



ASK DEANNA! Real People, Real Advice

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

Dear Deanna!

My husband came in one day and announced that he wanted a divorce. I didn't see it coming and don't understand what happened. We have good kids, our communication is good and our sex life is active. He has been moody at times over the past year but I didn't think anything of it. He hasn't filed for divorce yet, but he is already moving out of the house. I asked him many questions but he got very upset when I asked if he was cheating. What do I do?

Torn Wife
Oklahoma City, OK

Dear Torn Wife:

Relationships don't end overnight and marriages don't operate like a light switch. There's a possibility you've been so tuned into the perfect life that you didn't notice your husband changing. A year is a long time for distractions and there's certainly something wrong. There is someone else, especially if he's moving out and getting defensive when infidelity comes up. Don't give up or agree to divorce without counseling, because you deserve an answer.

Dear Deanna!

My teen daughter has turned into a hip hop groupie and can't focus on her schoolwork or her responsibilities. She is constantly hanging posters, spending money on CD's and listening to the radio trying to win concert tickets. We have tried discipline, punishment and taking her radio. She has such a one-track mind and we don't know what to do. What are some suggestions to help us change her habits?

Dawn
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Dawn:

The first step is to realize that you are the parent and your daughter is the child. You should implement some expectations and standards that must be met before other activities. Enforce your guidelines but also offer positive reinforcement for accomplishments. Once things come into balance, introduce family activities and productive hobbies as entertainment. Eventually her interests will broaden and she'll be well rounded and more focused.

Dear Deanna!

I believe in open relationships and have no interest in being with one man. My primary boyfriend was fine with this in the beginning. At times, he has had several girlfriends and it didn't bother me. Now that I've made the decision to get serious with someone else, he is having problems. He wants to change me and insist that we become committed and only date each other. I'm not interested in this and I don't want to lose him or my new boyfriend. What do I do?

Renee
Online Reader

Dear Renee:

You were open and honest at the beginning of the relationship, so your boyfriend is the one who has to decide. If you agreed to be together on the terms of an open relationship then he is wrong to expect otherwise. However, if you really care about him, take the chance and choose him and see what happens. If being with only him doesn't please you, then let him know you tried, and he can stay or leave.

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Law, media hurt minorities

WASHINGTON (AP) - Flawed government policies and negative stereotyping of minority men have limited their economic opportunities, a new study says. It urges improved healthcare and education for minorities and less media consolidation.

The study by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a research and policy group that focuses on issues that affect minorities, examined the impact of U.S.

policies on men of African, Hispanic, Asian and Native American descent. It said the media and entertainment industries over represent minorities as criminals, and represent Whites as victims and law enforcers. Blacks are twice as likely as White defendants to be subject to negative pretrial publicity, it said. For Hispanics, three times as likely.

Meanwhile, federal laws such as the No Child Left Be-

hind Act have hurt minorities by driving good teachers away from high-poverty schools to better-funded ones where Whites are more highly represented, the report contends.

"We have a duty to stop now and reverse course," says the report, which was commissioned by a group led by Oakland Mayor-elect Ron Dellums. It comes as Democrats seek to plot a legislative agenda after regaining con-

trol of Congress in last week's elections for the first time since 1994.

Democratic congressional leaders have pledged to raise the minimum wage and step up oversight of government agencies. On another subject the report addresses, the Federal Communications Commission is reviewing the hotly disputed issue of whether to ease government rules to allow for more media consolidation.

Hecklers receive racist blow-up

Special to Sentinel-Voice

He called two Black hecklers the "n-word" and enthusiastically referenced a time when Blacks were often victims of civil rights abuses, but Michael Richards said his verbal barrage during a stand-up routine was fueled by anger and not bigotry.

"For me to be at a comedy club and flip out and say this crap, I'm deeply, deeply sorry," the former "Seinfeld" co-star said during a satellite appearance for David Letterman's "Late Show" in New York.

