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**ADVICE**

**Dishonest girlz**

Is it OK to lie to save her feelings?

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

My girlfriend recently quit her job as a certified public accountant to follow her lifelong dream to be an "artist." She's saved just enough money to pay her half of the rent and to not get too carried away with the romance of the starving artist.

The problem, Ms. Behavior, is that she's not very good. I mean, she's really not good.

And yet there she goes every day off to the garage—now her studio—to paint. She's talking about trying to show her work at some of the local galleries, but I don't think it's very likely.

I remain silently supportive of her dream. I do her paint-speckled laundry; I ask about her day; I tell her I'm proud of her, which I am—following a dream is a great thing.

My question is: Am I obligated to gently let her know that her work isn't that good and that she might have to adjust her expectations of being warmly received in the art community? If it were me, I'd want to know.

On the other hand, it's her path, and surely there's no lack of harsh reality in store for her. If I don't tell her, someone else will, but then won't she wonder if I knew all along? Is this a secret I should bring with me to the grave?

—Picasso's Partner

DEAR PICASSO'S PARTNER:

Although it would be dishonest for you to rave about your girlfriend's artwork, you also should not tell her it "isn't that good."

Having the time and money to do what she loves is a great blessing. Your willingness to do her paint-speckled laundry and your emotional support are probably very meaningful to her. If she must face discouragement, let it be from others.

You also can't be sure what's in store for your girlfriend. We all know of talented artists who never make a living. At the same time, a lack of artistic genius isn't a guarantee of failure. On occasion, a truly lousy painter has a noticeable, lucrative career.

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

I'm a 27-year-old lesbian who has only been out of the closet for about a year.

I met this wonderful woman who swept me off my feet. But I've come to find out almost everything she told me about herself was a lie.

She possesses a minimal amount of the qualities I find attractive in a woman, so as



**Ms. Behavior**

time has passed, I've found myself more and more attracted to other people with more of these qualities. One of the people I am attracted to is a mutual friend of ours.

My girlfriend and I have broken our relationship off because she is really insecure, jealous and immature. But I can't help thinking that one of the contributing factors is my attraction for this mutual friend, who is attracted to me as well.

My ex and I still live together as roommates and best friends. But I don't

know what to do with these feelings I harbor for our mutual friend. Would it be wrong for us to act on what we feel?

If my ex had only told the truth from the beginning, things would have turned out differently. I honestly can't stand to see my ex hurt, but I need to be true to myself.

—K.C.

DEAR K.C.:

It's no wonder your ex-girlfriend went from being a "wonderful woman" to seeming "really insecure, jealous and immature." You and the so-called "mutual friend" are probably exuding slippery sex hormones all over the place.

You're all juiced up and titillated over your secret attraction, barely refraining from trib-

adizing on the kitchen floor, right in front of your new "best friend." So how could your ex not feel jealous and insecure?

You say you can't stand to see your ex hurt, but what are you doing to reduce the harm? When people say, in this context, that they want to be "true" to themselves, it usually means they're about to disrobe.

Meanwhile, you blame your ex, saying if only she were honest from the beginning, none of this would have happened. But, except in the moment where you

wonder if your own attraction might be a "contributing factor," it sounds like you're the one who's not honest.

The problem is not that you've become attracted to someone else; it's that you're sneaking around and omitting the truth. The best thing you could do is to acknowledge the real reason you ended the relationship. Then, treat your ex with kindness and respect and move out. ☑

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

