

ADVICE

A far cry

Absence makes the heart ponder



Ms. Behavior

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:
I invariably have chosen the most difficult and frustrating kind of relationship: the long-distance kind. My girlfriend lives six hours away, and we only have been dating for a month. My feelings are getting stronger. I don't distrust her, but I question the depth of her involvement.

For example, we only talk on the phone three times a week; I'd like to talk every night. I don't want to hold myself back emotionally, but I am afraid of being hurt or disappointed. How do I ask for more? Or could this be a symptom of a deeper problem (i.e., the "check engine" light is on)? —R.

DEAR R:

If you repeatedly date faraway women even though it's "difficult and frustrating," maybe you worry you'll be sucked into the black hole of Instant Lesbian Marriage. Three hundred miles helps defend against canceling your third brunch date in favor of a commitment ceremony. If you can't meet a woman who lives in, say, Italy, another state is your safest bet. People recovering from bitter breakups often choose long-distance relationships, hoping the mileage will protect their hearts. (Long-distance relationships are exciting and accumulate frequent flier miles!)

The courtship period lasts longer with a long-distance girlfriend. You carefully wrap gifts and cards and sniff the ones you receive for evidence of her scent.

You pack your cutest outfits, drive or fly for hours and fantasize about your passionate weekend reunion. When you're finally together, every moment feels stolen and intense.

Your long-distance love doesn't snack on the couch in sweaty gym clothes or apply acne cream before bed. When you want to make love, she does, too; she never pats you on the head and rolls over, snoring and mumbling about Martians.

But have you asked yourself why you can't enjoy the current stage without wanting more? If you weren't confused about intimacy, why would you question "the depth of her involvement" after only a month? This might scare some women (except perhaps another merger-driven lesbian).

Think about why you're afraid to let your relationship evolve at a natural pace. Some people feel frightened by the beginning excitement and try to force their relationship to a humdrum middle stage. Six months later, they're comfortably settled in the nest of a predictable relationship, but their partner complains that the relationship is in a rut.

Try to appreciate the longing you feel when you're apart. Don't rush

through the delicious flutters of romance, especially if it's only to alleviate your discomfort.

When you feel insecure, ask yourself why. You might live together for 92 years, but there's no reason to push in that direction yet.

Wait a few months before telling your girlfriend you'd like to call more often. In the

meantime, ask for a transitional object, like her bra or her toothbrush, and hold it to your nose and mouth when you're uncomfortable with feeling your longing.

DEAR MS BEHAVIOR:

I usually enjoy your column, but not your recent response to Charles, who asked about bisexual cruises and small penises. You responded that bisexuality "is an imaginary state," and because he expressed interest in oral sex with men but not women, you assumed he is more gay than bisexual.

As a writer for gay publications (and a homosexual yourself!), denouncing bisexuality as false only harms the gay community. Bisexuality is struggling to find its voice and acceptance.

I urge you as an intelligent person with influence to think before speaking about this issue again. We all deserve tolerance, love and respect.

—Andrew McGraw

DEAR ANDREW:

Ms. Behavior appreciates your passionate response but wonders why you never have written when she teasingly has stereotyped muscular sissy boys and relationship-hungry, SUV-driving dykes. Perhaps when you're less personally involved, you can tell that a loving jab does not mean disrespect.

Yes, Ms. Behavior is a real lesbian, who never in reality has doubted bisexuals exist. (Two of her early "lesbian" relationships were with women who tried to jump the fence but landed on it instead.)

Ms. Behavior likes to amuse but takes her job as adviser seriously. If a reader is too obsessed with his stock portfolio, his cocker spaniel or his personal trainer to be a good boyfriend, Ms. Behavior points it out. If a reader fails to notice obvious clues that her partner is cheating—e.g., a lipstick-stained sex toy in her bed when neither she nor her partner wears lipstick—Ms. Behavior feels obligated to mention it.

And if she thinks a particular reader sounds like a dickhead who feels more comfortable being labeled "bisexual," she won't suppress the thought just to maintain a polite politically correct tone. Please do not set up a competition between bisexuals and lesbians for the role of Most Likely to Take Offense. ☐

Write your confused and conflicted heart out to MS. BEHAVIOR at MsBehavior@aol.com.

