

# Letters to serviceman overseas leads to love, marriage

DEAR ABBY: Some years ago, I responded to your Operation Dear Abby program. I thought it would be neat to have a pen pal while I was in high school. I'm happy to report that I got much more than I ever dreamed of.

I began writing to Karl, and we corresponded for more than a year before we were able to meet in person. When we did meet, we both felt an immediate attraction to each other — but as fate would have it, he was stationed overseas again and I was leaving for college. Fortunately, we reconnected and began to date exclusively.

To make a long story short, we recently celebrated our 15th wedding anniversary. We are each other's best friend and feel blessed to have three beautiful children. Thank you, Abby, for bringing us together.

— KATHY K., ROANOKE, VA.

**DEAR KATHY K.:** Thank you for an upper of a letter. Many love stories began with Operation Dear Abby, and continue to be created through [OperationDearAbby.net](http://OperationDearAbby.net) — the online version that now operates 24/7 year round. I'm pleased that writing to a member of the armed services was not only rewarding for you, but also became the pathway to your future.

Readers, as I am sure you already know, this is a time of year when our young men and women in the military feel most poignantly their separation from their families and the people they love. While it is not within our power to make that go away, it does present an opportunity to show them we appreciate the fact that they are fulfilling their duty at the risk of their own safety. Today, and during the rest of this holiday season, won't you please make a special effort to let them know they are in our thoughts and prayers. Go to [www.OperationDearAbby.net](http://www.OperationDearAbby.net) and send a message of support. It'll mean the world to them.

DEAR ABBY: My daughter is an attractive, well-educated, single, professional woman in her early 40s. She is gay. I have known about her sexual orientation since she was in high school and have always been supportive. We have enjoyed a good relationship.

I have been friendly to my daughter's same gender friends in the past, until she moved into the home of a divorced woman who claims she is also gay. Abby, this woman is in her mid-40s. She has two children, ages 5 and 12, from her previous marriage to a man. There is significant financial advantage for her to have my daughter move in with her.

Between you and me, I don't believe that she is really gay. Is it possible for a woman to become gay after many years of marriage that produced two children? Thanks for your help.

— PERPLEXED MOTHER IN THE EAST

**DEAR PERPLEXED:** Yes, it is possible for a person to discover that she (or he) is gay after having been married and having children. Usually, the person felt a same-sex attraction much earlier, but denied it and married, hoping the feeling would go away. Many years — sometimes decades — later, the man or woman realizes that something is "missing," meets someone, and the feelings return stronger than ever. And that's when they finally come out.

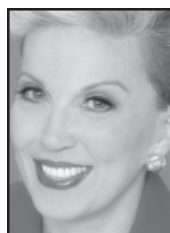
DEAR ABBY: My brother is being married soon, and he's planning to have his dog serve as the ring bearer in the wedding. My 2-year-old daughter will be the flower girl.

My mother thinks that having a dog in the wedding is disrespectful and she's worried about what the guests will think. She plans to tell my brother that she doesn't approve.

The dog is well behaved and, frankly, my daughter is more likely to cause a problem than the dog. I think a wedding is completely up to the couple, and they should do whatever will make the day special for them. What do you think?

— DOGGONE WEDDING PARTY

**DEAR WEDDING PARTY:** Point out to your well-meaning mother that everyone in the family will be happier if she worries less about what the wedding guests will say and concentrates more on the happiness of the occasion. Your brother having his dog as his ring bearer isn't as "fur out" as she fears. It has been done by other animal lovers before, and I'm sure it will be again.



**Abigail Van Buren**

• Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My mother is a talented artist, and my sister and I love to give her creations as gifts to family and friends. My sister and I have purchased these gifts — albeit at a discount — but money is ex-

changed and the gifts are from US.

Our problem: Often the people receiving the gifts assume that we did not pay for them. Sometimes they have even said, "Thank your mother for me." How should this be handled so the recipient knows we were the givers and not the artist who made the work — who "happens" to be our mom?

— JESSICA IN CHARLOTTE, N.C.

**DEAR JESSICA:** When they say, "Thank your mother for me," tell them the gift came from

you and not from her. It should not be necessary to explain further.

DEAR ABBY: I am going to a conference in a city where an old flame lives. I haven't seen him in nearly 10 years. I am considering looking him up, but now I'm questioning my motives. I'm single, and don't know what his status is. I don't expect a reconciliation, but the idea to give him a call popped into my head — and then I got nervous. I'd love to see him. Have you any ad-

vice?

— TEMPTED IN AUSTIN, TEXAS

**DEAR TEMPTED:** Yes. Call him! You are single, and if he is, too, it could be a new beginning for both of you. Ask him to lunch so you can both catch up on what's happened during the last decade. If it turns out that he's married, invite his wife along. Who knows? You might make a new friend who could introduce you to "Mr. Right."

*Editor's note: Dear Abby is writ-*

*ten by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.*

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## There's a time and place for everything.

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