

Bride unhappy with same day event

DEARABBY: I'm being married in three months, and through pure coincidence it turns out that one of my cousins is being married the same day. We're not close, as she was very competitive with me while we were growing up.

Her wedding will take place in the morning. I'm having an afternoon wedding with an evening reception. I assumed she wouldn't be able to make it to my reception because she'd be exhausted and want to spend time with her new husband. Well, I just received an e-mail from her saying she wants to attend. Ordinarily, that would thrill me. However, the catch is, she says there won't be enough time to change, so she wants to wear her bridal gown to my reception.

I think this is terribly rude. I mean, how long does it take to change? Am I being petty, and if not, what can I say to her?

— FRUSTRATED BRIDE IN TEXAS

DEAR FRUSTRATED: Although the rules regarding proper attire for wedding guests have become more flexible in recent years, it is still unacceptable for a guest to wear a bridal gown to someone else's reception. Tell your cousin that you will "understand" if she's a few minutes late to your reception, so she can change, and that she and her new husband should quietly seat themselves when they arrive.

DEAR ABBY: I'm 31, divorced and female. My marriage ended four years ago. I haven't dated much since.

When I least expected it, a wonderful man I'll call Tony walked into my life. He was everything I wanted and more. He treated me the way I deserved to be treated and seemed to like me a lot. I fell for him hard.

A short time later, he told me he didn't want a serious relationship. I was crushed but continued to see him. We dated for about two years and there were still no serious feelings on his part. Then, all of a sudden, he hit me with the news that he had fallen in love with someone else. I was floored! He had said he



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

didn't want a serious relationship. I can't seem to get over him. Every time I try, Tony calls me and wants to hook up. His new girlfriend will be moving here soon from another state, yet he still calls and wants to hook up with me. How can I let go and move on?

— CAN'T LET GO
DEAR CAN'T: Let me explain something. When Tony said he didn't want a serious relationship, he meant with YOU. Wake up and smell the coffee. You are being used. The sooner you can recognize that fact, the sooner you'll be able to let go and say no.

DEARABBY: My boyfriend and I have been having some problems. He has this female friend who wants him to date her. I told her no, it isn't going to happen, but she won't leave him alone. We're trying to plan our wedding, but she keeps getting in our way. What should I do?

— SPITTING NAILS IN WHITEVILLE, N.C.

DEAR SPITTING NAILS: Nothing. The female friend isn't getting the message because the wrong person is doing the talking. If your boyfriend is serious about marrying you, HE should be the one to inform her that his feelings for her are strictly platonic. Please suggest it.

DEAR ABBY: I am about 70 pounds overweight. When I try to diet I just give up. I feel like crying every night because of the way I look. The older I get, the more concerned I am about my weight problem, but I can't help myself.

I'm not dating anyone, and my so-called "friend" said it's because I am so ugly.

I am also kind of scared that I'll wind up dead because of my weight, but I can't stop eating. I eat because I'm sad and I eat because I'm happy.

I joined an athletic program at school. All it did was help me lose a little bit of weight — not much.

What can I do to feel better about myself and become more healthy? I don't want to die.

— SCARED AND SAD FAT GIRL

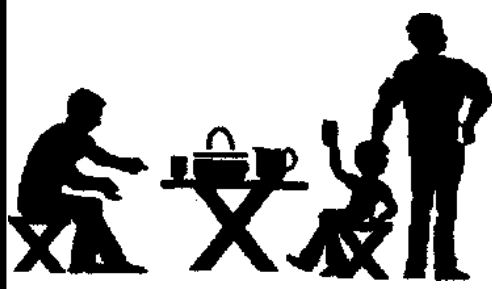
DEAR SCARED AND FAT: Stop beating yourself up. You have a weight problem, but you are not alone. So do millions of other people. Give yourself a pat on the back. You have already taken the first important step in overcoming your problem. You joined an athletic program, which is important to your long-term health.

An added bonus is that it helps to burn calories.

Now it's time to make an appointment with your physician so he or she can recommend a sensible weight-loss program. Once that's established, go to your phone directory and check the listings for Overeaters Anonymous. OA is a self-help group that has been around for more than 40 years, with more than 8,000 chapters in 50 countries. You will be welcomed with open arms into a fellowship of compassionate women, men and young people who share a common problem. It charges no dues or fees, and the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively. Allow me to quote from a letter I printed in 1999 from a member of Overeaters Anonymous:

"Before I found OA at age 19, I had failed at every diet I tried. I wasn't able to stop shoving food down my throat. Back then, I could easily consume eight candy bars, a pint of ice cream and half a pizza in one sitting. ... My emotional state was equally tortured.

"I lost 45 pounds, Abby, but more important, I have kept it off for more than 18 years. One of my closest friends lost 102 pounds through OA and has kept it off for nearly two years. My sponsor, who guides me through the program, lost 250 pounds and has kept it off for 27 years. I'm not making it up.



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