SPIRITUALITY

Metro: Spirituality

Ainsworth United Church of Christ is a multi-racial, multicultural, open and affirming church. Sunday worship is at 10 am, and church school for children runs concurrently. (2941 NE Ainsworth St. 503-284-8767. aucc@teleport.com.) (11/01)

Anawim Community of gay men meets weekly for Christian meditation and prayer. (7:30 pm Thursday. 503-281-0722.) (11/01)

Bridgeport Community Church (UCC) is a growing community of progressive, political people, exploring and celebrating the Christian faith. We are multicultural, lesbian, gay, bi and straight, and our children are valued members. (10:30 am Sunday, 621 NE 76th Ave. 503-258-0992.) (11/01)

Community of St. Andrew invites all to join a diverse Catholic faith community for prayer and fellowship. (9:30 am Sunday, 806 NE Alberta St. 503-281-4429.) (11/01)

Dignity Portland meets for Mass on Sundays. (503-262-6947.) (11/01)

Eastrose Fellowship Unitarian Universalist a welcoming congregation, offers Sunday service and children's religious education at 10:30 am. (1133 NE 181st Ave., Gresham. 503-665-2628. eastrose@teleport.com.) (11/01)

Estacada United Methodist Church Reconciling Congregation, where we really mean everyone is welcome. Sunday worship at 10:30 am. (204 SE Main St., Estacada. 503-349-4245.) (11/01)

First Congregational United Church of Christ is an open and affirming congregation in the liberal Christian tradition. Sunday worship is at 10:25 am, and church school for children runs concurrently. (1126 SW Park Ave. 503-228-7219.) (11/01)

First Unitarian Church of Portland is an open and affirming liberal religious community. We offer a wide range of programs to nurture spiritual growth and community. Our Sunday services are at 9 and 10:45 am. (1011 SW 12th Ave. 503-228-6389. www.firstunitarianportland.org.) (5/02)

First United Methodist Church of Portland, a welcoming and reconciling congregation, believes no one is left out in God's family. GLBT potlucks are held monthly. (10:30 am Sunday, 1838 SW Jefferson St. 503-228-3195. www.fumcpdx.org.) (11/01)

Full Circle Temple is a place of worship for women of all ages offering workshops, song and drum circles, meditation rooms and altars of celebration, incorporating what you bring to share. (10 am-10 pm Tuesday-Sunday, 3125 E Burnside St. 503-238-0675.) (11/01)

Portland Center for Spiritual Growth invites you to celebrate your spirituality with the Revs. Casey and Berdell Moffett-Chaney. Liberal, practical; all are welcome. (10:30 am Sunday, 4828 NE 33rd Ave. 503-481-7591.) (05/02)

Grace Space, a multidimensional spiritual center led by the Rev. Stephanie Torres, holds Sunday evening celebrations. (5 pm. Friends of Multnomah, 4312 SE Stark St. 503-287-3216.) (11/01)

Integrity, the gay and lesbian ministry of the Episcopal Church, meets on the second Friday of each month in the Morrison Room at Trinity Cathedral. Eucharist is celebrated at 6:45 pm followed by a potluck and fellowship. (147 NW 19th Ave. 503-286-9111. www.integrityusa.org.) (11/01)

Interfaith Spiritual Center. Spiritual directors from various world religions traditions are available for guidance, classes and retreats. (Second Floor, 3910 SE 11th Ave. 503-233-2026, ext. 3. www.spiritone.com/~isc. (11/01)

Compassionate Heart Sangha, a lesbian and gay meditation group, meets in the Buddhist Vipassana tradition. (7:30-9 pm Wednesday, Flanders House, 2926 NE Flanders St. Jon 503-239-5539.) (11/01)

Lincoln Street United Methodist Church is an open and accepting congregation of progressive Christians. (9 am Sunday, 5145 SE Lincoln St. 503-231-1930.) (11/01)

Metanoia Peace Community (United Methodist) is a "house church," bringing gay and straight together. (Daily prayer 7:20 am, Sunday gathering 6 pm, 2116 NE 18th Ave. 503-281-3697. www.tearsoup.com/metanoia.) (11/01)

Metropolitan Community Church of Portland holds ecumenical Sunday morning worship services at 9 and 11 am. Sunday school for children is held during the 11 am worship service. (2400 NE Broadway, 503-281-8868. info@mccportland.com.) (11/01)

