I don't want to go to dinner. But if you give me your car, I will give you a sur- prise."

Carlos says, "OK!" He jumps out of the car. He gives her the keys and says, "Here are the keys."

The beautiful blond takes the keys and then kisses Carlos on the cheek. Then she jumps into the car and drives away.

Carlos stands on the sidewalk. Now he has no car and no girl. He says, "**That's it**, just a kiss on the cheek?"

He gets on her bike and rides home.

Bubba's Food

Sara Smith, who lives in San Francisco, went shopping for cat food. Sara is 30, and lives at 3037 Market St. She **has lived** there since 1990. Sara is married. She is

married to a man named John. She **has been** married for 7 years.

They have two children, and one very big cat. Their son Bob is five years old and their daughter Nancy is three. Their cat, Bubba, is 2 years old. Bubba is **huge**. He weighs 258 pounds (117 kilos)!

At 9am, Sara **got into** her car and **drove** to the pet store. She **bought** 68 bags of cat food for \$10 each plus tax. The regular price was \$15, so she **got a good deal**. The total was \$680. She paid by credit card.

On her way home, Sara stopped at a convenience store to buy milk. Bubba loves milk. The milk was \$3.00 for one gallon, and Sara bought 30 gallons. She paid \$100 and got \$10 **back in change**.

Sara **got home** at 11 a.m. Bubba was waiting at the door. He was very hungry.

Changed

NO AFFECTION ANYMORE

DEAR ABBY:

My husband of 39 years **no longer hugs** me or shows me any **affection**. I have **seen him through** cancer and diabetes. We have four grown children, and we have been **seeing a therapist** for a year and a half. He is kind, generous and friendly, but there are no **compliments** or any of the **flirtatious banter** we used to enjoy.

He **swears** he's not **having an affair**, and he doesn't know why he has changed. Perhaps you do?

-- GRACE IN PHOENIX

Drag

HIGH PRICE OF MOM'S HELP IS **DRAG** ON FAMILY BUSINESS

DEAR ABBY:

Twenty years ago, my sister and I bought a business from our mother. We all love and respect one another and get along well. We will be finished **paying off** the business in two years.

Our problem: Mom, who is now 77, still **draws a salary** from us **above and beyond** the payment for the business. Her **workload** has **lessened** greatly, as it should. She could do all of her work in one day and lessen the **burden** of her salary. However, she says she'd "go crazy" if she **retired**. We don't want that. She could still come in as often as she wants and do her personal paperwork, bank- ing, letter-writing, reading, etc. These are all things she does at "work" -- **on the clock**.

If we try to discuss this, Mom gets hurt and says, "Just let me know when I'm not worth the money." We don't want to do that. We would hope she would see the fairness of this and suggest it herself.

Business **expenses** are **going through the roof**, and there are **updates** we should make, but we can't do it as long as we are paying Mom at the level we are, **on top of** the money for the **buy-out**.

-- DAUGHTERS DEAREST

Intimacy

DEAR ABBY:

My husband, "James," and I have been married only three years. We are both **in our 20s**. Everything is really great between us -- except our sex life. **As far as he is concerned** that's fine, too, but I am not **satisfied**. It may seem **odd** to hear the female wants to have sex more **frequently** than a young and healthy **male**, but that's **the case** in our relationship.

Abby, I **work with the public** and I get frequent **remarks** about what a beautiful woman I am. This makes it hard for me to believe that I don't attract him at all. I have **expressed** many times that I wish we were more **intimate**. I have even expressed it to him in more than one letter, hoping **to reach him**.

I am **at a total loss** as to how to make him realize how important this is to me. Is there something wrong with my body? I just don't know who **to turn to** for advice on this subject. Please help me.

-- **SHORT ON INTIMACY IN OHIO**

Secret Love

WOMAN HESITATES TO REVEAL SECRET LOVE FOR COLLEAGUE

DEAR ABBY:

I am a single woman in my early 30s who has never been married. I recently fell in love with a wonderful man **with whom** I spend a great deal of time. He is **unaware** of the **intensity** of my feelings, and I'm afraid of telling him out of **fear of rejection**.

There are a couple of additional **concerns**: He is 15 years my **senior** and a medical doctor. I am a social worker in a lower **economic class**. In addition, we are of different religions, but we have similar spiritual beliefs and **values**. He is also my co-worker.

I am very interested in **pursuing a deeper relationship** with this man, but would like to hear your advice first. Thank you for your **thoughts** on this.

-- **LONGING FOR MORE IN CHICAGO**

The Race

It's 5 o'clock and Allen is riding his motorcycle in San Francisco. He is riding down Van Ness street and comes to a **stop light**.

A red Ferrari **pulls up** next to him. The driver's wearing dark sun glasses. He **looks over** at Allen. Allen looks at him and realizes that the driver is Tom Cruise!

