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OPINION

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Older Men And Younger Women Older Women And Younger Men...

BY C.M. BROOKS

She is 26 years of age. He is 39. While she was making her debut to her parents and to the world, he had reached a milestone in his life by entering high school as a freshman. When she was in the fourth grade mastering the art of cursive handwriting and grasping rudimentary mathematical concepts, he was intellectualizing social controversies like the Vietnam War and the Peace Talks.

The age old question about the age difference factor plays an important role in the dynamics of relationships. Does being ten, fifteen, or twenty years your partners' junior or senior really make a difference in the relationship? And why do younger people seek out older people and vice versa? What about the generation gap and how does it affect the two people involved?

Almost every female friend that I have has always dated someone who was older, sometimes with someone who was significantly older. What is the attraction? For women or at least my friends, dating an older man has more advantages than dating someone who is of the same age as themselves.

There is the perception that the older man possesses a certain level of maturity that cannot be found in someone who is 25 years of age. With so much life experience behind him the older man has an understanding of life that can be shared and even used as a guide like that of a teacher-student relationship.

Wisdom can be a "turn-on" for a lot of people: it is an element found in someone who has lived life and gone through achievements and seen defeats. It is not so easily available in someone who is younger through no fault of theirs, but it is an asset that a lot of people would like to have in a mate.

Dating an older person also brings to mind someone who knows what they want out of life and they know how to go about getting the most out of it. He/she is stable, secure emotionally and financially, and is ready for love and understands commitment. As a friend put it, "older men are more attractive because they are able to provide you with the better things that life has to offer. They are able to enjoy evenings out, purchase gifts, vacation once a year, and they have established the kind of morals and values that you are looking for. Younger men are busy trying to better themselves by going to school or they don't know how or don't want to cultivate loving relationships because it is not a priority." I personally think that this is a rather shallow statement, but it is relevant. I wonder how many people have turned down a date because he didn't have a car or it was a beater? I wonder how many readers out there have overlooked someone because they didn't have enough money to spend on a nice evening out?

Not only is the old man perceived to be wiser and more stable, but

he is also seen as more challenging. His knowledge and education offers you a level of depth that a younger person may not have. They are able to discuss the social and political atmospheres of different countries. They are able to appreciate art and music. With a younger man you may be limited to the mundane. You would converse about the present because that may be what is important at the time in their life.

So if older men provide all the things that some women feel is necessary in a relationship, then why should the generation gap be important to the relationship? My cousin had this piece of wisdom to share about the dreaded generation gap. She thinks that the "generation gap is a farce. With the media being so dominate in our culture, every generation has been exposed to every age group even though they may not be living that particular arrangement. If you don't live a particular lifestyle, than you have at least heard about it or have seen it. Besides, thinking is not a generation thing. This type of relationship is not a matter of different generations, but a matter of what you have been taught. A 50-year old person and a 25-year old person may be different in age, but what they have in common is that they were both raised to believe in God, that they must work, and so forth. Anyone who does not accept this kind of relationship simply is unwilling to listen and unwilling to understand. There is no generation gap, only a slight margin."

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

I used to be very difficult for me to imagine dating someone born in the year 1965 when you consider that I was born ten years (1955) earlier. This is by no means to suggest that it could not work, but there are some serious issues that need to be addressed before (we) I consider such a relationship.

Issues surrounding maturity, values, expectations of each other, and the individual needs of the parties involved at the time they encounter. A decade can make a big difference in a relationship when it comes to personal development and growth.

Let's have some fun before developing this premise any further. Take me for example, by the time I was ten years old (1965), I had already attended four elementary schools, lived at eight addresses around the nation's capital, established a juvenile criminal record, experienced my first sexual encounter, and knew first hand the pain of growing up in a broken household. I was angry, mad at the world, my parents, and I had no regard for authority or established law and order. Simply put, I was out of control and headed for self-destruction.

Imagine, experiencing all of this pain and hurt before a person ten years younger than me barely enters the world. While they laid, hopefully in peace, in the homes of their parents, I ran like a wild boar through the streets. While they laid in the cradle, I had already listened to Dr. Martin Luther King speak, shook the hands of Senator Hubert H. Humphreys and Robert Kennedy, and watched vividly his brother John F. being shot to death on the television news accounts. I can recall coming home only to find everyone in the house crying, predicting doom for black people, and wondered how VP Lyndon B. Johnson would do. They were crying for Kennedy. I can also remember passing out "LBJ for the USA" bumper stickers and encouraging my family not to vote for Barry Goldwater because he would make us go to school on Saturday's. Yes, I can recall a great many events and memories up to the year 1965 or to age ten.

