

Got A Problem?

By Gwendolyn Baines

Dear Gwendolyn:

Three years ago, I met who at that time seemed to be a wonderful woman. She didn't work and lived on her mother's income. However, her mother was placed in a nursing home, and overnight her funds were stopped. She visited her mother every day and often took something good to eat, such as a cake or pie. I just knew any woman that devoted to her mother would be a dear, devoted wife.

Well, I was in for a rude awakening. Immediately after I moved in, she stopped going to see her mother. She started being cruel to me. She stopped cooking and cleaning the house. At night, I would be at home watching television and she would be in the streets. I pay all the bills and even give her an allowance. I think she has taken me for a fool. I intend to leave her on New Year's Eve.

Charles

Dear Charles:

You said that immediately after you moved in, you saw the true personality and character of your girlfriend. Let me tell you this: People need to stay in their own place — and not concern themselves with being together, but no papers — no ring. She played the 'good foot' role there is no doubt about that. Think about it. What was so great about her cooking and cleaning? Women of knowledge left the kitchen years ago. They are sitting at the corporate level boardroom tables making their own money. It is obvious she befriended you for financial replacement.

The beginning of a new year is a great feeling. Many people don't make it and that gives you reason to be thankful. I was glad to know that you intend to leave this woman. When you leave her, close your ears to whatever she has to say. Don't be weak like most men. You know... leave on New Year's Eve and return — New Year's Day.

Dear Gwendolyn:

This is my senior year of school and I am in the process of making applications to attend college next fall. However, I do have a problem. My mother wants me to go to the college where she met my dad. While there at the college she was in a sorority and my father was in a fraternity. I can't seem to make her realize I don't want to go there.

It is a small historically Black college that still has a good name. But Gwendolyn, the college does not have my field of interest. I want to pursue a degree in Engineering (Computer).

It makes no sense for me to go four years and beyond and major in a field where I would not seek employment. She says, "All my sorority sisters are sending their children there."

André

Dear André:

Your mother appears to be a real true sorority girl. I am sure she has great fond memories of her college years. And to paint her with a bigger smile is when she thinks of the day she met your dad. It is because of your choice of career, I will have to agree with you not to attend where your mother is steering you. Students today major in the field of interest where they wish to seek employment.

There was a time, however, students would go through four years of college without giving thought to a particular major. They just wanted to receive a degree and, therefore, would be able to say, "I am a college graduate." That has changed. Companies now tend to hire graduates with degrees in the capacity of which the company needs.

Let me tell you this: Seek every possible scholarship and/or loan in case your parents decide not to finance your schooling. Sometimes in life you cannot always grant your parents' wishes. Do not try to reason with your mother. Parents of Greek organizations don't usually do much 'individual' thinking. They tend to do what the group is doing. Think about it. They had their college life, but now — you must decide yours.

Got a problem? Email her at: gwenbaines@hotmail.com and visit her website at: www.gwenbaines.com.

Sex addiction gets due as issue

By Tuala Williams

Special to Sentinel-Voice

DALLAS (NNPA) — The need to be loved is a strong desire. The longing to be wanted can be just as strong. It is the stuff that songs, books and movies are made of.

In fact, the drive can become so strong and so dangerous it is considered an addiction. While controversy among sex therapists exists regarding the existence of sexual addiction, many sex therapists say it is a reality and is often born out of childhood trauma or emotional neglect related to love and or sex. Many groups and therapeutic practices, such as Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, a twelve-step group, were founded for just that purpose.

"We in S.L.A.A. believe that sex and love addiction is a progressive illness which cannot be cured; but which, like many illnesses, can be arrested. It may take several forms — including, but not limited to a compulsive need for sex, extreme dependency on one or many people, or a chronic preoccupation with romance, — intrigue, or fantasy. An obsessive compulsive pattern, either sexual or emotional, or both, exists in which relationships or sexual activities have become increasingly destructive to career, family and sense of self-respect. Sex addiction and love addiction, if left unchecked, always gets worse," reads a statement on their web site, www.slaafws.org.