Tom **sneers** at Allen. He says, "When the light turns green, let's race". Allen says, "Alright, **you're on!**" Tom says, "I'm gonna **smoke you, sucka!**" Allen says, "You wish. I'm gonna beat you and your **sorry-ass** car".

Allen and Tom wait at the light. They **rev their engines**. Suddenly, the light turns green. Allen and Tom **take off!** They **zoom** down Van Ness at top speed.

Tom is winning. But suddenly, blue and red lights appear behind Tom-- it's the police. They **pull him over**.

Allen zooms past Tom, laughing. He yells, "**Better luck next time!**" Allen is the winner!

Bad Choices

Publish Date: April 6, 2007 Dear Dr. Tracy,

I am a 33 year old divorced woman with four kids. I was married for 12 years and I have been divorced for approximately 3 years. I met my new boyfriend during my divorce. We hit it off and have been together ever since. He is a 44 year old divorced man. When I met him he had been divorced for 2 years. Well, I met his ex-wife and she seemed to be an okay person. What I found out 3 months into my relationship with him was that he was fooling around with his ex-wife again-- who also at this time had a boyfriend of her own. I figured that since I did not have a committed relationship with him, I had no place to say anything. The problem is it continued further into our relationship, up to the point when I found out I was pregnant. At the same time I found out that he and his ex-wife planned to go to his family reunion together. Of course before all of this, I drove by his house one night and saw her car parked outside his home. The excuse I got after all of this was that they were considering getting back together. I thought it was very funny that as soon as she met me, she found interest in him again.

I guess my issue is the fact that now I am still in this relationship. I have brought a child into this nonsense and I hate the fact that he keeps in contact with her. My boyfriend has taken responsibility for her son from a previous relationship. His excuse for having so much contact with his ex-wife is because of that boy. I know this is not true but I have no real proof

otherwise. I have also dealt with him taking women to hotels and my gut tells me it was her, but he promises it was not her.

I have tried to get over all the cheating. I know that she is very close to his family and I also know that his family does not like me because I stand up for myself. I guess the bottom line is knowing how much contact his ex-wife has with him and the fact that he knows I can't stand her. Am I in a weird relationship with a man that wants to have his cake and eat it too? Or am I being paranoid and need to trust him when he says he does not want her. I have never had so much animosity towards two people in my life. I do love this man, but I feel like I have put myself back in an unhealthy relationship with a man that is trying to lie to me.

To be totally honest, now that I have his child I even hate the fact that he helps her son. She never has to ask for anything regarding that boy, but I have to constantly remind him when our son needs something. He does it for the other boy without thinking, but my son is a second thought even when I have said, "Look at your son. He is in dire need". I was married to a cheating man and hooked up with another cheating man. I wonder if it's just my bad choices in men.

Double Standard

Publish Date: April 8, 2007

FAMILY IS UNEASY WHEN ONE SISTER DATES OTHER'S EX-LOVER DEAR ABBY:

My sister, "Jane," and I are both in our mid-50s. Jane has had numerous affairs over the past several years after her third divorce, and was involved in an "intimate relationship" with a terrific man, "Will," that lasted about three months. Jane broke up with Will several months after she decided he wasn't what she was looking for, and she's presently engaged to be married to a very nice man ("Sam") and seems very happy.

I dated Will several times before he and Jane became involved. We weren't intimate at that time, and we started seeing each other again over the last month. This time we have fallen in love.

My problem is Jane is upset that Will and I are together and says I have "betrayed" her. She is worried about having her former and current lovers present at family gatherings, and our parents are also concerned. They say it's "just weird." The fact that my sister was intimate with Will doesn't bother me or Will, but it sure bothers them.

Abby, I have always been the "good girl" in the family and bowed to their pressure, but my relationship with Will is more than I could have ever imagined, and I don't want to give up my future happiness just to make my sister and my parents more comfortable. My adult children have all met and approve of Will and our relationship, but Jane and my parents won't budge. Any suggestions?

-- WANTS WILL IN WALLA WALLA, WASH.

DEAR WANTS WILL: Perhaps it's time to stop being the "good girl," begin acting like a woman who knows what she wants, and confront the double standard in your family. If your sister was "sophisticated" enough to have serial affairs, and your parents have been so worldly they have turned a blind eye to it, then they should all be adult enough to realize that you are entitled to your happiness, too.

Although this may make for some awkward first few family gatherings, as grown-ups, everyone should be able to get past it. But if they can't, you are going to have to decide whether you want this man, or to be a people-pleaser for the rest of your life.

Greek Family

Publish Date: April 1, 2007
WOMAN WILL NEVER BE GREEK ENOUGH FOR HUSBAND'S FAMILY DEAR ABBY:

I married a Greek man whose family never accepted me. Being young and naive, I tried everything to fit in, converting from Catholicism to the Greek Orthodox faith, attending all family functions, including them in our lives. It was never enough.