Now, am I a better person or more mature because of these experiences? Am I wiser? More mature? More perceptive? Enlightened? More stable emotionally and intellectually because I have a ten year jump on a woman I might date? In some cases, yes, but younger does not always mean less smarter and if people learn to accept others for their face value, chances are they will learn something new. Respect is very important. If a man grows up in a ghetto environment and dates a middle class woman with an open mind, he should learn or be exposed to a new set of values and a lifestyle contrary to his upbringing. He could also reject what she has to offer. We all have something to offer in relationships, regardless of the age factor or perceived level of maturity. Age is just a number that indicates how long a person has been on earth, not their intellectual capacity. It (age) is also a poor way for a person to assert their superiority or attempt to gain a psychological advantage over another person. It is wrong. Again, there are some advantages to being old, but that does not make a person better than another and I am speaking strictly in terms of adult relationships. I know some old fools.

Why would an older woman want a younger man and why would an older man want a younger woman? First, let us take a look at the older woman. She might have more energy, sex drive, spirit, and imagination than a man her age. It has been suggested by many scholars that a woman reaches her sexual peak between the age of 38-42. On the other hand, a man reaches his sexual peak between the ages of 18-22. From that point, it has been documented that a males testosterone (sex hormones) decreases with age. It is no wonder that the older woman and a younger male match up well. However, can that younger man be sensitive or have a "slow hand" as the Pointer Sisters suggested? Is it all about "sex" or being pounced on for hours by the younger man? Hopefully, it's about love and respect. Some younger men are out for the cash, credit cards, and other material things older women can provide.

What about older men and younger women? Some younger women enjoy the company of an older man because he might be more sensitive, secure economically, and generally more stable than his younger counterpart careerwise. As one twenty-five year old female stated, "most of the guys my age are into the fast life or in jail. Many of them have no direction..." Some younger women have no recourse but to date older men. Sadly, many older men (or sugar daddies) date younger women for egotistical reasons and for added prestige among their peers. It may cost him dearly, but looking good in public may be more important than his wallet or bank account. What bothers this columnist the most is the older men leaving their wives of decades for some "pretty young thang". It goes both ways. Women leave their longtime mates for the same reasons. If a persons needs are not being met, most often they will seek other options or consider a new mate. It's human nature. Not all of these encounters are based on individual selfishness or greed, some are true love and blessed from the start.

Personally, I do not know the reasons why, but I meet more women a decade younger than my own age. Most women my age are usually married or divorced and do not want to again, or have children and do not want anymore. This is a problem because I would like to get (oneday) married and father children. By the same token, most 25 year olds are just starting out in their careers, are attending undergraduate/graduate school, and do not want to be married or have children until later in life. However, there are exceptions to the rule and timing is very important when dealing with a younger person. Patience is important too. It is important because the younger individual might not be capable of meeting the older persons needs and frankly, they might not want too.

Age may be a factor in the beginning of a relationship, but life has a way of closing the gap as time goes by. That same twenty-five year old will be 50 years later when I'm 60. It gets better with time.



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AFTER 7

Kevon Edmonds Melvin Edmonds Keith Mitchell



Seemingly overnight, After 7 have rocketed to the top of the charts, and established themselves as a dynamic force in the music world. The group's self-titled debut has already gone gold and is racing toward platinum status, spawning hit singles in the process. "Ready or Not" landed in the top ten of Billboard's pop singles chart, and went to #1 on the black music charts; "Can't Stop," "Heat

Of The Moment," and "Don't Cha Think" have made major inroads at radio and retail.

In addition to chart success, After 7's live performances have earned much praise. Billboard said: "The group's smart choreography, easy stage presence, and smooth vocal blend recalled the best of old soul while updating it to a modern sound."

The trio includes the sibling and cousin of one of the industry's most prolific teams-L.A. and Babyface. Melvin and Kevon Edmonds are Babyface's brothers, while Keith Mitchell is L.A.'s cousin. Their debut album is truly a family affair, having been produced by L.A. and Babyface.

After 7's appeal is due more to talent than predestination, but the destinies of the two families provide a fascinating background story. L.A., Babyface and the members of After 7's are natives of Indianapolis, and their collective success is a tribute to their strong work ethic and Midwestern values.

Keith's musical roots are firmly entrenched in the church. Although he had no formal training, he was directing the youth choir at the age of seven and continued to sharpen his vocal talents up to and including the time he first hooked up with the others. Melvin and Kevon have a similar background: "We were always surrounded by music," noted Kevon. "Our mother sang in the church and both parents kept music alive in our home. We grew up listening to the great jazz artists of their era. Singing was like breathing...it was something we had to do."

After 7's sound is instantly recognizable: a mixture of whip-crack dance grooves and romantic ballads effortlessly blend with a classic sweet-soul vocal style reminiscent of legendary groups such as the Temptations, The Four Tops and the Whispers. "We think our sound is very special," said Melvin.

After 7's long-term goals include plans to establish their own management and production company, with the intention of providing an outlet for up-and-coming talent and to give something back to the community.