



CAROLYN HAX

Her friend keeps dating jerks, and now acts like one

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Dear Carolyn: My best friend's dating another jerk. She told me after the last one to tell her when I see she's made another bad choice - because, as she says, "Obviously I don't see it till it's too late." Well, I told her. And she got extremely [ticked] off at me. She says she never should have asked me to "warn" her because now I'm obviously on a power trip and taking advantage of her trust and just want to control her relationships. Seriously, she said all that.

Believe it or not, she's usually a great person, a great friend, very kind and caring, blablablah, so this was totally out of character. Now I have no idea how to interact with her. She posted on my Facebook wall as if that whole interaction never happened. But, I am still: (a) [ticked] off and (b) concerned for her emotional tumult to come as a result of her dating another jerk.

What should I say to her? How should I act?

Totally at a loss

I guess now you know why she keeps dating jerks. She's clearly not interested in looking inward, asking herself hard questions, recognizing her own hang-ups and shortcomings or - when it's reckoning time - admitting her own complicity in her bad decisions. She had a nice gig blaming the guys, and now she can add you to her list of people to blame.

What you do with this information is where it gets really interesting.

Someone who attacks your character when you give her your openly solicited opinions is going to be a real hoot when you start offering unsolicited opinions, such as the one you want to give her now: that her attack on you was childish and insulting, not to mention completely self-defeating. No matter how constructive the criticism may be, she doesn't want to hear it. She has made herself clear on that.

Unfortunately, having something important to say that you know she'll refuse to hear is a huge obstacle between people who regard themselves as close. Now, officially, you are holding back a part of yourself when you're with her. Going on without saying something to your friend will mean you're acting.

So I think you have to deal with your relationship with her - and the fact that she set you up - while also learning your lesson and not even mentioning her relationship with Jerk: "I was really surprised at your reaction: You asked me to do something, so I did it. It would never occur to me to question your motives in sharing your opinion with me, and it really hurts that you're questioning my motives now."

Then, duck. Or, who knows, maybe below her angry-reaction layer, she has an I've-had-a-chance-to-cool-off layer where she's able to hold herself accountable. What's a little optimism among friends.

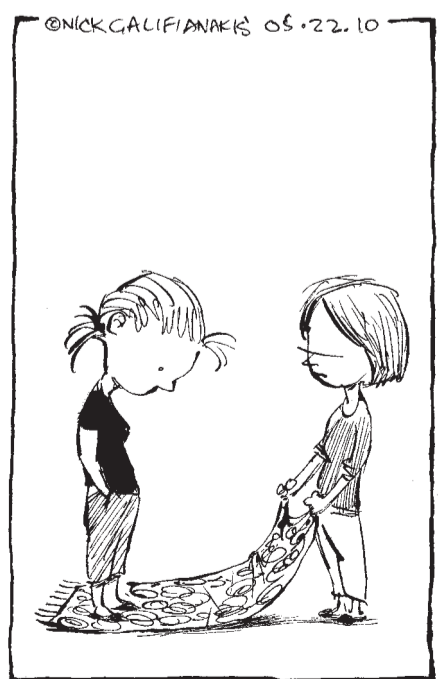
Dear Carolyn: Is it possible to be in love after being with someone for only two months?

Maryland

Sure. What isn't possible is to be sure your love found a target that's good for you. For that, you'll have to be patient, but there's no reason you can't enjoy the feelings in the meantime.

Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays on www.washingtonpost.com/discussions.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com.



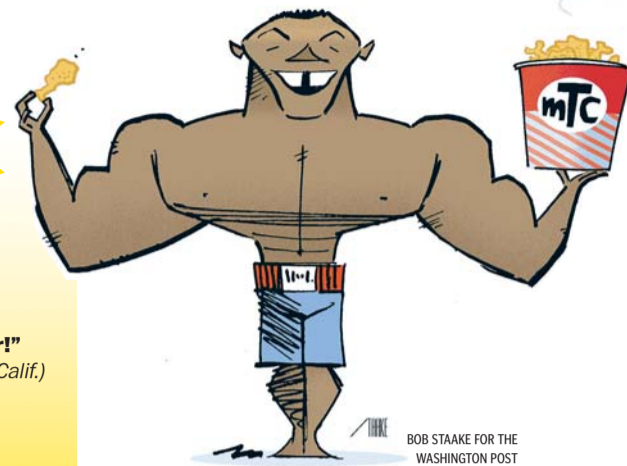
NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

REPORT FROM WEEK 866 In which we asked for two overlapping names, or a name overlapping with another word or expression (the spellings of the overlapping part of the names didn't have to be identical):



Mike Tyson Chicken: "Mmm, tastes just like ear!" (Malcolm Fleschner, Palo Alto, Calif.)