My husband and I traveled to Crete with his family to visit his relatives there, and some extended family members refused to share the dinner table with me because I was not Greek. One of those family members was a priest!

Our daughter, "Athena," was born four years later. What broke the camel's back for me was a Christmas dinner when she was 6. My father-in-law gave cards with \$100 to all the grandchildren of Greek heritage. Athena received nothing and cried for hours wanting to know why her grandfather didn't love her. My husband just tried to stay neutral.

Abby, how far should someone have to go to fit in with their husband's family? -- IRISH AGAIN IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Longtime Affair

LONGTIME AFFAIR APPEARS SET TO LAST FOR LONG TIME TO COME

DEAR ABBY:

I'm married; he's married. We're in love and have been for eight years. We've tried breaking it off several times over the years, but a force bigger than both of us keeps bringing us back together.

I never believed in soulmates or true love until we met. Our love is deep and unconditional; our roots are intertwined. It's a shame that it happened late in life, but it happened nonetheless. He treats me like a queen.

Neither of us is leaving our spouses or family. We are both in our 50s and sometimes act like we're in our 20s. It's magical!

Is it wrong? Do we go on until something changes? Do we try for the 100th time to break away? An affair, no matter how you slice it, will never be accepted in the eyes of traditional society, so it will be perceived as unacceptable. What's your opinion?

-- BEWITCHED, BOTHERED AND BEWILDERED IN NEW YORK

Lost Custody

Publish Date: March 20, 2007
YOUNG MOTHER IS FRIGHTENED BY THREAT OF LOST CUSTODY
DEAR ABBY:

I am 22 years old and have been married 17 months. "Derek" and I have a 23-month-old son. Derek hasn't worked for about a year and refuses to help support our family. He also belittles me whenever he talks to me. I am not happy in this marriage, but I am not sure what to do about it.

On our honeymoon, Derek told me if I ever divorced him that he'd make sure he would get custody of our son. And his mom already said that she would tell the judge that I was an unfit mother.

My son is my world, Abby. He doesn't even let his daddy hold him, so I know he wouldn't be better off with Derek. But because I am on disability, I don't know if I have a good chance of getting custody if I leave. I don't feel Derek loves me or my son.

What should I do? Stick it out with my husband or take the chance of losing my son?

-- TRAPPED IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meddling Mother-In-Law

WIFE READY TO WASH HER HANDS OF MEDDLING MOTHER-IN-LAW

DEAR ABBY:

How do I politely tell my mother-in-law to stop doing my laundry? It all started when I was on bed rest due to my pregnancy. I didn't mind her doing an occasional load to help us out. But now she does it anytime she's over to watch the kids.

I'm very picky about how I do my laundry, and this is the main reason I don't want her doing it. Also, I'd prefer she spend time playing with the kids than with the laundry!

She also puts things away in the wrong places. She does it with my dishes, too. Once I told her not to worry about my laundry because I wasn't done sorting it. She took it upon herself to do it anyway.

She's very strong-willed. My husband and I have had problems with her not respecting our parenting, too. She often takes things the wrong way. What's the best way for us to tell her that her help is not needed?

-- DIRTY FAMILY LAUNDRY

Nudist

DEAR ABBY:

We have a male neighbor I'll call "Flash" who frequently walks out to get his newspaper -- or the mail, or to retrieve something from his car -- while he's as naked as the day he was born. (He's in his late 50s and divorced.)

Some of the women in the neighborhood know not to look toward Flash's home if they're out for a walk. They have discovered that he is most likely in the buff, standing at his glass door or sitting at his front office computer with the door open.

Flash is otherwise a likable and helpful neighbor. We hesitate to say anything. We do not want to say anything that might destroy that relationship. It's not against the law to be a nudist, or for a woman to go topless in public in this city. However, to see a fella streak to his car is a little surprising and unsettling, even for another adult.

In the normal course of things, he may be spotted in the nude once a week. I can only assume this goes on daily, but thankfully, our paths don't cross more than once a week. Is this something we should be concerned about?

-- STARTLED IN AUSTIN, TEXAS

Obsessive Behavior

Publish Date: March 23, 2007

PARENTS DENY PROBABLE CAUSE OF SON'S OBSESSIVE BEHAVIOR DEAR ABBY:

My nephew, "Vincent," is 16 and has had problems with **obsessive** handwashing for years. I have enough professional experience to strongly suspect that he suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

My brother and his wife **refuse** to believe their child has a problem and will not take him to get help. My nephew's hands are **chafed** and raw, and his parents **reprimand** him for this behavior when he really needs professional help.

His mother is the biggest problem. She **nixes** all issues that suggest a problem, and my brother will not **stand up to** her. What can I do?

-- WORRIED AUNT IN FLORIDA