

# Liberal Arts major tired of criticism

DEAR ABBY: I'm writing because I'm not sure who else to ask. I'm 22, in college, and I'm tired of having to defend what I want to do with my life. My major is liberal arts. I chose it only because I have no passion for any specific area.

When family or friends ask what my major is and I tell them, they generally come back with something about majoring in "unemployment" or making sure I have a "backup plan" in case I don't find a rich husband.

Abby, all I want is to be a mother to my future children and a wife to my husband. I'm tired of defending myself, and I'm beginning to think my desires are not normal. What can I say to people?

— UNSURE IN THE MIDWEST

**DEAR UNSURE:** What you want is very normal. And the fact that you will complete your college education instead of settling for an "MRS" degree is good insurance for the future.

But keep in mind that although your dream is to be a stay-at-home mother and wife, not everyone who marries winds up living that kind of life. Widowhood, divorce or a spouse's illness can change those plans in a flash and land a woman in the workplace — where, by the way, a college degree and the breadth of knowledge you're acquiring in liberal arts will help you to succeed. Explain that the next time you are challenged.



**Abigail Van Buren**

• Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My grandmother loves to shop, and she spends a pretty penny buying us grandkids all kinds of gifts — mostly clothes and shoes. But my grandmother is decades older than we are, and her sense of style leaves much to be desired.

We accept graciously, then usually donate her gifts to Goodwill, hoping that an older person might buy them back, with no luck. What do I tell my grandmother? I know she'll be furious — and I'm afraid she'll ask about all the other gifts, most of which I don't have either.

— "BUSTED" IN TEXAS  
**DEAR "BUSTED":** I have a strong suspicion that your grandmother already is onto you — which is why she asked you to return the shoes. Because you have been put into a corner, the best advice I can offer is to level with her and tell her exactly what you

have told me. (If you do, she may send you a check from now on.)

However, if she gets mad, remind her that once a gift is given, it is the recipient's to do with as she wishes, and in giving the gifts to Goodwill you wanted to be sure someone got pleasure from using them.

DEAR ABBY: My husband's co-worker died recently in a tragic accident. We're going to be attending a memorial service for him very soon. Because I never met this man, nor was I ever introduced to his wife or family, I am not sure what would be proper for me to say to the grieving family members — or if I should let my husband express our sympathies since he was acquainted with him.

— ANONYMOUS IN MISSISSIPPI

**DEAR ANONYMOUS:** If you have a chance to converse directly with the widow or family members, all you need to say is, "Please accept my sympathy for your loss." It's short, sweet, eloquent and honest. And it would be better than standing mute while your husband does all the talking.

DEAR ABBY: I am concerned for my sister, "Sharon." She has been divorced for four years and hasn't been able to find a decent man.

Sharon is 42, has a good job and is intelligent. Recently, she brought "Rick" to our family reunion. We were all impressed with this handsome, well-educated professional man.

Well, she recently confided that Rick has been married four times, and if that wasn't enough to deter her, she also said he had served time in jail for molesting his 6-year-old daughter.

Our family is in an uproar! Sharon doesn't seem to think this is an issue because her sons are all grown.

We have all told her that we don't want him around.

How desperate must she be to have a man in her life to settle for a child molester? What should we do? Can child molesters be rehabilitated?

— SICKENED SISTER IN NEW JERSEY

**DEAR SICKENED SISTER:** My experts have told me that although child molesters "can" be rehabilitated, the success rate is very low. If your sister marries this man, he should not be allowed to be around minor children, including grandchildren, nieces, nephews and neighborhood children. Indeed, as a condition of his release from prison, he may not be allowed to be.

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