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ADVICE

Generation gap

Can a 51-year-old love a man born after Watergate?

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:
I just met the most wonderful guy.
The good news: His last husband of 3 1/2 years was older than I am. The bad news: He is only 27 (ouch). I am 51.
Is it possible for a relationship to work when the age difference is so large? He said age is just a number, but I know it is more than that. It is a record of how long each of us has been alive.
Thanks for your advice.
—Frank



DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:
I started a new job last month for a small company with 20 employees. On my first day, I was overjoyed upon meeting Rhonda because my gaydar went off; I could detect she was a lesbian like myself.
She and I work on the same project and interact regularly. I am smitten with her, and every day is exciting to me because I know I will see her and get to be near her.
I was thinking about asking her out on a date, but then last week she mentioned her

DEAR FRANK:
The prospect of a new relationship is very exciting. And it would be lovely if age really were just a number. But if that were true, Junior would not have consecutively chosen two men who were so much older than he.
Consciously or not, he's looking for something specific that he feels he can get from someone 2 1/2 decades his senior. (Hello, Daddy?)
Ms. Behavior sometimes receives letters from people with intergenerational relationships that have soured, particularly when the age difference is so large. The traits that appealed to them in the beginning now annoy them.

two sons to me. I didn't know she had children. Then she told me she had a husband as well!
I was and still am crushed about this news. I thought there was something brewing between us, but now I guess not.
Rhonda used to be in the National Guard. Do you think that's what fooled me?
I can't believe how off base I was about Rhonda. What do you think?
—Crushed Over Rhonda

The younger member of the couple complains that the low-key lifestyle that once felt calming now seems too sedentary. The older member gripes that he secretly feels unable to maintain the level of activity his partner needs, and he yearns for more sophisticated companionship.
For the sake of perspective on your compatibility: Your boyfriend candidate was born after Watergate. Rock 'n' roll was virtually dead by the time he reached elementary school. He never had to suffer the pain of only a few television channels. He probably never wrote a school essay without a computer. He reached puberty when you were beginning middle age. By the time he was old enough to have sex, it was never safe to do it without a condom. Finally, by the time you reach the age that you'll need annual prostate exams, your boyfriend still won't have achieved his full bone mass.



DEAR CRUSHED OVER RHONDA:
News flash: Married women sometimes flirt with lesbians! And married women (even mothers!) sometimes are themselves lesbians.

So the chemistry you felt brewing between you and Rhonda probably was real. But that doesn't mean she necessarily wants to act on it or even acknowledge it. She just might enjoy the titillation of flirting with you.
It's also possible Rhonda does want to have an affair with you. But before you get yourself worked up about this possibility, Ms. Behavior must recommend against acting on it.
First, a relationship in the workplace, particularly a small office, is always dicey. (If Rhonda

None of this would matter much (you could consider it similar to a multicultural marriage), except that the chances of not engaging in a father-son dynamic are practically nil. Ultimately, your decision about whether to get involved should include some consideration of how you feel about that fact.
But who are we kidding? By the time you read this, you and Junior probably will be shopping for Nintendo for your living room.

is "straight," you quickly will gain a reputation as the lesbian who recruits from the National Guard.) Second, there's the very real risk of having your heart broken by a woman who only wants to dabble in Sapphic love and erotic pleasure.
Next, consider the fact that Rhonda served in the military. Given that, it's likely her husband did, too, or still does, in which case he's likely to have access to at least one gun.
As for the question of how many straight women serve in the National Guard: Ms. Behavior estimates there are fewer than could fit in a Volkswagen Beetle. ☐

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