ROB STAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

MAL-AMALGRAMS: HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Nicolas Sarkozymandias: "Look on my wife, ye mighty, and despair!" (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)
Stephen Strasburg, Va.: Where the speed limit is 101 mph (80 on curves). (Eric Sorensen)
Chippendale Earnhardt: The dancer with sponsor logos on his G-string. (Pam Sweeney)
Weird Al Sharpston: Al Sharpston. (Craig Dykstra)
Brooks Robinson Crusoe: Baltimore Oriole who was stranded at third base for 20 years. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)
Eleanor Holmes Norton AntiVirus: Supposedly there to serve an important purpose, but mostly just slows down the system. (Brendan Beary)
Helen Thomas Jefferson: She's worked out of the White House since 1801. (Chris Doyle)
Nicorette Butler: Gum-smacking gambler in "Gone With the Winstons." (Chris Doyle)
Maya Angelou Ferrigno: Stopped singing and busted outta the damn cage. (Lois Douthitt, Arlington)
James Joyce Kilmer: Wrote "A Portrait of the Artist as a Sapling." (Marleen May, Rockville)
The New Yorkermit the Frog: It isn't easy being smarter than everyone. (Bill Spencer, Cockeysville, Md.)
Norman Chad Ochocinco: Sports columnist/poker announcer who changes his surname each time he remarries. (Pam Sweeney)
Betsy Ross Perot: Thirteen stars, thirteen stripes, simple as that. (Russell Beland, Fairfax)
Cialis in Wonderland: Just swallow it and grow. (John Cogburn, Southlake, Tex.)



Online discussion Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style Conversational at washingtonpost.com/styleconversational.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 870: Let's play Nopardy

- "Avoid these potty training missteps" (Drew Bennett)
"My condolence card to Bernie Madoff" (Stephen Dudzik)
"A Luddite visionary" (Dave Zarow)
"The ruly and grunted mob" (Russell Beland)
"Dick Cheney at his cuddliest" (Phil Frankendorf)
"The Westboro Baptist commitment ceremony" (Anne Paris)
"More awesome than a meal of road-kill possum" (Peter Metrinks)
"Tildes, unlauts and schwas" (Craig Dykstra)
"Tatooos your mom with love" (Paul Blanchard)
"E. coli puns" (Mark Richardson)
"Larry King workout DVD" (Chris Doyle)

Last week we posted dozens of Googlenopes - phrases that yielded that "no results found" icon when you Googled them. The Empress is renowned for refusing to waste anything but time, and so we now venture back into the entry pool to use some other G'nopes as "answers" in our perennial "Jeopardy"-type contest. This week: Describe any of the above phrases in the form of a question. Direct from Hawaii, a really rockin' Obama dashboard doll - in Hawaiian garb (plus maybe the nuclear football hanging from his belt) but oddly stocky in build, as if he's been gobbled pol. This isn't a bobbiehead but a bobbietoos: The whole upper body is on a spring. Brought back for us by Loser Beverley Sharp. Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Loser Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fr Stink for their First Ink). One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Tuesday, June 1. Put "Week 870" in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results to be published June 19. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's results is by Craig Dykstra; this week's honorable-mentions subhead is by Tom Witte.

Black culture's in the center ring at the UniverSoul Circus

CIRCUS FROM CI

Dunk All-Stars flying toward a basketball hoop, ball in hand, soaring like players in the NBA but more dramatically. Short men and tall men. A man in dreads and blue tennis shoes runs, dives through a huge ring of fire, flips, and - Bam! - slams the ball through the hoop.

You begin to get it. "What is the trick?" Killeon Miller, one of the slam dunk stars, says later. "Don't get burned."

The UniverSoul Circus, headquartered in Atlanta, was founded in 1994 by Cedric Walker, a concert promoter who wanted to give black circus performers a chance to showcase black culture and talent. Its annual appearance here in Prince George's County is a rite of spring.

Inside the big top, Ringmaster Tone, whose official name is Anthony Luewellyn, 38, gets the crowd going: "When I say big top, you say circus!"

The trained poodles take the ring, followed by a high-wire act. A team of men from Africa and South America climb to a tightrope 25 feet in the air.

"Clap your hands everybody," commands Tone, wearing Doc Martens and a black tuxedo coat. Then he glances up. "Ciriac from West Africa" is walking the tightrope.

Tone yells: "How low can you go to?" And Ciriac does the splits on the high wire, one leg in front of the other. Next up is "Johan from the Dominican Republic," who does a dance most often seen by football players after a touchdown. But this is 25 feet up, on a single wire.

"Now these are some moves you don't see everyday on a high wire," Tone says.

Then "Henry from South America" leaps and lands on the wire. He wobbles. Left. Left. Right. Right. And catches his balance.

"That's okay," the ringmaster says. "This is dangerous stuff." Next, three men stack up, each standing on another's shoulders as if they were fractions, with the bottom man walking across the high wire with some heavy weight.

"Once they make it across," Tone says, "I want every man, boy and girl to stand up and scream."

They make it and the crowd



MARK GAIL/THE WASHINGTON POST

MIXING THINGS UP: Though it focuses on black culture, Chinese acrobats and a Russian poodle tamer are also part UniverSoul Circus.

screams, cheering for them as if they were brothers.

Right before halftime, the ringmaster calls for a Soul Train line.

The deejay begins to play music from "The Price is Right." The ringmaster asks, "Hey, deejay, can you funk it up a bit? It's got to be funky. This is old school."

Five men and five women from the crowd run to the stage and form a Soul Train line. Couple No. 4 does the bump, and the man breaks into the robot. Couple No. 5 dances down the line. But wait.

The man stops. He is in the middle of the ring. These are his five seconds of fame. He begins to break dance and the crowd explodes.

The ringmaster sends all the couples to their seats, announcing, "You all just won a free trip. . . . Right back to your seat."

Frankie Beverly and Maze pump through the speakers. "D.C.?" the ringmaster asks. "I have one question: Is everybody happy? Where the party people at?"

But then, just as you are going old

DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU

