

ADVICE

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

I'm a 23-year-old gay man. My longest relationship was with my childhood sweetheart—a girl—which started in the seventh grade and continued through college.

I'm still close to Betsy's parents, although she refuses to speak to me. She doesn't accept my homosexuality. She says it's an abomination because I was supposed to marry her, and she doesn't ever want to see me again. Her parents continue to write me cards and letters and to tell me they accept me as I am.

Can I remain close with her parents and see them on the sly when I visit home? I know it sounds weird, but they were like a second family to me. My boyfriend says I gave all that up when I gave up "boinking Betsy."

Is that true, Ms. Behavior? Does becoming gay mean you have to wipe away all the comforts of the past?

—Member of the Family

DEAR MEMBER OF THE FAMILY:

Being gay does not mean you have to wipe away all the comforts of your past. It only means you have to wear silly costumes, hold your wrist limply and talk with a lisp. (Actually, you could save that performance for a chance encounter with Betsy.)

When you refer to seeing her parents "on the sly," from whom are you hiding it? If you mean Betsy, Ms. Behavior sees no problem with your choice. You're not obligated to please her anymore. (In fact, it's unlikely you ever did, isn't it?)

You do, however, have an obligation to be truthful with your boyfriend about your

feelings for Betsy's family. He doesn't have to like your relationship with them, and he doesn't have to visit them with you, but you shouldn't hide from him your intention to see them.

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

Last fall my friend Joe introduced me to Sherry on a lesbian fix-up. He claimed she was a fantastic, stylish professional with a great sense of humor.

We went out on several dates. At first she seemed exactly as he described her, although soon she grew a little nervous and clingy. Within the month, Sherry had lost her job and apartment during some kind of rage attack and lost any semblance of sanity.

When I broke it off with her, she seemed unwilling to accept reality and kept calling, writing, sending gifts and dropping by. It was traumatic for me—like being stalked—and, finally, I got tough with her: "Sherry, you're not for me. Sorry things are rough, but I don't want to date anymore. Don't call or write. I do not want to be in contact with you ever again."

Boinking Betsy

You can give up the girl and still keep the parents



Ms. Behavior

Luckily, that did the trick.

Anyway, the problem is my friend Joe. It turns out he has known Sherry for years and has lived through these meltdowns of hers—freaking out, losing jobs, massive insecurities, verging on delusions—but he neglected to warn me.

Last night I saw him at a party. When I mentioned the experience, he just shrugged and said, "Guess she wasn't for you."

I know I should just let it go and write it off as a singular psycho lesbian dating experience, but I feel so

mad at his response. I also found out he's now planning to set her up with Sarah, a casual friend of mine. Should I warn her?

—Warning the World About Sherry

DEAR WARNING THE WORLD ABOUT SHERRY:

It sounds like Sherry needs a therapist (or some medication) a lot more than she needs a girlfriend. With the proper help, she might feel a lot better and not act so, well, nutty.

You can warn Sarah about your own experience with Sherry without being

unkind. Unless, of course, Sarah is one of those gentle-hearted, boundary-free lesbians who ache to fulfill all of someone's wacky needs. Haven't you met the type—professional dog groomer by day, amateur crisis counselor/psychodrama instructor by night, willing to act as caretaker, lover, career counselor, real estate agent, mommy and psychiatrist?

Joe might continue to try to foist Sherry onto unsuspecting lesbians because it lightens his burden—he might be the beneficiary

*When I broke it off with her, she seemed unwilling to accept reality and kept calling, writing, sending gifts and dropping by*

of her meltdowns when she's single.

But, at this point, it's no longer your problem. You can just consider his judgment tainted; don't trust him for matchmaking, movie reviews or home decorating tips. [ ]

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MERYL COHN is the author of *Do What I Say: Ms. Behavior's Guide to Gay and Lesbian Etiquette* (Houghton Mifflin). Her Internet site is [www.msbehavior.com](http://www.msbehavior.com). Send questions or correspondence to [msbehavior@aol.com](mailto:msbehavior@aol.com).

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