

Dear Uncle Mike,

My boyfriend is a wonderful guy. We're both in our mid-twenties, have jobs and plan on getting married within the year. We've known each other for over three years and he has always been respectful, kind and courteous to me in public and in private. I know that's who he is. What I don't understand is his choice of friends. Most of the guys he hangs out with are pigs. They tell ignorant sexist racist jokes and have at times been really obnoxious, for example when they watch football games at the local tavern. My boyfriend has never treated me badly. Why does he associate with guys that are such jerks? And should I be worried?

Mary, Eugene, Oregon

Dear Mary,

If you must worry, worry about your ability to deal with badly flawed men. Having one that evidently isn't should help matters greatly. In one way or another, most men, like most women, can be jerks; which is to say, they're capable of manifesting jerklike behavior from time to time. We all have our flaky edges. Having made nice, Uncle Mike must say he prefers not to be in the same room with sexist or racist swine let alone watch a football game with them. Of course, Uncle Mike doesn't even watch football games alone. If your sensitive and caring boyfriend laughs at the execrable jokes and gives high fives over adolescent references to female body parts, he's condoning and encouraging behavior you don't sound anxious to have in your life. He needs to deal with this. So do you. If you don't want to hang around in a psychological garbage dump observing a pack of male primates being obnoxious, don't. If, out of consideration for your friend, you continue to suffer, Uncle Mike recommends you not suffer silently. Civilization depends on not cutting the sad little piggies one inch more slack than they deserve. Your input could be the antidote to their bad brain chemistry. Molly Ivins tells a lovely story about former Texas governor Ann Richardson who, at a black tie affair, forced herself to listen politely as a good old hog made comment after comment about passing pairs of breasts. Finally, she turned to the ladies in the circle and asked if anyone had seen a good (colloquial term for penis) lately. Someone should build a monument to the woman. And you should explain to your boyfriend that there might be better things the two of you could do with your time than hang out with borderline nitwits. If he's the man you think he is, he'll agree.

Dear Uncle Mike,

Do you have kids? What are he/she/they like? Do they read your column and are they anything like you? Also, are your parents still alive? And what do they think of your advice? Are they as smart as you? What nationality are you?

Just Wondering, Willamina, Oregon

Dear Just,

Uncle Mike can't thank you enough for yet another reminder of how much more fun life is when we all mind our own business. Although he can't imagine why you're interested in his immediate family and is a little worried that you are, he'll be polite. Yes. Much like other people. Infrequently and a little. Yes. About what most parents would. You bet. Uncle Mike comes from a long line of air breathers.

Dear Uncle Mike,

Do you think people are inherently violent? My girlfriend does but I don't. Also, do you think rape is about power or sex? We're talking about this now in school. Thank you if you answer this. Some other kids in the class may write you, just a warning.

Sonia and Terri, Olympia, Washington

Dear Sonia and Terri,

You're more than welcome and thanks for the tip. No, Uncle Mike doesn't believe people are inherently violent. He believes they're inherently territorial and easily frightened. Cram them too close together and make them compete for food and shelter and someone's bound to punch someone else in the nose and take their stuff. Scare them enough and they'll punch you in the nose for no reason. Uncle Mike thinks rape is about power and sex. If it was only about power, the man would just punch the woman in the nose and take her stuff.

Dear Uncle Mike,

I don't have a problem, I have a situation. I'm a divorced and long time single man of fifty-four. A lady with whom I was involved two years ago has moved back to the area. Aside from the necessary acrimony during the breakup, we have maintained our friendship. Neither of us wants to start up again, living together is out of the question, but since neither of us was seeing anyone else, we started having sex occasionally. We see each other once or twice a month and are both satisfied with the relationship. The situation is that I have started seeing a woman. Last week she asked the inevitable question: am I seeing anyone else? I told her no because strictly speaking I'm not. We've only known each other three months and I doubt it will turn into a long lasting relationship. My old friend is no threat to her and I see no reason to rock the boat. I'm not a complete scoundrel and realize that I'm being less than open and honest but I can't see any harm to anyone by continuing to enjoy both friendships. As I said, I don't have a problem. I intend to follow my own feelings regardless what you say. I am interested in your opinion however and am sure your readers would be interested in the situation.

"Doug", Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Doug,

With all due respect, there is a problem and it's you. You are lying to a woman who, silly as it may sound, trusts you to tell her the truth. On Uncle Mike's block, this makes you a scoundrel. You either live the truth or you don't; if you don't, you're harming everyone. The relationship you've carved out with your old friend seems the very one you're emotionally and ethically equipped to handle: one in which your only responsibility is to show up with your hormones and a bottle of cheap wine. On behalf of women everywhere, Uncle Mike urges you to make this your only relationship. On behalf of men everywhere, we'd love to meet you behind the barn and show our appreciation for making our relationships with women more challenging than they already are.

Dear Uncle Mike,

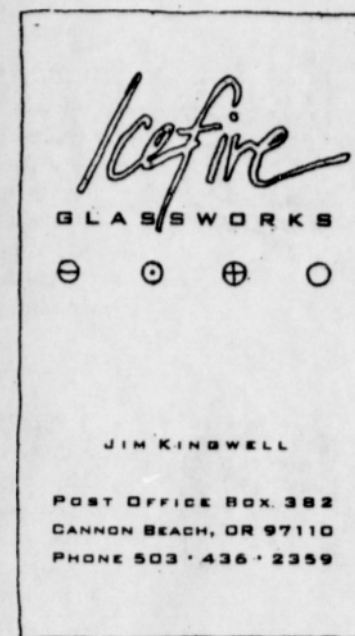
Some time back you had a running dialogue about toilet paper -- which way the roll should be. A friend told me about it but couldn't remember what the consensus was. I'd really like to know. Thanks.

William, Sacramento, California

Dear William,

If there was a consensus, Uncle Mike is blissfully unaware of it. When dialogues get pointless, he tends to nod off.

THE RARY PAGE



If the government was as afraid of disturbing the consumer as it is of disturbing business, this would be some democracy. Frank McKinney Hubbard



To limit the press is to insult a nation; to prohibit reading of certain books is to declare the inhabitants to be either fools or slaves. Claude Adrien Helvetius



The age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system. Thomas Paine

