

Herpes infection is reminder of husband's broken promise

DEAR ABBY: A young mother wrote that her husband had given her herpes-2, and asked you to help her decide whether to stay or to leave the marriage. She said that the virus was a constant reminder of his indiscretion, and asked if any other man could love her if he knew. Please give her this message:

I also contracted herpes-2 (HSV-2) from my ex-husband during our marriage. We divorced and I married my soul mate. While we were dating, I told him about the virus and waited to hear him say, "Adios." Instead, to my amazement, his response was, "I love you. This isn't your fault and we'll deal with it."

I, too, am angry during an outbreak because it is a reminder that the person I trusted most betrayed me. But remember that stress is one of the triggers for an outbreak. Then remind yourself that this virus doesn't change who you are inside. You have done nothing wrong. Get all the information you can because knowledge is empowering. No matter what decision you make about your marriage, your heart will heal.

— LIVING HAPPILY
DEAR LIVING: Thank you for the beautiful testimonial that a full life is possible after an HSV-2 diagnosis. People who have this infection often feel isolated because it is not a condition that is easily discussed. For anyone who might have missed it in my previous column, the National Herpes Hotline — (919) 361-8488 operates from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern time. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I contracted herpes-2 after a one-night stand 10 years ago. Since the age of 17, I have struggled with feelings of anger, humiliation and the fear of never finding love. I, too, felt "robbed of my dignity, my self-image and my future." But I have slowly arrived at the acceptance stage, and so will that young wife.

She can save her marriage if she truly loves her husband "in sickness and health." Living with HSV-2 is possible; many people do it. She should ask herself if she can live without the family unit the two of them have built together.

I am still single since my diagnosis, but I have had two healthy relationships over six years' time. The key is honesty and healthy communication.

— LIVING STRONG IN LOS ANGELES

DEAR LIVING STRONG: I agree, and that is true in any healthy relationship. I would be shirking my responsibility as an advice columnist, however, if I



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

didn't point out that more than half of all teenagers today are sexually active. That is why they need clear, concise sex education — beyond "just say no" — to help them avoid sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

DEAR ABBY: My friend "Diane" and I went downtown for a few drinks after work. She drove. At the end of the night, she had a parking ticket. I was surprised when she said I should pay half, especially since she knows money is tight for me right now. I think Diane is being unfair. I wouldn't expect her to pay half of it if it was my ticket.

— CONFUSED IN FLORIDA
DEAR CONFUSED: She provided the transportation. I assume she paid for the gas. Since you were together when she got the parking ticket, it would have been nice if you had OFFERED to pay half the ticket.

DEAR ABBY: I recently turned 18 and started a new job as a waitress in an upscale cafe. I love my job, but there's one drawback.

The other waitresses and I get hit on left and right by men in their 40s and 50s. I'm not talking about a few cute remarks but lewd suggestions and asking for our phone numbers. One girl even had to file a police report because a 61-year-old man kept coming by and waiting for her to get off work, even after she declined his invitation to go out.

Where does a man that age get the idea that he can get a girl who's still in high school? And how do we let them down without sounding rude or risking our jobs?

— GROSSED OUT IN FLORIDA

DEAR GROSSED OUT: Where does he get the idea? In his dreams, honey! How should you deal with it? Be friendly, be polite, and tell him that he reminds you of someone very special — your grandfather.

DEAR ABBY: My friend, "Harry," and I are having a disagreement about proper etiquette. He says he doesn't have to open a door for me, only for his wife — even though we are both females.

My boyfriend and I feel that the door should be opened for both women by the first male to reach the door. Harry claims that he needs to open the door only for his wife because they are a couple, and my boyfriend should open the door for me. My boyfriend always opens the door for me and continues to hold

it open for Harry's wife.

— LESLIE IN MAPLE
DEAR LESLIE: You are. Harry should continue to hold the door until both women have entered or exited. To do otherwise is rude and thoughtless. I don't know who taught Harry his manners, but it appears he's a little rough around the edges and could use some polishing.

DEAR ABBY: How should I respond to my husband who constantly corrects me when I'm talking to friends and relatives? We can be talking about anything — movies, weather, the day of the week we did something. And, according to him, I am always wrong. It's bad enough when he does it at home, but it's humiliating when we're out.

— ALWAYS WRONG
DEAR ALWAYS WRONG: Loving spouses do not correct each other in public; they do it

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privately. Since you have spoken to your husband about this and he continues, recognize that he is insecure and trying to make himself look smarter/superior by making you look foolish. Most people recognize this ploy for what it is. Nothing you can say to

him about his behavior will make him less defensive. He's already on the defensive and it has nothing to do with you.

Marriage counseling might help him see how detrimental this is, and improve your level of communication. I wish you luck.

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