



Dear Uncle Mike,  
 Maybe you can explain one of the mysteries of the (*adverbial adjective form of the colloquial term for coitus*) universe. Why do knock down gorgeous chicks who seem to have enough brains to function hook up with cretin jerks who treat them like cows? What the (*coitus again*) am I not getting here? And then they (professional term for a female dog) and moan because these (anuses) do them wrong. I'm starting to think women really are as stupid as these guys think they are. Is it as simple as that?  
 Aaron, Lincoln City, Oregon

Dear Aaron,  
 Sadly for fellows like you, nothing is as simple as it should be. Before sinking his fangs into your question, allow Uncle Mike to suggest renewed efforts on your vocabulary. If we must curse in public, we owe it to the world to do it with wit and flair; as opposed to the way you do it. There may be mysteries in the universe but the choices we make in mates is really not among them. We engage each other because we have something to learn and, like iron filings to a magnet, we're drawn to those people who are best able to teach us. Because we don't always, or even usually, know what it is we need to learn, the process can turn ugly fast; a fact accounting for much, if not most, country western music. Uncle Mike shares your pain. Like Uncle Mike, you must learn to just shake your head wish them all, yourself included, peace and joy. Insane laughter is also an option.

On a deeper, more personal note: Uncle Mike wonders who in the world you think you are to decide what some woman (or, as you put it, *chick*) you don't know wants and needs in a relationship? The only relationship these women have that's any concern of yours is the one they have, or don't have, with you. You should really try to leave the rest of it alone. You know nothing and are therefore neither expected nor entitled to an opinion. It is, in psychological terms, none of your business. Unless, of course, your goal is understanding as opposed to whining. In their urge to civilize men, women, bless their hearts, often ignore the difference between outlaws (rebellious spirits able to be housetrained) and criminals (functional sociopaths). We all have our crosses to bear.

Women also choose mates on the basis of how easy it is, and will be, to train and manage them: raising men for fun and profit is the pastime of many female sociopaths. You may or may not have had time to notice, but there are women whose practice of 'love' comes close to a crime against humanity: the major difference between them and a puff adder being that the puff adder will never pretend to like you. Many of these women look just like the women you're coveting. That they find someone of like mind merely saves two other people. In closing, Uncle Mike would once more remind you that none of this is any of your concern. If these women were meant to be interested in you, they would be interested in you. And, if they're not interested in you, who in their right mind would be interested in them? Interesting term, 'right mind'.

Dear Uncle Mike,  
 If time started with the big bang, when does it stop?  
 Annie, San Francisco, California

Dear Annie,  
 In our current understanding, there is no such thing as time. There is only space/time: an indissoluble marriage of the two. The question thus becomes, is there space/time? Strictly speaking, no. The universe functions on superluminal (faster than light) connections between observable object/events. Space/time is a metric imposed, either by the conscious observer or the deity of your choice, on a reality that can be neither measured or observed. As our old teacher Werner Heisenberg said: "There is no quantum reality. There is only a mathematical description of it." Regardless when space/time started, it will stop when the observer reaches the velocity of light. The problem being that, at the velocity of light, the metric of space/time breaks down and it will take that observer the rest of forever to notice. It's always something.

Dear Uncle Mike,  
 On our way to dinner recently, my friend and I were approached by a panhandler. My friend gave him a quarter. I told her that she is only adding to his problems since he probably just spent it on booze or dope. What do you think?  
 Shirley, Portland, Oregon

Dear Shirley,  
 About what? Do I think the human to whom you feel so superior raced off with your friend's quarter for a night of degeneracy? Not at today's rates. What would you have him do with his twenty-five cents? Save up for an SUV? Mostly, Uncle Mike thinks it's none of your business and suggests you review the definition of 'charity' and 'gift'. Being a less sterling person than yourself, if Uncle Mike found himself standing on the corner asking people like you for spare change, he might need a drink too. If you can't spare a quarter to make someone's load a little lighter, at least spare us your Calvinist moralizing. In closing, Uncle Mike sincerely hopes your job is secure and nothing awful happens to you.

Dear Uncle Mike,  
 I'm a divorced woman, thirty-six. I'm good looking, smart, and friendly. I also haven't had a date in months. It's not that my standards are too high, Lord knows. No one's even approaching me. Is it my breath? Something I said? Other women I know are having the same problem. What's with you guys?  
 Cynthia, Eureka, California

Dear Cynthia,  
 It depends a great deal on which guys you're talking about. No matter. Uncle Mike is a great advocate of taking things as they are. Karma being what it is, chances are you're alone for good reason. Instead of railing at the universe, admit the possibility that whatever is, is right. Being alone is one thing, being lonely quite another. Uncle Mike would suggest you stop defining yourself as half of a pair. Although he will vomit if he hears even once more that a woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle, he cautions you against imagining a man is the antidote for some existential poison you've taken.

Dear Uncle Mike,  
 Is there proper bathroom etiquette when people spend the night? When you're ready for bed, should you offer your guests first use or leave the bathroom for them after you've retired? I know it's not an earthshaking issue but I was just curious.  
 Mariah, Portland, Oregon

Dear Mariah,  
 People Uncle Mike knows well enough to let them sleep in his home generally go to the bathroom when they need to and go to bed when they're tired. If your guests start yawning and you're sitting on their hide-a-bed, by all means go brush your teeth and give it and them a rest.

# THE RARY PAGE

Dear Uncle Mike,  
 I live in a small town. Last week, a friend told me she'd been hearing rumors. Without getting into them, they're totally unfounded and completely out of character for me. I haven't lived here long enough for everyone to know better. Should I confront the situation or ignore it?  
 Innocent, Astoria, Oregon

Dear Innocent,  
 Uncle Mike would suggest a combination of both. Unless the people spreading the rumors are much larger than you or are known to carry weapons, wait for a public opportunity to help them put their ducks in a row. Within earshot of at least two other people, tell them their mouth seems much larger than their brain and that, in addition to having the ethics of a rabid weasel, they're full of crap and should dummy up and get a life. Uncle Mike assumes the people who really count know what's up with you. The opinions of others deserve to be roundly ignored. The banishing ritual for falsehood is to live the truth.

Dear Uncle Mike,  
 My wife's sister is a single parent and just got a job working nights. To help out, we volunteered to babysit. The little girl is three and is spoiled rotten. Her mother does not stand up to her in any way and when we do the child "tells on us". Telling her not to bounce on the furniture and climb on the coffee table is child abuse. My wife doesn't want to interfere because her sister has enough on her plate without getting lectured on child rearing but our evenings have become hell and I'm sick of it. I have no idea why I'm writing to you. Probably to let off steam.  
 Thanks.  
 James, Reno, Nevada

Dear James,  
 Don't mention it. Teaching children to behave like human beings is not child abuse; to not teach them is. It takes a whole village to raise an unpleasant child and you and your wife are adult villagers. When the child is in your care, the child is in your care. It will in no way scar her budding psyche to learn that when you're at Uncle James' house you don't jump on the furniture and climb on the coffee table. The easiest way to accomplish this (and the one that involves the least duct tape) is to stay one step ahead of the child by involving her, him (or, in worst case scenarios, it) in some more appropriate activity. This means, of course, that you can no longer "babysit": you need to engage this child's energy on levels that preclude sitting her in front of the TV set and hoping she vegges out. Read to the kid, take her for a walk, play catch. Even with adults, it's amazing how much attention-seeking behavior goes away when someone pays attention.

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I have too much respect for the truth to drag it out on every trifling occasion. Mark Twain