

Ex-girlfriend won't fade away

DEARABBY: I am in an uncomfortable spot. I met a great woman last month and have developed feelings for her. I'll call her Carmen.

Every time I try to focus my energy into starting this relationship, my ex, "Rita," pops back into the picture. Most recently, she was calling about a cell phone we had when we were together.

Carmen is aware that I got out of a 5 1/2-year relationship six months ago, but every time Rita does something to upset me, Carmen tells me she thinks I am not over Rita. Abby, I feel the relationship with my ex is over. I sincerely want to explore things with Carmen.

I have talked to Rita a few times to get everything squared away so there will be no more reasons for further contact, but something else always keeps coming up. I don't want Carmen to be scared off. What should I do?

—READY TO MOVE ON IN DULUTH

DEAR READY: If you allow it, Rita will always find an excuse to maintain contact. It is time to put your past firmly behind you and move on. This means making a clean break with Rita. Tell her that communicating with her is causing problems for you, so you won't be doing it anymore. Then keep your word — no phone calls, no e-mails, no visits.

DEARABBY: In the past, survivors drawing Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the Department of Veterans Affairs because their spouse died from a service-connected cause, lost this benefit if they remarried.

Effective Dec. 16, 2003, qualifying spouses who remarry after age 57 retain the DIC benefit. Those who remarried after age 57 but before the new law took effect can have their DIC benefit restored — but only if they apply for DIC



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

reinstatement by Dec. 15, 2004.

To apply, these surviving spouses should submit a written request for restoration of DIC along with a statement of dependence (VA form 21-686c). The form is available on the Web at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/21-686c.pdf. Applications should be mailed to the nearest regional VA office. To find the nearest office, go to www.va.gov and click on Facility Locator.

—VICE ADM. NORBERT R. RYAN JR., USN (RET.), MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

DEAR ADM. RYAN: Thanks for this important alert, which could mean a significant amount of money — \$967 or more a month — for some people who could really use it. So, readers, if you know any widows or widowers who lost their spouse because of a service-related cause, and who might have missed reading today's column, please be an angel and call this to his or her attention. If the VA receives the application later than Dec. 15, restoration of DIC benefits must be denied.

This one-year application period does NOT apply to other surviving spouses whose remarriage on or after reaching age 57 followed enactment of the law.

For more information, call: (800) 827-1000 or visit the nearest VA regional office, the location of which can be found in the blue pages of local telephone directories. People with hearing impairment should call: (800) 829-4833 using their TDD device.

Time is growing short, so don't procrastinate.

DEARABBY: I am one of your older readers — age 90 — but I don't look a day over 70. I recently told my sister that I wear hip-huggers, and she asked me if I'm going senile. She thinks it's awful. I say hip-huggers are comfortable in the summer heat. What is your opinion?

—“HIP” IN CASSELBERRY, FLA.

DEAR “HIP”: I know women 30 years younger than you who are reluctant to bear their mid-ribs because their skin is no longer taut. However, since you are comfortable wearing hip-huggers, the choice should be yours and your sister should refrain from making any more catty comments. (Could she be jealous?)

DEARABBY: Recently the adult children of some casual acquaintances sent us a letter informing us that their parents would be celebrating an anniversary soon. In it, they requested we send money so they could give their parents a two-week vacation. The children explained that they couldn't afford to pay for the trip, but wanted to do something special for their parents. They intend to put the names of all the donors on a card with the tickets and mail it to their parents as a “surprise.” I think we should ignore it. What do you think our response should be?

—ANONYMOUS
DEAR ANONYMOUS: Do with it what you do with other unsolicited requests for donations.

Editor's note: Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

Children should know the little things count

From “REWARDS,” page 5

obvious, and parents readily respond.

But they also need to let their child know when they are doing good in the little everyday matters, such as playing well with a sibling

or friends, keeping their voice calm in a difficult situation, or getting ready for bed without being told.

Children need hugs from parents, too. Not only when they've done something special, but on a regular basis, just because they are special.

Editor's note: The preceding column was provided as a public service from High Plains Mental Health Center.

This article was contributed by Karen D. Beery, LCPC, Consultation and Education Department of High Plains Mental Health.



Welcome Dr. Bruce Kellogg, D.O.

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