



Dear Uncle Mike,
 We're some young guys and you're an older guy. In your experience, what's the best way to meet babes? Was it different when you were young?
 Three Guys, Portland, Oregon

Dear Dunderheads,

Thanks so much for writing. From time to time, Uncle Mike is asked if the letters that appear in this column are real or if he just makes them up. Hearing from you helps him understand their doubts.

Uncle Mike can't be certain what you mean by "babes" but, if you mean women (what babes become once you learn to think of them as humans), he has no idea what the best way for you to meet them might be. Or, for that matter, if it's a good idea that you do. Uncle Mike suspects it mightn't work out.

But, since you took time from your busy day adjusting your baseball cap and playing air guitar to ask, Uncle Mike is, although suddenly very tired, polite enough to answer. The best way to meet an appropriate woman is to go about your life with the certainty she'll appear at exactly the right moment. If you go about your life in ways anything like Uncle Mike imagines, she'll live to regret it. You ask if things were different when Uncle Mike was young. He can only answer that some things never change.

Dear Uncle Mike,

My sister's son is seventeen. He's a good level headed kid, he does well in school and plays basketball. Never a serious problem. His girlfriend is sixteen and has had a rotten homelife. She lives with her father who has a new girlfriend who evidently doesn't like her. So she's living at my sister's place, with her father's permission. She has her own bedroom, my sister has a big house, and she's a nice girl. I've met her and she's not wild or anything. My sister says it works out great, that she and my brother-in-law like her and enjoy having her around. The problem is they don't think these two kids are having sex. Seriously. They say they've talked with both of them and believe they're not. Are they crazy or am I? I'm really concerned.

Don't Use My Name or Town

Dear Don't,

Interesting word, crazy. Before we begin, let Uncle Mike point out one of those simple truths that so often get lost in the nurturing folds of family concern: the situation you describe is not your business. Unless you believe your sister and her husband (who are, we mustn't forget, the young man's parents) are dangerously unbalanced and/or don't know as much about their family as you do, Uncle Mike's best advice is for you to put a cork in it.

This said, your sister and her husband are out of their minds. While it is, of course, mathematically possible that these two robust young animals will not, as it were, explore the mystery together, Uncle Mike would snort loudly if asked to bet on it. Even if you chained them to non-adjointing walls, he would ask for stiff odds. The question then becomes: should responsible adults allow two consenting adolescents to have sex under their roof? Who knows? A great deal would depend upon who, and where, the people are. Who knows if this young man and young woman have something significant to do together right now? Who's to say that being intimate with each other in a family setting won't benefit everyone involved? If no law is being broken, the two of them are aware of the difference between safe sex and stupid sex and the adults involved are willing to become a three generation household should something wondrous and unexpected happen, Uncle Mike is hard put for a reason to ask the authorities to intervene. Their plates are full enough dealing with young people no one cares about and the adults they turn out to be.

If your real concern is, as Uncle Mike suspects it might be, that your nephew and his girlfriend are having more fun than you did, or perhaps still are, let Uncle Mike assure you once more it's not your concern. The only sex life that concerns any of us is, thank goodness, our own. Chant this until you feel better.

Dear Uncle Mike,

One simple question: do you believe in reincarnation?

Julia, Lincoln City, Oregon

Dear Julia,

In the strictest sense of the word, no. Uncle Mike believes in incarnation; the prefix re- implies death, a metaphysical construct no longer supported by observation. We are, in simplest terms, wave forms: persistent resonances in a symphony of transformation. The electromagnetic field we see in the mirror will, hopefully while having whole bunches of fun, wax to full strength and then wane. At just the right moment, it will lie down and devolve into simpler systems. Uncle Mike sees himself as an organizing principle: a point conscious observer in a universe that is, at all points, conscious. His perspective, and yours, are integral aspects of the geometry of space/time; as eternal as a compass point sailing from whatever was to whatever will be on the inner tube we call Is.

If you want a war on drugs then you have to include gasoline, television and money.

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