



Dear Uncle Mike,
I have been in this relationship for two years that is going nowhere. So I really just want this person to either get with the program (marry me) or go away (like now). I hate to be a (female canine) but I can live with it. Any advice?

Karynn Online

Dear Karynn,

Before Uncle Mike wades into your complex situation, allow him to comment on your name. Clever spellings usually make Uncle Mike gag. He thinks yours is a very pretty rendition. As regards your love life, he would recommend offering your hand once more to the man, making certain he understands it's become a one time offer. If he needs more time to think, give him whatever time you've been wasting on him. No fault, no error, no blame. Just get on your horse and ride away.

Dear Uncle Mike,

Men never make any great, foolish gestures anymore. My suspicion is they never did. I'm talking, of course, about women. I've heard these stories all my life, but I've never actually met a man "ruined" by a woman (I've met plenty of women ruined by men). Where are these great mythical creatures? Are there any left in the South? And while we're at it, I'd like to meet the woman who could inspire such behavior. Thanks. I feel better now.

Mary, Portland, Oregon

Dear Mary,

Uncle Mike is glad you feel better. He feels pretty good himself, although slightly sad that the men in your life have been, from the sounds of things, tragically downsized. Any man not inspired by love to do grand and foolish things is a man busy dying. For better or worse, civilization was built largely by men trying to impress a woman. One of the great lessons love delivers to men is that there are people in the world more important than themselves; people worthy of grand dreams and noble gestures; people who embody, as well as inspire, the union of flesh and spirit. Falling in love is a religious experience which, by definition, should transform us. Done properly, we become a better version of ourselves. For men, this means becoming a willing fool for love, something women seem to do more naturally. (If women weren't willing to love unconditionally, and without reason, men would be even lonelier than they are.) For the magic to work, men must be willing to be inspired and women must be willing to inspire them. Sadly, Inspiration is now a perfume and will soon be a car model. We are being led, by those who want our money, to surrender to our idiot wants instead of to our needs. We eat life as if we were fast food and wonder why our spirits wither. We are taught the lie that the human adventure boils down to loving things and using people. Uncle Mike hates to sound like a greeting card but the human adventure involves only one thing: love. Behind all the bells and whistles, we all want to feel good, we all want to be happy. Falling in love is pure joy, which is to say, a religious experience. When we love we become twelve pounds of human in a ten pound bag. We become aware of deep secrets hiding in plain sight. We experience what it means to be alive. (The end result is being able to fall in love with a radish, but we needn't go that far here.) Men do grand and foolish things because women make them understand that grand and foolish things need to be done. Unless we learn not merely to love but to make our love a force in the world, we're worse than foolish. We're fools. Thank you. Uncle Mike feels even better now.

Dear Uncle Mike,

Did God really talk to Jesus literally? What do you think?
Shelly in Corvallis, Oregon

Dear Shirley,

Uncle Mike has no problem with the notion of God talking to anyone. The ineffable unity behind the world is babbling happily to us all the time. Our great teachers are those with the wisdom to listen longer and harder to the silence. They're easily spotted by their generosity and their grins.

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If you want to understand democracy,
spend less time in the library with Plato
and more time in buses with people.
Simeon Strunsky

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As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy.
Abraham Lincoln