A strong sex drive should not be confused with sexual addiction. Sex addiction is characterized by persons using sex to get a "high," and then finding themselves needing ever-greater or more powerful "doses." These addictions typically lead to greater risk-taking behavior over time and also have greater negative impact on the lives of those suffering with the disease. According to sexhelp.com, 72 percent of sex addicts experience suicidal thoughts, 70 percent have relationship difficulties and 68 percent have suffered exposure to sexually transmitted diseases.

Last year, 26-year-old R&B singing sensation Ne-Yo, confessed to VIBE senior editor Laura Checkoway that he had a "slight addiction" to sex. He stated that at one time, "I became a complete whore. I might possibly have had sex with every girl in my

"I became a complete whore. I might possibly have had sex with every girl in my 11th grade class... it went from like, nothing to like, three and four a day."

— Ne-Yo



11th grade class...it went from like, nothing to like, three and four a day." He stated that he managed to get some control over his addiction by "helping himself" instead of engaging in sex with groupies.

But Ne-Yo is not alone and this addiction, which may well be a factor in the rise of HIV/AIDS among African-American men in Dallas and throughout the United States. According to The Good Shepherd Restoration Ministries,

"For some Black men, a very disturbing phenomenon, men who have sex with men — MSM — Brothers on the — 'down low,' is increasingly becoming the primary means of transmitting HIV to heterosexual, Black women and men. Untreated sexual addiction and/or experimental homosexual activity in prisons have led some heterosexual or 'straight,' Black men to engage in even more riskier sexual behavior such as this.

"MSM is having grave consequences to the health and families of these men." Sources from the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, indicate that approximately one out of every 47 Black men in Dallas is living with HIV. While drug use does account for a narrow percentage of the infections, approximately 80

percent of all infections occurred during sexual activity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, nationally, MSM accounted for more than 71 percent of all HIV infections among men in 2005; however, only 5 percent to 7 percent of men identified themselves as MSM. Denial, experts in the field of HIV/AIDS say, is the driving force behind the spread of HIV/AIDS. Denial also plays a big part in the failure to respond appropriately to any type of addiction.

Apathy is touted as being another contributing factor to the spread. In most of the cases related to sex, contracting and spreading the disease could have been prevented had the participants simply chosen to use a condom, to only indulge with men or women with whom they were in a monogamous relationship, and to have been tested. These steps are commonly recommended by experts in the prevention of the spread of all sexually transmitted diseases.

Failure to take the appropriate precautions despite this available information is a form of risk-taking behavior commonly associated with sexual addictions. Among men who have sex with men, sexual compulsivity has been associated with higher frequencies of sexual behaviors that

may increase risk for transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

These factors indicate a type of sexual addiction, which may be an underlying factor in the spread of HIV among Blacks, who are disproportionately affected by the disease. As of May 2008, there were 13,441 Dallas County residents living with HIV/AIDS. Of those, 5,775 were living with HIV and approximately 7,666 were living with AIDS, according to the Dallas County Health Department. MSM made up 62 percent of that number. Nationally, 72 African-Americans are infected with HIV every day. Last year 334 African-Americans in Dallas County were newly diagnosed with HIV, and 159 were newly diagnosed with AIDS. "African-Americans make up approximately 13 percent of the population of the United States, yet almost half of the total AIDS cases reported in this country are among members of the Black community," said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS Director.

"What Dallas County is experiencing is no different than what is being seen in every major urban area across the nation. We must focus not on the raw data and numbers, but on the behaviors that lead to the numbers. Risky behaviors, such as sexual addiction, certainly contribute to the increase in the numbers of persons infected with Sexually Transmitted Diseases, including HIV and AIDS.

Thompson concludes, "Dallas County Health and Human Services, along with health departments across the nation, must develop and implement strategies to exercise good judgment on sex.



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