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SAVAGE LOVE

PAIR OF ACES
BY DAN SAVAGE

I've been reading your advice column in the Coast in Halifax for a while, and it seems that most solutions to relationship problems revolve around sex. Everyone wants it or needs it, we should fuck before dinner, or we can spice up our sex life in this certain way to be happy. What about someone who doesn't want to have sex, ever? I've asked other people for advice, and the answer is usually "take one for the team," have sex to keep them happy. Is that the only way I could find happiness in a relationship? It's not something I want to do—but at this point, I don't see any other options.

All Alone Ace

I'm a sex-advice columnist. Consequently, AAA, people tend to write me when sex (needing it, wanting it, getting it but not the kind you want, etc.) is the problem, and sex (in some new and improved form) is often-but-not-always the solution. I also get and respond to questions from asexuals, and I've urged sexuals not to regard asexuals as defective—or, for that matter, to view committed-but-sexless relationships as defective. So long as both people in the relationship are content and happy, it's a good and healthy and functional relationship, whether the sex is vanilla or spicy or nonexistent. Strictly companionate marriages can be good marriages.

As for "taking one for the team," that's not advice given only to asexuals. A woman who's married to a foot fetishist, for instance, may be advised to "take one for the team" and let her husband perv on her feet. A vanilla guy married to a woman corrupted by *Fifty Shades of Grey* (it's *baaaaaack*) may be advised to "take one for the team" and tie the wife up once in a while. And while there are certainly lots of asexuals out there taking one for the team—having sex to please/keep/shut up their partners (or allowing their partners to seek sex elsewhere)—you know who doesn't have to take one for the team, ever? Asexuals with other asexuals.

Dating another asexual is the other option, the obvious option, and may be the best option for you, AAA. (Don't want to take one for the team, ever? Don't draft anyone onto your team who wants one, ever.) A quick Google search brings up several asexual dating sites: Asexualitic.com, AsexualMatch.com, Ace-Book.net, AsexualPals.com. You can also choose to identify as asexual—and search for other asexuals—on mainstream dating sites like OkCupid and Match.

I can already hear you composing your response, AAA: Asexuals are just 1 percent of the population. There are 400,000 people in Halifax, which means there are 3,999 other asexuals. Sounds like a lot, but most will be too young, too old, or unappealing for political or personal reasons (loves Kevin O'Leary, hasn't seen *Moonlight*, picks their nose with an oyster fork). And a significant chunk of that number may not be aware—yet—that they're asexual. So realistically, AAA, your local dating pool is much smaller than 3,999.

But! Good news! There are 7.5 billion people on the planet! And 75 million of them are asexual!

I have a good friend with a unique array of kinks—a crazy, specific, and rare constellation of kinks—and he cast a wide net on kink dating apps. After he met someone on the other side of the world with all the same kinks and they hit it off via Skype and the guy provided my friend with references (put my friend in touch with friends who could vouch for him), my friend flew to the other side of the world to go on a first date. Two months later, he went back, stayed for a few months, and then moved abroad to be with Mr. Kink Match On The Other Side Of The World. My friend did things people are typically advised against—who gets on a 12-hour flight to go on a first date?—because he knew there weren't many lids out there for his particular pot.

Asexuality isn't a kink, I realize, but you can and should cast a wide net, AAA, like my kinky expat friend. Don't let geography limit you in your search. You may not be able to afford to do what my friend did—fly halfway around the world for a first date—but you can get your ass to the next province over if you hit it off with an asexual in New Brunswick or Quebec. Good luck.

I'm a 22-year-old lesbian living in Utah. I'm finally going back to college this fall. I have autism (high functioning), and I couldn't handle going to school full-time while working. Thus I will be stuck living at my parents' house, as I couldn't afford rent and living expenses on my own. The problem is, my parents are super Republican and religious. While I live at home, I can't date (they are against me being gay), I can't drink, and I can't watch movies with swears. They also force me to participate in daily scripture study, which I hate. I don't know what to do. I can't be myself or have any fun while I live at home because I'm afraid my parents will kick me out. But I can't afford to move out, either. I'm shy and socially nervous, so I don't have any friends who could help me out, and I can't see living with roommates who are strangers. I'll be 29 by the time I graduate, and I don't want to live like this for that long. Any advice? Maybe I could work something out with my parents, but they are set in their ways and I don't want to hurt them.

Under Their Authoritarian Homophobia

If they were just enforcing "their rules" about booze in their house, that would be one thing. But requiring your adult daughter not to date anyone, or not to be a lesbian at all, is just mean. (A lot of insane religious people believe homosexuality is an act, not an identity, so someone who isn't currently having gay or lesbian sex isn't actually gay or lesbian. By that standard, I haven't been gay for hours.) And leveraging their daughter's autism and social isolation and economic dependence against her in order to control her? Meaner still.

You say you don't want to hurt your parents—you're a good daughter—but it's clear your shitty parents don't care if they hurt you.

Typically my advice would be to tell your mean and shitty parents what they want to hear—to feel free to lie to them under duress—and then lean on your friends, do your own thing outside of the house, and be careful not to get caught. But that's not an option for you.

So you'll have to ask yourself what you value more: freedom now or getting your degree sooner rather than later. If it's your freedom, move out, get a job, go to community college, and take your time getting that degree. If it's getting your degree before turning 30, knuckle under, spend a lot of late nights "studying in the library," and go to the student resource center on your campus and ask if there are any campus services/support groups for students with autism or Asperger's syndrome. Who knows? You might meet some people who you could see yourself living with, as roommates and friends, and be able to get out of your parents' house sooner rather than later.

P.S. You're in Utah, UTAH. If there's an LGBT student group on your campus, go to the meetings and share your story. You might meet a gay Mormon boy with parents like yours—shitty and mean—who could use a fake girlfriend until he graduates, and you could use a fake boyfriend until you move out of mom and dad's.

On the Lovecast, two tricky pregnancies: savagelovecast.com.

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