

Home-schooled student struggles finding new friends

Dear Harlan,
I'm a 19-year-old female and home schooled from the eighth grade until I got my GED two years ago. I was home schooled because of severe depression that required hospitalization four times and medication. I'm still on the medicine and still struggle with daily life. My problem is that I've been totally cut off from everything since I left school.

I only leave the house to go to my part-time job where I work alone. I have no friends and I never got my driver's license because I never went anywhere. I want to have a life and friends, and go to college and all the normal things, but I don't know where to start.

I'm incredibly shy and have a really hard time thinking of things to say to people. They think I'm stuck up or weird because I'm so quiet. I don't know what to do.

Stuck at home

Dear Stuck,
Finding a friend without being around people is like finding a filet in a vegetarian restaurant. You need to start by putting yourself in the right place in or-

der to find what you seek. It would be much easier if there were friend stores, but they've yet to open up retail friends in strip shopping centers.

The closest thing to a "friend store" is going to a place where you can find people with similar interests. If your doctor clears you, start by finding a part-time job where you can work around some people. When you're not working, try getting involved in a group setting where talking is part of the activity. A book club, a religious studies group, community theater, group sports, or any activity that intrigues you are all the perfect way to get started.

Making friends takes time, patience and a deliberate effort. Take the time, make the effort and make new friends.

Dear Harlan,
I like this girl from work and want to invite her to a sort of celebration at my college the night before classes start. It will be very public and there will be food and music and dancing and fireworks.

My problem is knowing if she

COMMENTARY Ask Harlan

already has a boyfriend without looking completely foolish by simply asking her out? The asking out will be easy, it's knowing if she has a boyfriend that's bothering me. I do not think I can just ask her without seeming interested and I'm not into spying or asking a gossip for information either. What can I do?



Not the fool

Dear fool

After getting your letter, I did some asking around and followed this girl for a couple days. I'm still not sure if she has a boyfriend, but I know she walks fast and has no problem using pepper spray and blunt kicks to the head when being followed.

Regardless of her dating status, you're not a fool. Sitting around and pondering any longer would be foolish. Unless she's used to dating psychics, you have to ask to find the answers. It's not like you're asking her anything so incredibly personal. Avoid asking for her social security number in addition to asking her for a date and you'll avoid being a big fool. If she says she has a boyfriend, ask her if she wants to go as a friend. Anything less would be foolish.

Dear Harlan,

A year ago, I found out something very terrible. My fiancée was diagnosed with HPV and she caught the disease from me. Never in my life did I experience the effects that are caused by HPV.

Our lives have totally changed.

We are not intimate anymore and her love for me is not as strong as it used to be. I even asked her if she still thinks about marrying me and she replies, "I don't know anymore." We have four years together now and I have no idea what to do.

A part of me tells me to be miserable, alone and not be reminded every day of this terrible disease and that I'm the cause of it. I had no idea I had it.

Now, I know that sex is not everything, but I think it plays a very important part in a relationship. I've gone into support groups over the Internet and they have helped out a lot, but I want to talk to those who have gone or are going through the same thing. What do I do? Please help!

Miserable

Dear Miserable,

The good news is that you no longer have to worry about giving it to each other.

You can find support from about 24 million people, because according to the National Institutes of Health, that's approximately the number of Americans with HPV (Human Papillomavirus).

Some people have HPV, the virus that causes genital warts, and never even know it. Symptoms can appear where the naked eye can't see.

Married couples must learn to deal with adversity. If this thing is going to tear you two apart, you're not meant to be together.

As for the HPV, your girlfriend needs to make sure she has a pap every 6 months (sometimes every 3 months with active warts) and she needs to consult a doctor. Yes, it can be uncomfortable. Yes, you always carry HPV, even without active warts. Yes, it can be a precursor to cervical cancer, but it can usually be con-

trolled.

Millions of people with HPV live normal and happy lives.

And who knows? Your fiancée might have unknowingly given it to you. For support and information call the STD hotline at: 1-800-227-8922 or contact your local hospital.

Dear Harlan,

I'm freaking out. I'm 16 and have only had one boyfriend and that was three years ago. Since then, I have only gone out with one guy while all my friends are dating a lot.

I have a lot of friends, and I'm not ugly or anything. I also don't think there's anything wrong with me in general. So, I can't figure out why I don't have one.

Any thoughts?
Wondering

Dear Wondering,

I have thoughts about dinner, thoughts about the weekend, and thoughts about what it would be like to be a Backstreet Boy, but your letter doesn't require much thought.

It's not about quantity; it's about quality. You might be so dynamic that most guys are too intimidated. It might take a very confident guy to find the courage to ask you out or you just asking a guy you like to hang out.

You could also ask your friends to ask their boyfriends to set you up. Whatever you do, stop freaking out because you're totally normal. Try giving more thought to dinner instead.

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

Ducks Village

Come Live With Us

APARTMENTS DESIGNED WITH YOU IN MIND

- 1, 2, 3, & 4 Br., Furnished units
- Private bedrooms with individual leases
- Competitive rates, 3 payment plans
- Leases that coincide with the school year
- Large swimming pool and year-round spa
- Barbecue grills near every apartment
- State-of-the-art fitness center
- Rec-room, Volleyball and Basketball
- Computer lab with free internet access
- High-speed internet available
- Free movie rentals

STILL LOOKING FOR A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE?

- Individual spaces or entire apartments
- Minutes by bike across the Autzen footbridge
- Bus stop at Kinsrow & Centennial
- No application fees
- Apply Today!

Stop by our office M-F 8-5 or Saturday 9-1, and check us out!

3225 Kinsrow Ave., Eugene • 485-7200
www.ducksvillageapts.com

Pitch in!

Recycle your copy of the ODE.

Oregon Festival of American Music
Twin Rivers Traditional Music Festival 2000

American Fiddle Masters

Mark O'Connor
Michael Doucet avec BeauSoleil
Vassar Clements
& The Little Big Band
The Anger-Marshall Band

Saturday, August 26 - 2:30 pm
Cuthbert Amphitheater

Tickets: 682-5000
Information 687-6526 or www.ofam.org

Bank of America
Hilton
WEEKLY

Low Student Airfares

Europe • Africa
Asia • South America

More Than
100 Departure Cities!

Eurailpasses
Bus Passes
Study Abroad

student universe.com
IT'S YOUR WORLD. EXPLORE IT.
StudentUniverse.com
800-272-9676