

## Ask Aunt Gay

Dear Aunt Gay,

I don't have a problem directly with my relationship-- we've been together-- happily-- for nine years. But my lover has a man friend who is a psychic and emotional vampire. Their (thankfully) long distance relationship is very co-dependent. Seeing her cave into his demands on the phone drives me nuts! It's all I can do not to grab the phone out of her hand and scream obscenities at him. Sometimes he calls every day for two weeks and keeps her on the phone for two hours each time. Once he called at two a.m. She admits he's manipulating her, that she's co-dependent, but it isn't changing much. Help! How can I get disengaged from this situation? How can I get her to disengage from him? What should I do?

Dear Tangled,

It sounds awful to have your life with your lover constantly invaded.

This creep is going to call again. What will you need in order to feel powerful and good? An agreement that some activities or times will be sacred and uninterrupted? Reassurance that there will be a lover left for you when he's done? Don't let your anger keep you from addressing your real issues.

As for how to disengage when it's actually happening-- that's not easy. But it's really simple: When she gets on the phone, you walk away. You consider her phone call none of your business. You get into some project that has as much fascination for you as the drama of your lover and her vampire.

It might help to tell yourself something different about the whole scene. For example: "My lover is a crisis counselor. She may get beeped at any moment and be busy counseling for a couple of hours."

As for getting her to disengage: You can't force her to change her behavior, no matter how destructive you think it is. But people whose self images are getting stronger make increasingly healthy choices. You can help her build her self image to the point that she won't be willing to settle for an unhealthy relationship. Any support you give her has the potential to do that, and any criticism has the potential to wear it away. Of course she's doing the best she can right now.

I wonder if part of the problem comes from your nine happy years together; maybe you're suffering from lesbian overintimacy. Are you two a little too close? In other words, do you resent her limiting her accessibility to you because you are afraid to limit your accessibility to her? Consciously supporting each other's au-

tonomy may be the key to your next nine years.

Dear Aunt Gay,

A lesbian who testified at the Montpelier hearing in support of H211, the civil rights bill for lesbians and gay men, recently returned to her home to find it had been vandalized. I wrote about my feelings of outrage and fear in a letter to the editor of the Times Argus, asking them to omit my name and address when they printed it, so I would not become a target.

The editor refused to print the letter without my name. He said, "I am sympathetic to your situation, yet I also believe in our policy of prohibiting anonymous letters to the editor; I think if we allowed them then we would risk becoming a forum for vile and irresponsible opinions."

I can't help but feel that this is yet another incident of discrimination, however subtle it may be. I've thought about allowing my signature to be printed. Even though I'm legally disabled and unemployed, there's my landlord, medical caregivers' and friends' reactions to worry about.

On the other hand, I've tried rewriting my letter and leaving out the parts about my own sexual orientation, but this takes away from the reason I wrote the letter in the first place. I'm unhappy keeping my letter out of the Times Argus altogether, but I can't decide what to do.

Also, I want the woman about whom I speak in my letter to know of my support and if I don't speak up, that won't happen!

I'm open to your suggestions.

Dear Speaking Up,

They've got you coming and going. You could write omitting your sexual orientation, in effect passing as an ally, a non-gay person who supports us. But freedom of the press should belong to everyone-- not just the people in no danger from hate crimes.

About this Times Argus policy, there is a difference between an anonymous letter (saying vile things or not) and a signed letter where the writer, fearing for her safety, has her name withheld in publication. There are papers willing to withhold a name, so long as they know who the writer is. You can encourage the Times Argus to make this distinction and to expand their policy.

If they won't budge, you can urge people you know to write, as allies or as out lesbians and gay men, or you can try another paper. The Buyer's Digest has an anonymous Speak Out section, full of lively debate. Good luck!

Copyright Aunt Gay 1989

Guendolen

Alright. I want to know who this dude Murphy was. You know, the jerk whose legislative abilities cornered blanket jurisdiction over life's minor disasters. I mean I'd settle for a few amendments now and then- like maybe rescinding the personal choice clause. (Hey, give me a break here. PLEASE.)

I just don't get it. When presented with the opportunity to make even the most banal selections, I invariably choose the WRONG ONE!

It hits me in the produce department of the grocery store. After hours of carefully molesting each orange, I end up with the dry, fibrous ones. These would-be baseballs are carefully disguised by their gorgeous, cushiony skins. I pick the apples which immaculately conceive worms, the potatoes that conceal black caverns of rot, and cucumbers just waiting to develop their latent fuzzy grey skins. (Come On.)

If I'm at the bank, get out of my line and away from my car! Inside, I stand behind merchants wielding six money bags from mysterious and hidden places. And, they all contain loose change. Outside, I wait for folks who forgot their deposit slips, their I.D., and which bank this was. Once their stalled cars are towed away, the teller goes on break.

I go to restaurants with two hour seating delays and direct-from-Maine lobsters- as soon as the truck gets back. Movies sell out the ticket before mine, and parking garages turn on the "full" sign between the timer and the gate. (Can you believe it?)

Yet the real trauma occurs with my dumb-struck attractions. Against my better judgement and sound intentions, my knees sway mostly for "danger dreams". These are the aloof ones, the ones who run steamy then frost, the inaccessible, unattainables, and catch-me-if-you-cans. I just can't help myself. At the time, everyone else seems so boring.

I know. I know. I should read "Women Who Love Too Much". I have, fifteen times at last count. Still I surrender to the "here I go agains". Perhaps it's the morbid fascination innate in human beings. That force that draws us to dead birds despite queasy stomachs, or car accidents in defiance of our horror. On a scale from one to ten (dead birds to car accidents), my last one was a ten car pile up. Let's see... there were three eighteen wheelers, four Yugos, two full leaf peeper buses, and one motorcycle. Unfortunately, I drove in on the Kawasaki.

For now, my heart is in traction, but I'll be back in September. Until then....

Love Ya,  
Me

## Tutor Available for Private Lessons

Help with grammar and conversation in French, German, and Spanish.  
Specializing in Music Theory and Piano Techniques.

Reasonable rates and convenient scheduling.

Call Gilles at 865-3941