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SAVAGE LOVE



DEFINING DECENCY DOWN
BY DAN SAVAGE

My wife and I have a decent sex life. Pretty vanilla, but we're busy with work, chores, and life in general with two small kids, so I can't complain too much. About a year after having our second kid, I went down on my wife. As usual, we both enjoyed it greatly. Unfortunately, about a week later she got a yeast infection. She attributed the YI to the oral, and since then I am strictly forbidden from putting my mouth anywhere near her pussy. I understand that YI are no fun, painful, and embarrassing. I understand her reluctance. But I've never heard of oral sex causing YI, although I realize I might be misinformed. How do I win back her trust to let me go down on her? No one is about to mistake me for Sting when it comes to my endurance during intercourse, so having the ability to pleasure her without penetration is important.

Dirty Mouth Guy

"Yeast is not an STI," said Dr. Anika Denali Luengo, an ob-gyn in Portland, Oregon. "Yeast (candida) is a normal denizen of the vagina, and an infection simply means there is an overgrowth of it on the vulva or in the vagina."

People are likelier to get a yeast infection—or likelier to experience yeast overpopulation, since yeast is a citizen of Vagina City—when they're on antibiotics, they have diabetes, or their immune system has taken a hit.

"Oral sex can be a slight risk factor in transmission of candida," said Dr. Denali Luengo, "but the frequency of candidiasis is not increased by the frequency of sex, so it may not happen next time. Also, if her symptoms developed one week later, it could have been pure coincidence."

A coincidence—that was my hunch when I read your letter, DMG.

"Luckily, they are easy to treat—over the counter miconazole or the single-dose pill fluconazole—and are basically just a nuisance and present no major health risks," said Dr. Denali Luengo.

I got divorced five years ago after a 15-year marriage that produced two children who are now 13 and 6. When their mother moved out, she left pretty much everything. I took the wedding mementos—dress, video, photo albums—and threw them in a trunk. I have not looked at them since. Last night, my girlfriend of almost a year told me she thinks it is "really fucked up" that I still have this stuff. Is it?

Box Of Mementos Bothers

It's not, BOMB. Your marriage is a part of your past—it shaped the man you are today, the man your current girlfriend claims to love—and your children are a product of that marriage. Even if you never looked at those items again, even if they held no sentimental value for you (and it's fine if they do), one day your children might want to see those pictures or watch that video or handle that dress. And any attempt to erase your first marriage—by stuffing those items down the memory hole—could be interpreted by your children as evidence that you would have erased them too, if you could have.

Your girlfriend is a grown-up, and she needs to act like one. She's free to think it's fucked up that you still have those wedding mementos, of course, but it's ultimately none of her business and she needs to STFU about it.

I'm a 31-year-old gay man. I grew up in a conservative town and got a late start exploring my sexuality. I lost my virginity at 26, but I lacked the confidence to really allow myself to enjoy sex until I learned how to enjoy the present moment. I really hit my stride a couple of months ago, and now the floodgates have opened. I get on Grindr and have sex up to three times a week. I feel in my gut that this isn't a compulsion so much as an exploration, and something I need to get out of my system while I search for a monogamous relationship. As long as I'm safe, do you see any problem with me fucking around for a while?

Please Don't Use My Name

You're on your cumspringa, PDUMN. Most gay men have at least one. Be safe, get on PrEP, remember that HIV isn't the only sexually transmitted infection (use condoms), enjoy yourself, and be kind to the guys you meet on your cumspringa (even those you don't expect to see again). And if a monogamous relationship is what you ultimately want—and monogamy is a fine choice—telling yourself that sexual adventures are something you have to get out of your system first is a mistake. People who convince themselves that serious commitment means the death of sexual adventures—particularly people who enjoy sexual adventures—will either avoid commitment entirely or murder the ones they make so they can have sexual adventures again.

I'm not saying you have to be nonmonogamous, PDUMN. I'm saying a couple can be exclusive and sexually adventurous at the same time. I'm also saying the person you are now—a person who enjoys sexual adventures—is the person you're likely to be after your cumspringa is over and you're ready to make a commitment.

I'm a straight-identified guy in my early 30s. I am married, but my wife lives in another part of the country and we're doing an open relationship until she moves to live with me. Last weekend, I met a girl at a bar who ended up coming home with me, and she turned out to be a pre-op trans woman. I'd never been with a trans person before, so I decided to just roll with it and ended up having a pretty good time. Over the course of the weekend, I started to get the sense that she really liked me and maybe even considered me boyfriend material. I want to see her again, but I'm not really available for a serious relationship. Knowing the kind of unbelievable shit trans people have to deal with, I feel like it would be unfair to string her along. She is not aware of my marital status. What should I do?

Can't Think Of Funny Acronym

O brave new world that has such straight-identified guys in it.

Anyway, CTOFA, here's what you should do: Get in a time machine and go be completely—what's the word?—oh right, go be completely straight with this woman *before you take her home from that bar*. You're married and doing the LDR thing and the marriage is open and you're available for fun but nothing more.

No time machine? Then handle it the same way you would if you'd deceived some cis woman—excuse me, if you'd accidentally gotten some cis woman's hopes up by failing to mention the wife. Level with her—you're married—and let the nips fall where they may. She might be angry or she might not give a wet squirt (she may not be as interested as you think she is). If she accuses you of making up a wife because you don't want to date a trans woman, it shouldn't be hard to prove your wife—and your marriage—exists.

Finally, CTOFA, you say it would "be unfair to string her along" because of the "unbelievable shit trans people have to deal with." It would be unfair—it would be wrong—to string a cis woman along, too. Stringing people along is wrong, period.

On the *Lovecast*, we love Lindsey Doe from *Sexplanations*, and you will too: savage-lovecast.com.

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