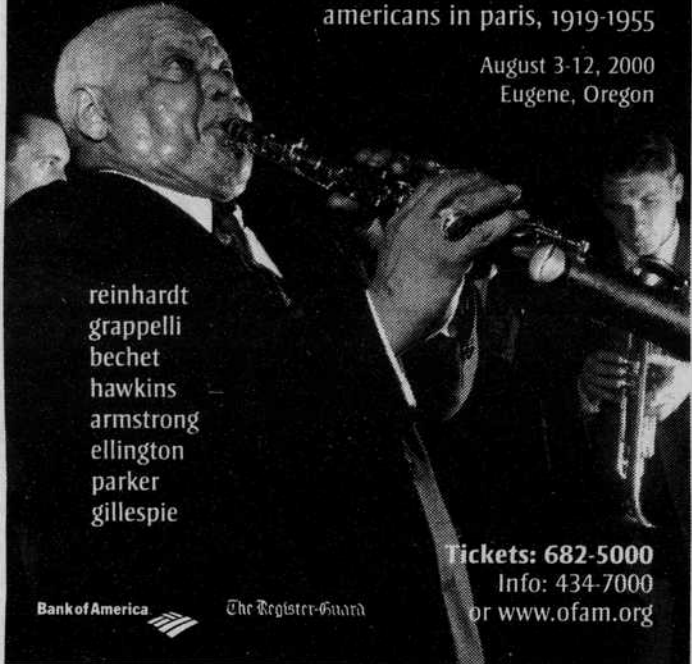


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# Older lover nothing but trouble

Dear Harlan,  
 I'm a 19-year-old that's been independent since I was 11 years old. I met a woman that happened to be an ex-girlfriend's mom. For some reason, we started hanging out and we fell for each other very seriously. She's 40 and has been through some heavy things with other men. Once we got together, we really made each other happy. Everyone seems to disapprove of our relationship. The entire town thinks it's wrong. Common sense says it's a bad idea, but we both love each other with all of our hearts. Should I forget about our 6 months of bliss and go on with my life or should I follow my heart?  
 Heart

Dear Heart,  
 What kind of woman dates her daughter's ex-boyfriend? It's not surprising that your mother, I mean girlfriend, has found so much trouble in her past. She seems to have a natural ability to seek it out. There's no question that you're a mature guy who has been through a lot. And I'm sure this woman is incredibly comforting and makes you feel good in so many ways, but try to be an objective observer and tell me that you think this is a good idea?  
 The age difference alone is reason to be concerned, but everything combined turns concern into alarm. This woman is either seeking to recapture her youth or trying to avoid dealing with something in her present, but there's something wrong. You might be in bliss, but be very careful because this woman is trouble. This is a mature woman who knows how to handle a 19-year-old teenager looking for a mother figure and stability. Any woman who has a history of man problems and then dates her daughter's ex-boyfriend is a woman to avoid. The age difference plus her history gives common sense the clear edge over the heart.

Dear Harlan,  
 There are three girls in my life right now and this is unfortunately a big problem. The first girl, let's call her K, is an old girlfriend. She broke up with me because she thought I wasn't sensitive enough. The second has a crush on me, but I just want to be friends. The third likes me and I like her, but only in a one date sexual kind of way. The problem is that the one I really like is K, but now she isn't interested. I have totally changed; I am more sensitive and not a jerk anymore. How do I get her back in my life?  
 Former Jerk

Dear Former Jerk,  
 The only thing worse than having three girls is four or possibly even five. But the third girl is the most intriguing to me. You like her and she likes you, but only in a one date sexual kind of way. You could always just skip to the second date and avoid the sex.  
 You can tell your ex you've changed, but the only way to make a difference is to show her that you've changed. Any jerk can talk about it, but it takes a sensitive jerk to show her that you've really made some changes. Do something loving and show her the new you. Give her a card or take her to a special place or write her a heartfelt poem. Show her that you're willing to be completely vulnerable and totally sensitive and SHOW her you're different. If she won't date you again then just be her friend. If you're really no longer a jerk she'll naturally find herself discovering the new you over the next few months. And if she's still

not interested choose wisely and never make the mistake of being an insensitive jerk again.  
 Dear Harlan,  
 My closest friend has been in two very close but stormy relationships that broke up badly and made her quite depressed. She's been getting therapy and antidepressants, and now she's been going out with a new guy for a few months. She started seeing him only about two months after her last relationship broke up. I like and trust her new boyfriend, and she says she's never been happier, but I'm still really worried about whether she's ready to be in a new relationship and what she's going to do if he hurts her again. Am I being overprotective? (I almost think of her as a little sister.) Or should I talk to her about my concerns?  
 Worried

Dear Worried,  
 She's going to go from depressed to paranoid with you watching her every move.  
 You're a good friend, but you need to mind your own business. She's on anti-depressants, and she's in therapy. Between her doctor, her drug regimen and her family she probably doesn't need a friend watching her every move. Let her attempt to be happy without interfering and find something else to worry about. It's cool to be a concerned friend, but she needs to live her life. If anything, let her know you're always there for her and try not to worry so much.

Harlan is not a licensed psychologist, therapist or physician, but he is a licensed driver. Write Harlan via e-mail at [harlan@helpmeharlan.com](mailto:harlan@helpmeharlan.com) or online at: [www.helpmeharlan.com](http://www.helpmeharlan.com). All letters submitted become the property of the column.

## Metallica

continued from page 7  
 teresting addition, as was the giant blow-up hand giving the crowd the finger.  
 But unlike the other two bands, Kid Rock pulled it off. Somehow, he straddled that delicate balance and gave an explosive performance including his biggest hit "Bawitdaba" and the ballad "Cowboy." Even his rendition of the Grand Funk Railroad's "We're an American Band" was dynamic.  
 Korn followed, and succeeded in really making Kid look good. Their live performance was nowhere near the quality of their CD and singer Jonathon Davis' at-

tempt at uniqueness — he wore a kilt and played the bagpipes — was a miserable failure.  
 Even the girl next to me who was wearing a Korn shirt seemed put off when the crowd realized the bagpipe playing was a hoax, as the eerie melody continued when he put down the instrument.  
 Metallica finally arrived on the scene at 9 p.m. — five hours after the concert had begun — to show the wannabes how it's done. Looking more like yuppies who stepped off the golf course than a rock band, Metallica showed that it's about the music, not just the show. Every song was rich with melody and meaning, literally music to my ears after the abuse

they received from Korn.  
 And they gave the crowd what they wanted, playing "Unforgiven," "Fade to Black," "Master of Puppets" and other classics from an earlier decade of rock. Fireworks and a light show only added class to the performance, as did Metallica choosing not to scream profanity at the crowd, a tactic of the other bands.  
 While Metallica outshined the others immeasurably, it was obvious it wasn't just a well-polished show but the product of years of working and succeeding together. Metallica closed the Summer Sanitarium Tour with a finish that wrapped up their performance with a single word: indescribable.

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