

# Lousy tipper takes offense when woman adds her two cents

DEAR ABBY: I have been dating a man I'll call Joe for 2 1/2 years. We usually take turns paying for dinner and other outings. This arrangement works well, except when it's Joe's turn to pay for a meal. He leaves embarrassingly paltry tips. He normally leaves 10 percent or less — but I have seen him leave nothing when we have had reasonably good service.

I have asked Joe why he does this. He says I have no right to question him, since it's his prerogative. But, Abby, there are restaurants I'd like to return to, and I don't feel comfortable doing so because of the bad impression I am sure we left.

At a rather pricey restaurant recently, when Joe chose not to tip the waiter, I casually pulled a bill from my purse and left it on the table. Joe blew up and called it an insult.

— NEEDS A "TIP" IN HOUSTON

DEAR NEEDS: If I were you, I'd be more concerned about the fact that your boyfriend feels you "have no right to question him" than the fact that he's cheap when it comes to leaving gratuities. People who handle disagreements the way he does make poor life partners. "What you should do" is make a list of your boyfriend's good points and his bad ones, see how they balance out and whether the benefit is worth the cost emotionally, and act accordingly.

DEAR ABBY: I'm in my early 20s. I work nearly full time, attend college full time, am in a serious relationship, and my behavior is very professional. However, I look quite young. Most people say I look between 14 and 16.

I work at a school where many people mistake me for a student, and my professionalism and ability are often overlooked. Even when I go to the store, people younger than I am call me "Sweetie," or some



**Abigail Van Buren**

● Dear Abby

other childish name. What can I do to appear my age? I don't want to look older than I am, just to look my age and appear mature. Please help.

— NO LONGER A FRESHMAN

DEAR NO LONGER: The time may be here for a "make-over." Make an appointment with a hairdresser and makeup artist to see how they can give you a more businesslike and sophisticated persona. If it isn't already, your attire at work should be conservative, no-nonsense and businesslike.

Because you say your professionalism and ability are not appreciated, please consider assertiveness training. Lower the tone of your voice, speak louder, and if you feel you have been "overlooked," say, "Excuse me..." and repeat what's on your mind.

DEAR ABBY: I was molested by my father when I was 8. I am now 28, and I thought I'd gotten over it. I have had no contact with my father since I was 14.

I recently heard that he was living like a bum on the streets, and was treated for an overdose of someone else's prescription for psych meds. He is now in a home, and my brother, who lives near him, does what he can. My thought is, how dare he expect any of his children to care at all about him?

On the other hand, it's medically documented that he is "mental." Are we supposed to have compassion for the mentally ill?

— DAUGHTER OF A CRAZY, AVON, IND.

DEAR DAUGHTER: Compassion, yes. Amnesia, no. Much would depend upon whether your father was delusional when he molested you. But no one — including me — would blame you if you kept your distance under the circumstances.

DEAR ABBY: I am writing regarding your answer to "Julie in Spring, Texas," who asked you when parents should stop using baby talk with their children. I disagree with you. She said her son had just turned 3! He is still a baby. Many children are still in diapers at that age. Let the mother enjoy her young son while she still has the time.

— LINDA T., CLEARWATER

DEAR LINDA T.: Intelligent minds may disagree. But according to the mail I received regarding that letter, you are in the minority. I stand by my reply. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: My advice as a pediatrician is to stop baby talk the

day the baby is born — that is to say, never start!

Babies learn at a surprisingly early age to assimilate what they hear into their later speech patterns; they learn to "talk" what they hear, and "baby talk" is not the language we want them to use. Yes, talk softly, talk sweetly, sing to your baby — but use the words of proper language.

— LEE BERNSTEIN, M.D., LAS VEGAS, NEV.

DEAR ABBY: As a retired public school speech therapist, allow me to respond to "Julie's" question. Language development is one of the most important aspects of a child's life. A child begins to acquire language almost as soon as he starts hearing it. Vocabulary is not the only component of speech. Inflection, tone, grammar, etc. contribute to a person's ability to communicate effectively. Talking "baby talk" to an infant can delay the process of language development. Vocabulary should be age-appropriate but still within acceptable speech patterns.

— LILLIAN A., N. MIAMI BEACH

DEAR ABBY: When our daughter was born, my husband and I agreed there would be no baby talk. When my maternity leave was over and we put her in day care, I asked the providers not to use baby talk with her.

I wanted her to grasp how words

sounded and use them correctly.

She turned 3 last month, and can use the words "decide" and "separate" correctly. She knew her ABCs by 18 months and can count to 10 in English and Spanish, and on to 20 only in English. She is very articulate, and most people think she is at least 5. Please urge that mother to use "big boy/girl" words with her child. It will help her child to articulate what he/she wants to say, and everyone will understand what the child is trying to communicate.

— JEANNE J., CRESTVIEW, FLA.

DEAR ABBY: Research has shown that children who are spoken to as "adults," using complete sentences, not only learn faster, but have a better comprehension of the English language than children whose parents use baby talk. Studies have also shown that children who are read to, even before birth, also develop more rapidly.

— JUSTIN F., AMERICAN MILITARY (DEPLOYED)

DEAR ABBY: Because my dad and stepmother used baby talk with my 8-year-old brother for so long, he is now in speech therapy to learn proper English. He still uses phrases like "Me love you" because they thought it was "cute" and never corrected him. Using baby talk is a disservice to a child. Speaking to children correctly helps them become credible later in life.

— JULIA IN OGDEN, UTAH

DEAR ABBY: A friend of mine once retorted to a woman in a restaurant who asked her if she always spoke to her child like he was a rocket scientist, "Of course! How else can I expect him to grow up to be one?"

— PLAIN-SPEAKING FATHER OF FOUR

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