

The Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of a family disagreement presented to the Council. The Council deals with problems, major and minor, encountered by guidance counselors and social workers. Edited by Mrs. Alma Denny. (Copyright by General Features Corp.)

Nanette J. - She paints, so she expects everyone to humor her.

Dorothy T. - I think a real friend should feel for her friend.

Nanette J. - Dotty is 37 and she and I, and our families before us, have always been bosom friends. Now, out of the blue, she decides she's an artist and gives me strict orders not to call her during the

day because that's when she's painting.

Her husband falls for that temperament stuff, but not me. I think she's just pushing people around. Her "art" doesn't amount to a hill of beans. She just fell for her instructor's "line," and now she wants to chuck over everything else and just make masterpieces.

She used to meet me for lunch, or just chat on the

phone. But last time I called she asked me to get to the point, she had no time. No time for her oldest friend. She'll be sorry, giving up friends for a hobby. She's betting on the wrong horse.

Dorothy T. - Nan doesn't understand that this is more than a hobby to me. It's a dream come true—the chance at last to paint seriously. Years ago it was a hobby. While the children were growing up, I played around with oil paints and was able to be a pal to everybody, including Nan. But now it's full steam ahead. I know I can't kid around any more, if I want to perfect my technique. I'm not upstaging Nan, I

know I'm no Cezanne, but I want to give this the old Army try. My instructor was a judge in a local competition, and one of my still lifes won third prize. He says I have a real talent. A neighbor just paid me \$100 for my impression of the willows on her lawn.

My true friends, and that includes my wonderful husband, cooperate. If my request to be left alone bothers Nan, she's no friend.

The Council: Careful, Nanette, your envy is showing. Can it be that because you haven't the drive to pursue a cultural interest intensively yourself, you begrudge Dorothy her chance to track down a lifelong yen? You sound as though you'd rather have her pick you as her hobby.

Here Nanette has to squeeze her fun out of the same old tubes - gossip, phone calls, shopping sprees, canasta and mahjong, matinees and lunch dates - while Dorothy gets hers from a quiet communion between herself and a canvas. That's hard for Nanette to comprehend, and accept.

So, a word on friendship. Emerson says friends should be like books, easy to find

when you need them, but seldom used. The pursuit of a career need not cancel out an old friendship. But it will certainly test it. The old forms of nourishment - chit-chat and outings - aren't available to sustain it. It must coast on the momentum of accumulated strength. Current time and energy are earmarked primarily for the exciting new venture.

Nanette represents the type of friend who "uses" the other, far and above her right. Dissatisfied herself, she opposes any seeking of satisfaction by Dorothy which doesn't include her. She clings to Dorothy with an unwarranted possessiveness. Her salvation lies in finding other sources of comfort and release.

Whenever possible, of course, Dorothy should invite Nanette to make one of the old-time midday phone calls, if that's such a treat for the latter. There are lulls in the creative process. But, in general, Dorothy's request is reasonable and should be respected.

Dorothy isn't betting on the wrong horse. She's betting on her friends, the real ones who are rooting for her, win or lose. Looks as though she'd be betting wrong on Nanette.

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