## THERAPY PAGE



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Note to reeders: Poor Uncle Mike is sick sick sick this month, and along with sending his regrets, asks us to print a rerun (Ann & Abbey. those twin paragons of American truth and virtue, do this on vecetion and so can we). We chose this column from March 1993, for its wry outtiness and fleeting reference to the OCA.

Dear Uncle Mike.

My aunt and uncle, whom I hardly know, are celebrating their 50th wedding

anniversary next month. They live an hour's drive away and our relationship is limited to Christmas and birthday cards. The few times I've seen them as an adult. they've been aloof to both me and my husband. Are we obliged to go? Do we have to take a gift? My husband says we should but I say why be phony? What do you think? Mary R. Portland

Dear Mary.

The first thing you should do is stop confusing Uncle Mike with Ann Landers. At the risk of startling you. Mary, there are real problems in the world, to say nothing of interesting questions. To say your concerns fall short of the mark is to hilariously understate the case. This said, we press on.

Should you honor your aunt and uncle on their 50th wedding anniversary? To answer this. Uncle Mike must first know if you were raised by weasels. If not, your dilemma disappears. Uncle Mike refuses even to discuss whether you should bring a

Dear Uncle Mike.

I've got a guy problem. You're a guy so maybe you can help. I'm 28, single, and have a great boyfriend. Neither of us has much money, but every time we go out, Peter insists on paying. It's not some lame paternal trip. In every other way, he treats me like an equal. He even let me push the car once when the battery was dead. Why can't I pick up a beer tab? Any ideas?

Jill W., Lincoln City

Dear Jill.

Uncle Mike's first idea is that you and he should drink beer soon. Uncle Mike's second idea is that you might be confusing cash flow with sexual politics. This can be a

Uncle Mike loves to hear of young swains bearing gifts of food, entertainment, and beer to the women they love. As long as they don't imagine they're buying or leasing something, it is, when you stop to think about it, a nice thing for them to do. What true friend would discourage acts of generosity?

Uncle Mike applauds your sense of fairness and recognizes the importance of your partner learning to receive beer as well as give it. But, as anyone in the barter economy or a successful relationship will tell you, giving takes many forms. Judging from what you cite as the only problem in the relationship. Uncle Mike would bet that you give as much as you get -- perhaps without knowing it. Men are funny. If yours wants to pick up the check, practice your thank-yous. Pick the right moment, look him in the eye, and tell him how glad you are he's your friend.

Dear Uncle Mike.

My problem is my husband. After 16 years of marriage, suddenly he wants to spend time with the boys. Playing poker, shooting pool, and drinking beer. He says he deserves it. I say his place is home with his family. We have a 15 year old daughter. Being a man, you'll probably take his side.

Donna T. McMinnville

Dear Donna.

Perhaps without meaning to, you've hurt Uncle Mike's feelings. Being nearly seven in dog years. Uncle Mike has seen enough of both sexes to shatter whatever loyalties or biases he might have suffered as a youth. He would do volunteer work for the OCA before siding against anyone on the basis of gender, even you. Sadly, at least in your case, the sword of fairness cuts both ways.

Your problem stems from your being a neurotic control freak getting even with the universe for not giving you a life. Rather than confront your own tawdry insecurities and grudges, you shoose to make your husband's life as miserable as your own by what amounts to "grounding" him. Such spousal abuse has nothing to do with gender. The world is filled with men stupid enough to believe that all the little woman needs is him, the kids, and the big screen.

Let the poor wretch out to play. What's the worst that can happen? He has fun? From the sound of things, you could use a night out yourself. Why not go to your mother's and whine about things. Tell your husband Uncle Mike advises he either drink beer or shoot pool. The only sight more pathetic than a pool player with impaired vision is a poker player drunk enough to raise on a pair.

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DO NOT HAVE TO LOVE WHAT I LOVE YOU OO NOT HAVE TO SING WHAT I SING YOU DO NOT HAVE TO PRAY HOW I PRAY YOU DO NO! HAVE TO DANCE LIKE I DANCE YOU DO NOT HAVE TO LAUGH AT MY IORES YOU DO NOT HAVE TO KISS WHAT I RISS AND THAT IS WHY I CELEBRATE AND YOU SHOULD CELEBRATE WITH

Distrust all men in whom the impulse to punish is powerful. Nietzsche



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