



## ASK DEANNA! Real People, Real Advice

Ask Deanna! Is an advice column known for its fearless approach to reality-based subjects!

Dear Deanna!

My pastor, who happens to be my husband's best friend, has wrecked our church. He divorced his wife and a year later, married his wife's first cousin. Half the church doesn't care and others are trying to fire him. It wouldn't be so bad but the pastor has children who now have to deal with their cousin becoming their stepmother. I don't support this but I'm forced to choose sides because of my husband's friendship with him. What do I do?

Praying for Peace  
Paoli, PA

Dear Praying:

Jessie Jackson went half on a baby but he claimed to be a preacher man not a saint. If the pastor was legally divorced then he's privy to marry a cousin, a chair or a cardboard box. Yes, it looks strange and there may be more to the story such as why he got divorced and did the cousin play a part. As a Christian wife, you're committed to support your husband and avoid getting caught up in drama with the hell raising members of the church. If your pastor is not fornicating and can still deliver the Word, then get over it and keep it moving.

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Dear Deanna!

I'm a confessed womanizer with many dates and don't plan to change. I feel I should be given a pat on the back for being honest about who I really am. Instead, people call me a dog, they call me a player and women are upset when things don't go their way. Why do the honest guys have a hard time when the liars are on easy street?

Dwayne P.  
Memphis, TN

Dear Dwayne:

You're a fool with commitment issues and slim respect for women. Your behavior is not responsible and is nothing to brag about. When it comes to love, life and relationships, there is no honesty among cheaters, no points for players and no high fives for infidelity. A liar is only on easy street until they are revealed and then all heck breaks loose and they truly deserve it. Do yourself a favor and get a new game because this one is weak.

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Dear Deanna:

I'm afraid my little sister is going to slip and make a bad decision on graduation night. Our family has done a great job teaching her that true love waits. Her boyfriend has pressured her all year long, and we think she's getting weak and may give in. What can I do to prevent her from losing her virginity without disrespecting her as an adult?

Big Sister  
Online Reader

Dear Big Sister:

She's made it this far without breaking down and you should trust her to be an adult and hold on to the foundation. You can only share wisdom at this point. Step up the pace and have dialogue with her about the risks as well as the faith-based teachings of sex and marriage. If you want her home and not in a hotel on graduation night, the family should have a special celebration with her friends and loved ones and hope for the best.

Ask Deanna is written by Deanna M. Write Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or write: Deanna M, 264 S. La Cienega, Suite 1283, Beverly Hills, CA 90211 Website: www.askdeanna.com

# Uplifting saga spells success

By Kam Williams  
Sentinel-Voice

Although Akeelah Anderson (Keke Palmer) once exhibited enough academic promise to skip the second grade, the previously precocious adolescent has been underachieving as of late. Despite being blessed with tremendous potential, the unmotivated 11-year-old has recently been behaving like a juvenile delinquent: skipping classes, speaking with slang and generally dumbing herself down just to be accepted by her best friend, Georgia (Sahara Garey), and her other classmates at her dilapidated school located in the heart of the ghetto in South Central Los Angeles.

As an at-risk kid, Akeelah frequently finds herself in trouble with Mr. Welch (Curtis Armstrong), the principal of Crenshaw Middle School. Fortunately for her, he recognizes that the underlying problem is that there's been an absence of a real role model in Akeelah's life on a day-to-day basis since her father was murdered in cold blood five years ago.

Her mother (Angela Bassett) is well-meaning, but simply too busy working to keep a roof over the family's head to pay much attention. Meanwhile, her big sister, Kiana (Erica Hubbard), is a teenage-mom with a newborn baby, and her big brother, Devon (Lee Thompson Young), is presently a paratrooper in the Air Force.

Akeelah's fondest childhood memory is of playing Scrabble with her father, a practice which she has secretly continued alone on her computer and which explains why she's something of a spelling savant. Aware of this untapped talent, Principal Welch prods his budding prodigy to enter the school's spelling bee, attended by Dr. Larabee (Laurence Fishburne), a tweedy English professor and ex-spelling champ himself.

After Akeelah wins easily, she's encouraged to prepare for the citywide competition with the goal of qualifying for the Scripps National Bee in Washington, D.C. But she balks, asking, "Why would anybody want to represent a school that can't even put doors on its bathroom stalls?" Plus, she knows she'll be competing with



Laurence Fishburne counsels Akeelah Anderson (Keke Palmer) in "Akeelah and the Bee."

rich White kids whose parents can afford coaches.

Conveniently, Dr. Larabee not only resides right in the 'hood, but he also happens to be on sabbatical and is thus available to whip Akeelah into world-class spelling shape, in the style of "The Karate Kid's" Mr. Miyagi. Like Miyagi, Larabee is a no-nonsense disciplinarian with a green thumb who's in mourning.

As they prepare for the big day, Akeelah find a spelling nemesis in Dylañ Chiu (Sean

Michael), an Asian kid from across the tracks whose overbearing father wants to win more than his son.

But she makes a friend from upscale Woodland Hills, too, in Javier (J.R. Villarreal), a less-competitive flirt who invites her to his birthday party.

When "Crash" arrived in theaters almost exactly a year ago, I wrote that it was easily the best picture released in 2005 to that point. The same can be said for this crowd-pleaser. Any parents

wondering why they don't make wholesome family flicks anymore can stop wondering.

Without ever hitting a false note, and pausing for a few lighter moments along the way, this touching tale shares a bounty of uplifting messages while taking you on an emotional roller coaster ride guaranteed to leave you wiping away the tears, and on more than one occasion.

Excellent (4 stars); Rated PG for some profanity

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