

# Soft-spoken dad won't control his abusive teenage daughter

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend, "Jeff," is a single parent. His daughter, "Nicole," is 14. Jeff is very soft-spoken and even-tempered. He hates conflict and shies away from it if it arises.

We have been in a loving and caring relationship for nine years. We don't yell at each other or call each other names.

Over the last six months, Nicole's behavior toward her father has changed radically. She has become verbally abusive toward him. When she speaks to him she calls him names and uses ungodly language. I cringe when she starts screaming and cursing at him.

I moved out of the house because I can't be part of a household like that — it made me sick. I have stated on more than one occasion that this kind of behavior is unacceptable and not normal. Jeff says he has read books that say that it is. It has driven a wedge between us.

I'm concerned that if Nicole treats her father this way, how is she treating her peers, teachers or strangers?

— HEARTSICK IN FLORIDA  
DEAR HEARTSICK: Nicole's behavior is neither normal nor acceptable.

Your boyfriend should have asserted his authority the first time it happened. The longer he tolerates his daughter's outbursts, the more they will escalate.

I don't know what her problem is — whether she has fallen in with the wrong crowd, is experimenting with drugs or having emotional difficulties. But the time to get to the root of it and put



**Abigail Van Buren**

• Dear Abby

**a stop to it is NOW.**

**And if your boyfriend refuses to face that fact and act like a parent, he is shirking his responsibility to his daughter.**

DEAR ABBY: I need some advice. I married "Fritz" in February 2001, during a spur-of-the-moment trip to Las Vegas.

Afterward, we decided we would wait to tell our parents because we wanted to have a traditional wedding and invite all of our relatives.

It has been more than four years, and I am still trying to get Fritz, at the bare minimum, to tell our families that we're "engaged." But if I bring up the subject, he gets angry and refuses to talk about it because he's "not ready."

Fritz keeps sending me mixed signals — he bought me a \$2,500 diamond engagement/wedding ring, but I'm not allowed to wear it in front of any family members.

He tells me he loves me and I'm the only person he's going to spend the rest of his life with, but this has become a real strain on our relationship.

I don't understand why he won't marry me publicly since we are already married legally. Please help me.

— WANTS MY M.R.S. I

DEAR WANTS: It appears that the man you married still has a lot of growing up to do. He may have had second thoughts about marrying you, or he may be afraid of his parents' reaction. He could also have a problem with commitment and feels that he's "not really married" until there's a formal announcement. Because I'm not a mind reader, I can't be sure what his problem is.

However, there's one thing I know for sure.

**The way you are being treated is degrading, and you should not tolerate it. Offer Fritz the option of marriage counseling, because whether or not he wants to admit it, you ARE married, or end this travesty once and for all.**

DEAR ABBY: I disagree with the grouchy zookeeper who wants parents to stop "lying" to their kids about zoo animals. I have two children, 4 and 6, and I take them to the

zoo for family time and to encourage their love of animals. If they see a small goat and say, "What a cute baby," I'm not going to correct them or run to a zookeeper for an education about pygmy goats.

I'll say, "You're right. That's a cute baby. Let's see what other babies we can find."

Sometimes it's more important to enjoy the moment and agree with a child than search for the correct answer. Zookeepers should credit parents for taking their kids to the zoo at all, and not be such sticklers for "details!"

— MOMMY

**DEAR MOMMY: Please don't blame the zookeeper for wanting to do a conscientious job. Zoos were created for the purpose of education, conservation, recreation and research. Read on:**

DEAR ABBY: Many parents at the zoo are working parents, single parents, stressed parents.

We are doing well just finding time to take our kids to the zoo. Sometimes we have to tell "white lies" because a young child will not accept "I don't know," and will repeat the same question until you give SOME answer and go on about your business.

— DRIVEN CRAZY

DEAR ABBY: I know a lot about sea lions because I have volunteered at the Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito, Calif., for six years. One day, a little girl stood next to me asking her dad why she didn't see any baby sea lions. He replied, "That's because the big ones eat the babies!"

The child, who was about 7, looked so horrified I thought she'd cry.

I said, "That's not true, honey. The sea lions out there are daddies. The mommies and babies are somewhere else away from the people. They only eat fish; they don't eat their babies."

The father gave me a white-hot glare of anger, but I still don't think I owed him an apology.

What's the sense in telling a child such nonsense?

— SHERRILL IN SAN JOSE

DEAR ABBY: Allow me to share some "information" I overheard given by a teacher to a student on a Pacific gray whale-watching trip during the breeding season when an amorous male happened to roll over near the boat. In reply to the curious student's question, the teacher replied, "It's a periscope."

— AUDREY

DEAR ABBY: My family are proud members of the Cleveland

Zoological Society. One day we overheard a mother tell her son, "That's a boy lion. Do you know what a girl lion is called — a TIGER!" My 8-year-old daughter approached the woman and asked, "Do you know the difference between caribou and reindeer?"

After a moment's silence my daughter told her, "Caribou can't fly." The kid got it, but the mother didn't!

— ZOO FAMILY IN CLEVELAND

DEAR ABBY: My father used the zoo as a teaching tool for me. We went there almost daily.

I spent the ages of 1 to 5 with him during the days; evenings with my mom. If a question arose about an animal and Dad didn't know the answer, he'd say, "Let's find out together," and we'd proceed to the library.

I'm 27 now. I still love reading, spend many days at the library, and have a profound love and respect for animals.

I'm grateful my dad took the time to teach me all that when I was so young. Others could learn from his example.

If they do, it will open a door for communication with their children, and everyone will benefit.

— FLORIDA GIRL

## Patient denies allegations

From "LAWSUIT," Page 3

According to court documents, Andrijeski denies having sufficient information to admit or deny most of the claims listed in Mosier's petition against him, the facility or Phillips. And Andrijeski denies having threatened to kill, assault or traumatize Mosier at any time during his transfer to Larned State Hospital.

Represented by Joseph W. Jeter of Hays, High Plains Mental Health Services and Phillips deny Mosier's position she was in danger or injured by transporting Andrijeski for them. They also claim Mosier's

claim for worker's compensation should be the only money she receives and the suit against them should be dismissed.

Mosier alleges she was "severely traumatized" by Andrijeski and since the incident has been unable to work, difficulty sleeping, incurred medical bills, suffered physical complications and been unable to have normal relations with her husband and children. She claims she has not been paid since the alleged incident.

Jeter has filed a request with the court Mosier furnish his clients an itemized list of the total monetary damages she's seeking.

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