

People want to honor the commitment that they've made, but they don't want to live for decades and decades without any sexual fulfillment or even sexual release.

"Savage Love" grew to syndication in dozens of newspapers, and Savage embraced his role as a public figure, writing books entwined with his personal life (*The Kid, The Commitment, Skipping Towards Gomorrah*). Recently, he became distressed by the spate of suicides by young kids and teens bullied about their sexual identities. With his husband, Terry Miller, he started the "It Gets Better Project" as a YouTube channel that outgrew its video upload limit and became a website and a book. A compendium of thousands of testimonies from adults across the spectrum of sexual orientation and identity, the project aims to deliver the message that the bullying, which might be unbearable or inescapable in youth isn't lifelong — things get better, and there's enough cause for hope to keep surviving. Now he's been given the green light to develop *Savage U*, a late night advice show on MTV.

Between his anti-suicide advocacy and his leadership of the sex advice arena, Savage is one of the country's most-consulted oracles, which often demands judgments of right and wrong. Like Emily Post, Dear Abby and Ann Landers, Savage has a personal code and a sense of propriety. But does that make him an ethicist?

Savage monogamy

"I've never thought of myself as an ethicist," Savage told *EW*. "I think of myself as a fag." He consults a professional ethicist, Randy Cohen, when a letter writer requests ethical advice. He's asked Cohen about issues like disclosing positive HIV status, discussing sexual arrangements and what images are appropriate for masturbation.

Tom Bivins, the University of Oregon's John L. Hulteng Chair in Media Ethics, agrees that Savage is probably not an ethicist in the technical sense. But he says that's the case with most newspaper advice columnists. "They've historically come by their work because they're good at it; they're intuitive probably," Bivins says. Rather than taking on the role of the ethicist, advice columnists play roles similar to friends: sought out for help based on their reputations and relationships with their readers.

Savage seems to take delight in pissing off people, not normally the mark of a so-called ethicist. "In my opinion, if someone sets out intentionally to offend people, there's an ethical problem with that," Bivins says. While Bivins says that he isn't familiar with Savage's work, it's clear that changing the meaning of a person's name to "frothy lube-semen-fecal matter" was intended to offend. According to Bivins, that's where the important question comes in: Why publish something offensive?

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