"I'm not a racist. That's what's so insane about this," Richards said, his tone becoming angry and frustrated as he defended himself.

Richards described himself as going into "a rage" over the two audience members who interrupted his act Friday at the Laugh Factory in West Hollywood.

His explanation was reminiscent of Mel Gibson's assertion that he wasn't anti-Semitic after he let off a barrage of Jewish slurs during a traffic stop last summer: despite what came out of his mouth, that's not what is inside him.

Industry colleagues were in no hurry to accept Richards' apology.

"Once the word comes out of your mouth and you don't happen to be African-American, then you have a whole lot of explaining," comedian Paul Rodriguez, who was at the Laugh Factory during Richards' performance, said on a news program. "Freedom of speech has its limitations, and I think Michael Richards found those limitations."

Veteran publicist Michael Levine, whose clients have included comedians George Carlin, Sam Kinison and Rodney Dangerfield, called Richards' remarks inexcusable. Comics often face hecklers without losing their cool,

he said.

"I've never seen anything like this in my life," Levine said Monday. "I think it's a career ruiner for him... It's going to be a long road back for him, if at all."

His Laugh Factory tirade began after the two Black patrons shouted at him that he wasn't funny.

A videotape of the incident was posted on TMZ.com.

Richards retorted: "Shut up! Fifty years ago we'd have you upside down with a fork up your a—."

He then paced across the stage taunting the men for interrupting his show, peppering his speech with racial slurs and profanities.

"You can talk, you can talk, you're brave now mother——. Throw his a— out. He's a n——!" Richards shouts before re-

peating the racial epithet over and over again.

Moderating his tone at one point, Richards tells the audience, "It shocks you, it shocks you" and refers to "what lays buried."

While there is some chuckling in the audience throughout the outburst, someone can be heard gasping "Oh, my God" and people respond with "ooh" after Richards uses the n-word.

Eventually someone calls out: "It's not funny. That's why you're a reject, never had no shows, never had no movies. "Seinfeld," that's it."

Jerry Seinfeld, who had issued a statement saying he was "sick over this horrible, horrible mistake" and calling it offensive, was scheduled as a Letterman guest Monday. He encouraged Richards to make a satellite appearance

to talk about the incident, a CBS publicist said.

Richards deserved the chance to apologize, Seinfeld said on "Late Show."

"He's someone that I love, and I know how shattered he is about" what happened, Seinfeld said.

At one point, however, Richards grew flustered and expressed second thoughts about appearing on the program when his use of the term "Afro-American" caused some audience members to laugh.

"I'm hearing your audience laugh and I'm not even sure that this is where I should be addressing the situation," he said.

Richards, 57, who played Seinfeld's eccentric neighbor Kramer on the hit 1989-98 sitcom, hadn't spoken publicly about his remarks before "Late Show."

Fraternity punished after 'hood-themed celebration

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The administration at Johns Hopkins University has made a decision. It will put a fraternity on social probation because of a "Halloween in the Hood" party that angered members of the Black Student Union and sparked debate about race relations.

The university's Student Conduct Board hearing panel found the Sigma Chi fraternity guilty of all charges filed by the administration, including failure to supervise the conduct of the member who wrote the party invitation, resulting in harassment and intimidation.

University officials pledged Monday to continue efforts they started after the Halloween weekend party to promote racial healing.

University administrators

have held two campus-wide forums and meetings with the Black Student Union.

The Sigma Chi chapter was placed on social probation until January 2008, meaning it is barred from holding parties and other social events.

The university said it also must recruit four adult advisors and incorporate diversity training into its new members program.

The university's Office of

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action concluded that the invitation to the party played on racial stereotypes by encouraging attendees to wear "regional clothing from our locale" such as "bling bling ice ice, grills" and "hoochie hoops."

However, it found that a skeleton hanging from a rope noose was meant to represent the "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie and not to symbolize a lynching.

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