Potter's House Ministries Life Center. Evangelical and charismatic Christian. (3830 SE 62nd Ave. 503-775-5024.) (11/01)

Portland Radical Faeries meet twice a month with potlucks and circles at the full moon and the new moon. Open to all men seeking alternative spiritual growth and community. Coffee hours start 9:30 am Saturdays at 3 Friends Coffeehouse, 201 SE 12th Ave. (503-235-0826. otter@pccz.com.) (5/02)

SisterSpirit offers women's spirituality celebrations, discussion groups, a drumming circle, workshops and

classes. Schedule of events available. All women are welcome. (Suite 102, 3430 SE Belmont St. Mailing address: PO Box 9246, Portland, OR 97207. 503-736-3297. sistersp@teleport.com.) (11/01)

Southminster Presbyterian Church is a challenging, supportive community that welcomes all people. It is the first More Light Presbyterian Church in Oregon. (10 am Sunday summer, 9:30 and 11 am Sunday winter, 12250 SW Denney Road, Beaverton. 503-644-2073.) (11/01)

St. James Lutheran Church, a reconciled in Christ congregation, welcomes all people for traditional liturgical worship. (9 and 11 am Sunday, 1315 SW Park Ave. 503-227-2439.) (11/01)

St. Philip Neri Catholic Church offers a gay-positive community for Catholics and their friends. Mass at 7:30 pm Fridays followed by a social. (Paulist Center, 2408 SE 16th Ave. 503-231-4955.) (11/01)

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church has been welcoming all people since 1863. (12:10 pm Wednesday and 7:45 and 10 am Sunday. Sunday school and child care at 10 am. SW 13th Avenue at Clay Street. 503-223-6424.) (11/01)

Unity Church of Portland is an all-inclusive community following Christ's teachings and celebrating diversity and truth without trappings for 75 years. Sunday school and child care available. Potluck first Sundays. (10 am Sunday, 4525 SE Stark St. 503-234-7441. unityprind@vwdw.org.) (11/01)

University Park United Methodist Church is a member of the network of reconciling congregations and meets for worship at 10 am Sundays. (4775 N Lombard St. 503-289-7843.) (11/01)



Self Portrait by Kathleen Malan Thompson is on view at Studio 2507, at 2507 SE Clinton St., through Oct. 30

Wyeast Unitarian Universalist Congregation is a new, open and liberal religious community on the inner east side of Portland offering intergenerational services and religious education for children. It welcomes members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. Wyeast nurtures spiritual growth and promotes living by Unitarian Universalist principles. (4 pm Sunday, 3915 SE Steele St. 503-777-3704. www.wyeast.pnw.uua.org.) (5/02)

Zion United Church of Christ, an open and affirming congregation, is open to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual people who wish to worship in a Christ-centered, warm, caring, multiage/race/cultural faith community. (11 am Sunday, 2025 NE 23rd Ave., Gresham. 503-665-8741.) (11/01)

Washington: Spirituality

East Vancouver United Methodist Church. Reconciling, welcoming. (10 am Sunday, 5701 MacArthur Blvd. 360-693-4761. ourclarkcounty.columbian.com/273.) (11/01)

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. Two Sunday services, traditional and "less traditional" in an open and affirming congregation. (1220 NE 68th St., Vancouver. 360-693-1476.) (11/01)

Metropolitan Community Church of the Gentle Shepherd. (10 am every Sunday; 6:30 pm second and last Sunday. Suite E/F, 2200 Broadway, Vancouver. 360-695-1480. Mccgs@aol.com www.mccgs.org.) (11/01)

Michael Servetus Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, a home for the liberal religious spirit. (10 am Sunday, 4505 E 18th St., Vancouver. 360-695-1891.) (11/01)

Willamette Valley: Spirituality

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, is an open and affirming congregation offering worship and church school. Child care provided. Wheelchair accessible. (10 am Sunday, 700 Marion St. NE, Salem. 503-363-3660.) (11/01)

First Congregational United Church of Christ is an inclusive Christian community, an open and affirming church. (9:30 am Sunday summer, 10:30 am Sunday winter, 4515 SW West Hills Road, Corvallis. 541-757-8122.) (5/02)

