



ASK DEANNA!
*Real People,
Real Advice*

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

Dear Deanna!

I was in a marriage for 3 years that didn't last. I am now legally divorced with no strings attached and I want to live my life. I'm very responsible but my family accuses me of being an unfit parent. My children are old enough to be left home alone, and I don't bring my relationships in front of them. I don't want to enter another serious relationship and wish everyone would leave me alone. Does it matter what I do as long as my family is taken care of?

Marissa
Omaha, NE

Dear Marissa:

As a parent, you have moral obligations you must adhere to whether you want to or not. There's nothing wrong with having fun, recreational dating and enjoying the rush of single life. Double check your actions in regards to your parenting skills and the care arrangements for your children while you're out and about. You may not want a relationship, but you want to be careful and not fall into the category of a garden fool.

Dear Deanna!

I'm a Christian and there are things that I do that people don't agree with. I feel as if I can drink wine, enjoy music and wear what I want to wear. Don't get me wrong, I love the Lord and do what I'm supposed to do. My life is fine, but other people don't think so. I don't like being judged when other people at church do the same thing but pretend to be super holy. Do I need to go ahead and change churches because these people aren't going to change?

Honest Christian
Charleston, SC

Dear Honest:

If you were as rooted and tooted in your faith as you pretend to be, you wouldn't worry about what other people think. You need to put your stones away and come out of the same glass house that everyone else is in. You're just as guilty because you just so happen to know their business the way they know yours. Do yourself a favor and mind your business, live according to God's word and seek to receive growth and understanding in your worship instead of human acceptance.

Dear Deanna!

My wife and I are having financial troubles because she won't stop spending money. We live on a budget but she keeps breaking the rules. It's at the point where our bills are late, my credit rating has become poor and we don't have money to do simple things. I don't mind her spending here and there, but she makes major purchases without my consent, goes on trips and gives money to her family. How do I let her know, this is killing our marriage?

Dan
Long Island City, NY

Dear Dan:

You should bear the responsibility of eliminating her access to cash, bank accounts and credit cards and pay all the bills yourself. Your immediate goal is to stabilize the finances and your credit rating. The next step is to physically give her a budget, and if she messes up, leave her to fend for herself. Once this is done, encourage your wife to get some counseling and stick to the budget you give her or you'll both be looking at each other in the poor house.

Write: Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or 264 S. LaCienega Blvd. Suite 1283 Beverly Hills, CA 90211 Website: www.askdeanna.com.

Giovanni simply an 'acolyte'

By Stephani-Maari Booker
Special to Sentinel-Voice
MINNEAPOLIS (NNPA)

In 1968, Nikki Giovanni self-published her first book of poems. By 1972, she had received her first honorary doctorate, from Wilberforce University in Ohio. Since then, Giovanni has accumulated more than 20 honorary degrees and more than 12 keys to cities, including New York and Los Angeles.

Giovanni's most recent work alone, the children's book "Rosa" (Henry Holt and Co., 2005), has earned her at least five more honors, including the Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Best Book Award and the Child Magazine's Best Children's Book of the Year.

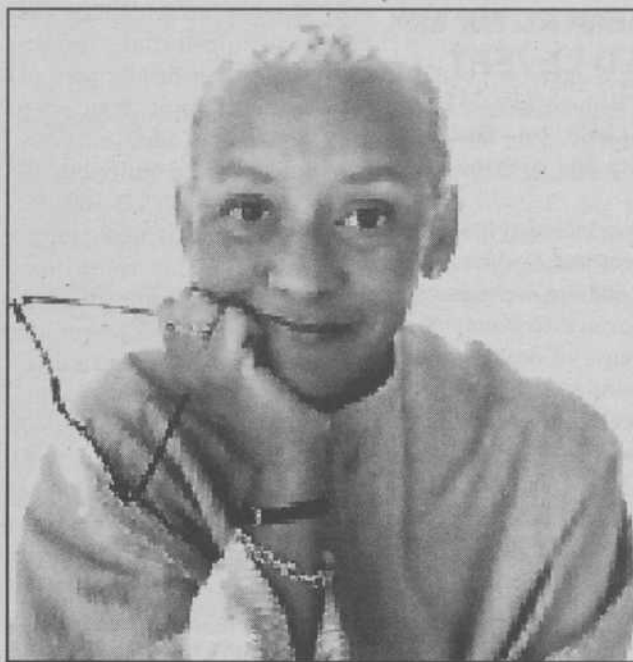
So how does Giovanni view being one of the most famous and honored Americans in the literary arts, credited with bringing the Black Arts Movement to the mainstream and being a godmother of today's spoken-word movement?

How does she view herself with all the mounds of praise heaped upon her, from public awards to individuals telling her that her poetry saved their lives?

"I've had people who've been very complimentary, yes," Giovanni responded in a telephone interview. "And I'm glad, but... I'm not a priest; I'm an acolyte... I'm not trying to do anything to anybody but bring a point of view. I'm not running for office... I'm not trying to lead. I'm just trying to say does this make sense, or isn't there some truth that we can obtain from this?"

"Acolytes" (William Morrow) is the name of Giovanni's new book of poetry. When told to explain the significance of the word for her, she said, "We traditionally think of acolytes in a religious context, but the world needs acolytes at this point; good people need acolytes at this point. It's the people that help you create your rituals. And all I'm trying to say is that we need some new rituals. We don't just need people following... along because somebody tells you something."

Giovanni appreciates the accolades she has been given, but she asserts her right to be "a human being, period... You can't let the fact — that people like you — make you make a fool out of yourself... It sounds funny, but if you stay humble — that's what



Nikki Giovanni wants her work to express a point of view.

the old gospel song that says 'live a humble life' — and 'humble' is not [that] you're poor and you wear dirty clothes; don't misunderstand. But that you have to keep putting the work in perspective, and the work has to be true, and you have to answer to, in my case, to my ancestors. I always feel like my grandmother is going to read this, even though she's been dead 40 years. And so I want it to be as truthful and as

beautiful as I can make it. But I'm not a Pied Piper."

When Giovanni was told that she's often credited as the godmother of spoken word, she expressed great delight.

"I love the kids... I love the spoken word; I love what they're doing. I am disenchanted that people actually complain about the hip-hop generation. They're great kids, and I think that they have struggled [to create

something] with nothing.

"...[My generation] had segregation, at least; we understood that was wrong. Now the kids don't have segregation, but they don't have band, they don't have school plays, they don't have a school paper, they can't work on the yearbook. And these kids have found a way to express themselves. It's an ancient way that they found, because they found it through music, as did our ancestors in 1619. I think that they're a great group, and...I'm glad to feel that I have been a part of helping to bring their voice out."

The status Giovanni has earned through her long work history brings the responsibility to keep doing good work: "You're fortunate; you get to do something that you really love and that's meaningful; and that's good, but you have to do it again. You have to come back again, and writers, I don't think, have the same flexibility like the [music makers]: The people who sing songs, sing the same song. They get a hit, and then they sing another (See Nikki, Page 13)

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