



ASK DEANNA! Real People, Real Advice

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

Dear Deanna!

I think it's disrespectful how my brother's wife pretends to be so helpless with the men in the family. My brother is a trucker and he's on the road most of the time working. She purposely calls the other husbands seeking help with her plumbing, car problems and calls to ask stupid questions. The women in the family see through her and think she's a big flirt. How do we address the problem without being viewed as "haters" or accused of jealousy?

Tina

Charleston, SC

Dear Tina:

This can be handled through dialogue and communication. Address the issue with your brother first and share your plans with him. Then address the concerns with your sister-in-law as a group. Provide solutions by giving her a directory of names, phone numbers and addresses for every problem she could possibly encounter. Lastly, each of you need to also talk to your spouse as well and issue boundaries in relation to them jumping to her every call.

Dear Deanna!

My mother plays favorites when it comes to my younger brother and sister because of who the father is. She is with my brother's father and she's trying to hold on to a failing relationship. My brother is a terror and gets away with everything because if he is disciplined, that causes an argument. I am sick and tired of my little sister being miserable, going through punishment while my mother makes a fool of herself. How can I get through to my mom?

Anita

Wilkesboro, NC

Dear Anita:

You're mature enough to see the problem, so you should feel secure talking with your mother woman-to-woman. Simply point out the differences she makes between the two children and the harm she's placing upon your little sister. At the same time, you need to show her the flaws in the relationship without making it personal. Have this discussion in a neutral setting and also point out positive things as well as the negative and hope for the best.

Dear Deanna!

My grandmother is embarrassing because she's old and still trying to act young. It's annoying to see my grandmother trying to sing rap songs, smoke cigarettes and wearing jeans. My parents don't mind but I don't think it's right. I feel that she makes herself look foolish and she doesn't realize that people are laughing at her. I would like a few suggestions on how I can have this discussion with my grandmother without appearing disrespectful?

Amber

Oklahoma City, OK

Dear Amber:

Your grandmother is old enough to live her life without worrying about what you or anyone else thinks. You could learn things such self-confidence and the ability to love life from this woman. If she was smoking marijuana and dressing like a hoochie, you would have a legitimate problem. But since she's enjoying life, you should relax, take her shopping and be blessed that you have a grandmother who's on her feet and not deceased or in a nursing home.

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



Presenting the 2008 Alpha Phi Debutantes — (Bottom to Top) Row 1: Brittany Carr, Collyn Williams, Joniqua Hooks. Row 2: Chelsea Matthews, Whitney Elzy, Shawntaine Williams, Shyleice Mack, Rene' McCullough. Row 3: Mon'Tearra Harris, Amanda Staten, Breeayana Perkins, Shavonna Noble, Jacqueline Knight, Masheila Moore. Row 4: Carmen Porter, Natalie Brown-Denby, Stephanie Thompson, Caren White, Ashley Snipes and Camille Clifton.

Sorority assists young women

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Helping to refine local young girls for the last 45 years, Les Femme Douze, a non-profit organization, through the sponsorship of the debutante program, held their annual cotillion ball. The program which presents "ladies to society" represents 15 high schools in the Clark County School District.

The organization mentors young ladies in their senior year of high school by promoting self-esteem, cultural awareness, social graces and

career preparation. With a variety of workshops designed to enhance leadership skills and setting goals for future educational aspirations.

With the help of former debutantes, the young ladies are assisted in acquiring scholarship information, as well as aiding in the process of applying to colleges and studying for the college entrance exams. Other aspects of the debutante program include community service and a talent show.

Collectively, the members of Les Femme Douze donate more than 2,000 hours of community service to a variety of businesses, churches, and other agencies through the valley. For more information about this program, emails may be sent to debadvisor@yahoo.com.

Awards were presented to the following debutantes:

Margaret Bennett Community Service Award — Chelsea Matthews

Lajuana Bailey Talent Award — Jacqueline Knight

Jeanie Crawford Academic Achievement Award — Masheila Moore 4.12 (GPA); Honorable Mention — Joniqua Hooks 4.048 (GPA) and Shavonna Noble 4.007 (GPA)

Scholarship/Solicitation Award 1st Place — Collyn Williams; 2nd Place — Whitney Elzy and 3rd Place — Ashley Snipes

Miss Congeniality 2008 — Jacqueline Knight

Miss Debutante 2008 — Whitney Elzy, Jacqueline Knight and Shavonna Noble

Jakes film explores facets of Black men

By Kenya Vaughn

Special to Sentinel-Voice

(NNPA) — "Chick flicks" of all ethnic persuasions have graced big and small screens for decades. Lifetime Movie Network has even created a cable television niche by chronicling the emotional rollercoasters of women from all walks of life.

But T.D. Jakes, best-selling author and mega-pastor of the Potter's House ministries, has decided to tap into the male species' pool of feelings for "Not Easily Broken," directed by Bill Duke, which hits theatres nationwide Friday.

"So many women today do not know how many men feel about relationships because so many stories are written from the female perspective," Jakes said.

"If we don't like the images, we have to tell our own story. And this is an opportunity to give a balanced description."

The film is based on

Jakes' novel of the same name and stars Morris Chestnut, Taraji P. Henson alongside St. Louis natives Niecy Nash and Jennifer Lewis.

Director Bill Duke attempts to capture the emotions of the Black man by showcasing the marital struggles of Dave and Clarice (Chestnut and Henson).

"Not Easily Broken" is Jakes' follow-up to his big screen production debut of "Woman Thou Art Loosed" in 2004 and also based on Jakes' best-selling book of the same name.

His latest film revolves around two people failing to coexist as they run in opposite directions from the middle ground of their marriage. Clarice is chasing her career goals while simultaneously neglecting her home life. Dave is pouring himself into extracurricular activities with a little league baseball team as an attempt to experience fatherhood vicariously through the boys he coaches.

A traumatic incident strips away their external scapegoats, forcing them to confront the issues that have ripped their marriage to shreds.

"You need something outside of a man and a woman to hold a relationship together," Jakes said. "It is our faith element. The movie gives an opportunity to see the practicality of faith and see how it plays out in the drama of life."

Jakes allowed Chestnut to produce the film along with him and Chestnut is grateful for the chance to do so. "Bishop Jakes has allowed me to wear more than just an actor's hat," Chestnut said. "I learned so much from him."

But in order to perform effectively his leading man duties for "Not Easily Broken," Chestnut said that had to learn to tackle the character from the inside out.

"Most of the roles I've done have been strong male figures that didn't deal with

vulnerability," Chestnut said. "It causes me to look at my own situation."

"We are told that men have a difficulty expressing our emotions and our feelings," said Jakes. "We do have a difficulty because we have been trained not to show our emotions. You are telling a three-year-old not to show his emotions and to 'man up.'"

"Through 'Not Easily Broken,' Jakes and Chestnut hope to create a new film style that will allow for a reversal of the generations of unhealthy emotional guidance that that has been imposed on boys, and Black boys, in particular. As Jakes said, he wants to open a "floodgate of buddy flicks that are not dependent on violence. Images are extremely powerful," Chestnut said. "This is a great opportunity for art to reinforce life."

The film is rated PG-13.

Kenya Vaughn writes for the St. Louis American.