Gay-Straight Alliance of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem meets for a potluck on the third Sunday of each month. (6 pm, 5090 Center St. NE. 503-363-8716.) (11/01)

Interfaith Spiritual Community meets for inspirational messages, children's celebrations and joy every Sunday at the Heart Center. We honor and celebrate all sacred paths, recognizing each person's divine gifts and supporting spiritual growth, healing and enlightenment. (6-7:30 pm, 1578 Commercial St. SE, Salem. 503-763-6030.) (11/01)

Morningside United Methodist Church is a reconciling congregation where everyone is welcome to participate in the full life of the congregation. (8:30 and 11 am Sunday, 3674 12th St. SE, Salem. 503-364-5013.) (11/01)

Sweet Spirit Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) holds worship at 11 am Sundays followed by coffee and fellowship as well as potluck lunches every second Sunday. (American Legion Hall, 4774 Lilac Lane NE, Salem. Mailing address: Pastor Ken Kerr, PO Box 12753, Salem, OR 97309. 503-315-7923.) (11/01)

YOUTH

Metro: Youth

Expression is a free art/expression support group for GLBT youth between 13 and 23 in Gresham. Hang out and have fun every Friday! Sponsored by Roots and Branches. (Jonathan 503-872-9664, ext. 28.) (11/01)

The **Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network** fights to end anti-gay bias in K-12 schools. (12700 SW North Dakota St., Suite 180, #129, Tigard, OR 97223. 503-525-1177 or 503-936-5614. glsenor@aol.com.) (11/01)

Outside In operates a clinic for anyone who can't qualify for the Oregon Health Plan as well as a needle exchange service that includes exchange for those who inject hormones. It also has some transitional housing for youth 20 and younger as well as for youth who are HIV-positive and younger than 23. It also plays host to **VOICES** (Voices of Individual and Community Empowerment from the Streets), a self-support group for queer youth. (10 am-6 pm Monday-Friday, 1236 SW Salmon St. 503-223-4121.) (11/01)

Pride Project brings together Washington County lesbian, gay, bi, trans and questioning youth to plan and attend monthly social events. Also information, referral, support and advocacy services for Washington County. (Molly 503-260-5792 molly@prideproject.org.) (11/01)

Rainbow is a multicultural peer support and activity group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and questioning youth. (4:30 pm Wednesday, Metropolitan Community Church of Portland, 2400 NE Broadway, 503-281-8868.) (11/01)

Sexual Minority Youth Recreation Center (SMYRC) offers drop-in computer access, pool tables and an informal place to hang out and plays host to weekly youth support groups including Windfire, Trans Youth Group and Personal Deity Proxy (a creative group). (4-8 pm Monday and Wednesday, 4 pm-midnight Friday and Saturday, 2100 SE Belmont St. 503-872-9664. www.smyrc.org.) (11/01)

Youth HIV/STD Prevention Project provides fun and educational programs along with counseling and testing to queer youth in a friendly, relaxed environment. (503-872-9664.) (11/01)

YouthNet, a program of Love Makes a Family, offers tutoring and mentoring for lesbian, gay, bi and trans youth as well as for children of LGBT parents. (503-227-1981.) (11/01)

Southern Oregon: Youth

Southern Oregon Youth Outreach (SOYO), a group for gay, lesbian, and bi youth between 14 and 20, meets on the first and Thursdays of the month in Ashland. (541-488-6990.) (11/01)

Washington: Youth

Triple Point offers education, support and advocacy to gay, lesbian, bi and trans and questioning youth in Vancouver, Wash. Meets 6-8 pm Tuesdays in the basement of Youth House, 1112 Columbia St. in Vancouver. (John 360-695-1325.) (5/02)

Willamette Valley: Youth

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth Group for ages 13 to 18 offers support, information and fun. Free, confidential, drop-in. (4-6 pm Friday, Amazon Community Center, 2700 Hilyard St., Eugene. 541-684-3466.) (11/01)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Youth Group for ages 25 and younger meets every Monday. (5 pm, Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St., Eugene. 541-346-1134.) (11/01)

Rainbow Youth is a support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth and their friends between 13 and 17 years old in the Salem-Keizer area. (503-581-5535.) (11/01)