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SAVAGE LOVE

CENTENARY COLLEGE OF LOUISIANA
BY DAN SAVAGE

READERS: A crowd of smart, engaged students packed a theater for Savage Love Live at Centenary College of Louisiana last week. Centenary is a terrific liberal-arts school in Shreveport. Centenary students submitted more Qs than I could possibly A in the 90 minutes I had with them. So here are some bonus answers to questions I didn't get to during my time there.

How does a young person learning to accept their sexuality come to terms with losing the unconditional love of their family?

You can't lose something you never had. You weren't aware of the conditional nature of your family's love until you accepted yourself and asked your family to do the same. That's how you discovered their love for you came with at least one condition: You had to be straight or be closeted. Now here's a paradox for you: You lost the illusion of your family's unconditional love when you came out, but coming out could win you their unconditional love in the end. Stand your ground, demand their love and respect—and your family, like the families of so many other queers, may grow to love and accept you for who you really are. It could take some time. But one day, you may be able to look back and see that your sexuality didn't cost you your family's unconditional love—it won it for you.

What do you do when your male friend who is already in a relationship (engaged) wants to have sex with you but lets you know via social media?

You block him or fuck him—or you fuck him and then block him.

How can you have a conversation with a man about his sexual performance without making him feel like you're criticizing him and without giving him the impression that you're unsatisfied?

By opening with a compliment, closing with a compliment, and making sure everything that comes between your opening compliment and closing compliment is also a compliment.

Do you think "butch" lesbians are really transgender? Nope.

Are you really anti-transgender? Nope.

How can we be sure that having an "open" relationship won't hurt our relationship?

You can't be sure that openness won't hurt your relationship. But you can't be sure that closedness won't hurt your relationship, either. Yes, sometimes relationships end after people open them up—and openness gets the blame, even if it had nothing to do with the breakup. But plenty of tightly closed/strictly monogamous relationships end every day. It's possible that many of those failed monogamous relationships could've been saved by some openness, a little leeway, or embracing monogamishamy.

I have been in a relationship with a married woman for five years. What are the odds that she will leave her spouse to be in a committed relationship with me instead?

I put the odds at zero. Unless this woman is in an honest open relationship with her husband, and LTRs with other men are allowed, her relationship with you is proof that she's not much good at this commitment stuff. By which I mean to say: Even if she did leave her husband for you, it would be foolish of you to expect to have a committed relationship with her—committed in the sexually-and-romantically-exclusive sense of the term—as she's currently not committed to the man to whom she's committed. What makes you think she'll commit to you?

Can you pray the gay away?

A girl can pray for whatever she wants.

Can it hurt a long-term, monogamous relationship if you had multiple sexual partners/experiences before? Or rather, how do you feel about sleeping around before marriage?

People who marry young—people who are likelier to have married without having had multiple partners/experiences—divorce at much higher rates than more experienced people who marry later in life. Sleeping around before marriage seems to help people figure out what they want. Or it helps them figure out whether what they were taught to want is actually what they do want. And someone who knows what they want is likelier to keep any long-term, monogamous commitments that they make.

Could I possibly be allergic to sperm?

You could! Possibly! Dr. Debby Herbenick, while filling in for me on Savage Love Letter of the Day duties recently, covered the topic of why some people are sensitive—sensitive to the point of explosive diarrhea—to semen: "Prostaglandins are substances made by the body and that the body is sensitive to. Semen contains prostaglandins—and prostaglandins can have a laxative effect on people. Related: If you've ever felt a little loosey-goosey right before getting your period, that's also thanks to prostaglandins (which spike just before your period, because the prostaglandins get the uterine muscles to contract, which then helps to shed the lining of the uterus, resulting in a menstrual period). Prostaglandins are also used to induce labor. So why don't more semen swallowers find themselves running to the bathroom post-blowjob? Fortunately, we're not all so sensitive to prostaglandins. I don't know why most people aren't extra-sensitive, but fortunately most of us aren't, or there would probably be a lot less swallowing in the world." Dr. Herbenick is a research scientist at Indiana University, a sexual-health educator at the Kinsey Institute, and a frequent Savage Love guest expert—and you can and should follow her on Twitter @DebbyHerbenick.

What is the difference between a Methodist and a Baptist?

There's no difference between a Methodist and a Baptist, according to my Catholic grandma. They're both going to hell.

What is the percentage of people who find male partners with the perfect penis? Perfect size, shape, length, girth, texture, head-to-shaft differential?

There's no research out there on this issue—no one has thought to pick the brains of folks who have successfully landed male partners with perfect penises—and I'm not sure such studies would even be possible. Because penis preferences are subjective: One person's perfect penis is the next person's imperfect penis. And isn't the person to whom a particular penis is attached at least as important as the size, texture, head-to-shaft differential, etc. of any given penis? Imagine if you made it your life's work to locate the world's perfect penis—perfect length, girth, bouquet, flavor, mouthfeel, etc.—only to discover that the penis is attached to Bill O'Reilly. Could that penis still be called perfect?

This week on the Lovecast, Dan chats with a panel of sex workers: savagelovecast.com.

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