

Smiling receptionist is not happy

DEAR ABBY: I am working temporarily as a receptionist. I get tired of greeting people, but I put on a smile and do it. But it upsets me when I make contact with someone and say, "Good morning," only to have him or her look away and ignore me.



Abigail Van Buren

● Dear Abby

Would it be OK to say, "Excuse me, I said, 'Good morning'?" If not, how do you suggest dealing with rude people like these? I think they should be made aware of their poor manners. But how?

a great man, my hero, and the only man I have ever wanted to be like.

Abby, I feel guilty about not having broken down and cried yet. I want those feelings to come, but they won't. Please give me some advice.

— GORDON IN IOWA

DEAR GORDON: Please accept my condolences for the loss of your father. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to grieve. Death is something that affects different people in different ways. Sometimes the survivors feel numb, which may be why it's hard for you to cry.

Please do not feel guilty about this. Joining a grief support group might help you in getting through this period. However, the last thing you need on top of the pain of your loss right now is to beat yourself up because you haven't behaved in a fashion you thought you "should" have.

DEAR ABBY: My sister-in-law never stops bragging about her kids. And these brats constantly compete to be the center of attention, spitefully putting my children down at family gatherings.

My mother-in-law spends a lot of extra time with these kids because

they are involved in athletics. My children are about the same age, but when I'm around my mother-in-law, all she talks about are the niece and nephew. She never asks about my children. I have taken to politely excusing myself when she does this, or when my sister-in-law starts bragging, or her kids start drawing attention to themselves.

Is this the proper way to handle this problem?
— READY TO SCREAM IN OLYMPIA, WASH.

DEAR READY TO SCREAM: Your sister-in-law appears to be a natural when it comes to public relations. Surely your own children have some accomplishment that you can pipe up and mention at these family gatherings. Leaving the room is not the way to handle this. Speaking up and talking about what caring, thoughtful, creative children your children are is something you should have started doing long ago.

Editor's note: Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

Mother-in-law taking up time

BY DR. JOYCE BROTHERS

Dear Dr. Brothers: Against my better judgment, I let my husband move his mother into our home when her last lease was up and she was complaining about being lonely. She's been alone for years, but now she seems to need constant attention. I am used to being an empty nester, with my children grown and no one tying me down as long as I am home at 6 p.m. to make dinner. Now I feel I have to be at my mother-in-law's beck and call all day. She's not ill or disabled in any way, just lonesome and needy. My husband says he would do the same for my mother, were she still living. How do I answer that, and how do I get my freedom back?

— F.R.

Dear F.R.: You need to sit down with your husband and see if you can divide up the duties that seem to make having an extra family member in your home such a chore. She needn't be made aware that you are taking turns cooking her dinner or watching her favorite TV show with her, but it will make it more pleasant for everyone if you each have some downtime. It doesn't sound as though you have any real emotional connection with your husband's mother. That's too bad. Perhaps you would find her easier to live with if you could find some common interests to talk about, read about or go see — such as a shopping trip or attending a class or lecture together.

Also, since your mother-in-law is not infirm in mind or body, why don't you introduce her to some other women and men her age through a local seniors' center or religious institution, if she is interested in that sort of thing? Having her own set of friends and activities would certainly help you regain that sense of freedom you so enjoy. You can call upon your husband to do some thinking, too — the more he pitches in, the less resentment you're going to feel.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I know you will think I am a terrible person, but I am taking a chance that you might understand. I can't really confess this to anyone else. My fiancé is in Iraq for at least six more months (he's been away for almost a year already). Instead of feeling more attached to him and counting the days until he comes home, I am feeling more and more like I wish I didn't know him. The truth is, I forget what we are all about. There's another guy I would like to go out with, but I don't want to have to give up my ring. What should I do?

— A.J.

Dear A.J.: Long-distance relationships are always difficult, and having your fiancé away in a war zone adds all sorts of extra stress to your vision of a future together. With irregular communication because of the circumstances, it's easy to lose the intimacy you built up before your fiancé's departure, and another guy who is within your grasp seems a lot more real to you right now. Those

around you are probably all enmeshed in the fantasy romance between you two separated lovers, which puts even more pressure on you to maintain that vignette of the maiden and her returning hero. Dumping a soldier in a war zone is bound to mark you as a cruel and heartless lover. I'm sure all these ideas are complicating your decision.

So ... you need to decide if it is worth it to send a Dear John letter or wait for that next overseas phone call to drop the bomb. You

should give some thought to how that will make you feel, and how your boyfriend will react. You can justify just about any action by wanting to be honest and truthful, but I am suggesting that you give some thought to your timing. If you decide you have to break up with him, telling him face to face is more respectful and seems to be a better way of doing things. If you can wait it out to see him, you'll feel better about everything in the end.

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Crafty kid



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Cosette O'Brien of Colby worked on a craft project during the Northwest Research-Extension Center Field Day Thursday. Children had the chance to get "crafty" while their parents learned about the right way to care for grass or the flower trial the experiment station participated in this summer.

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Showcased Homes of the Week

JUST LISTED Fantastic brick home situated in great area. Corner lot, well groomed w/ sprinklers. 4-5 BR, 3 attached grgs. Call Molly! 570 Austin ~ \$129,900	LOOK 5 BR, 2 bath spacious home, full bsmt, 2-car grg, underground sprinklers. 1024 Court Terrace ~ \$114,000	BREWSTER So very affordable. Brick older home with large front greeting porch, bsmt, 2-car grg, central heat & air. 420 Illinois Ave ~ \$39,900
WALK-OUT BASEMENT 4 BR, 2 bath lovely home. Family room w/ fireplace, spacious deck off kitchen. 785 Lane ~ \$92,500	FINISHED ATTIC A must see traditional home. 3 BR, 2 bath home on tree-lined street. Look/ make offer. 330 W. 5th ~ \$92,500	NEW LOOK 2 BR, 2 bath brick home. Spacious family room addition, new floor covering, paint, light fixtures, appliances & much more. 445 Lawrence ~ \$99,500
ATTRACTIVE KITCHEN 1 1/2 story, 3 BR, 2 bath home. Very attractive kitchen, easy access to rear yard deck. 635 W. 4th ~ \$79,500	THE ONE Brick, large 5 BR family home. Two recreation areas, formal areas, private master BR. Let's Look! 1811 Harvey Court ~ \$149,900	SO PERFECT 3 BR, 2 bath, 2-car grg. This is a very sharp one-level home with open floor plan; efficient wood-burning fireplace. 585 Austin ~ \$95,000
WHY RENT? You can easily own this clean & Sharp 2 BR cottage. Central heat & air. 830 W. Plum ~ \$35,000	BEAUTIFUL 2 story, 3 BR, 3 bath, custom decorated home. This home is simply "AWESOME". Call Molly. 1220 Lue Drive ~ \$154,500	GREAT VALUE Lots of home for your money. 4 BR, 2 bath, 1-car grg, main floor laundry. 1000 E. 9th ~ \$78,500
UNIQUE CHARM 3 BR, 2 bath home from yesteryear. Such romantic charm with traditional stability. 940 W. 2nd ~ \$76,000	RARE FIND Super large family home or perfect for entertaining. Over 5,000 sq. feet & 4-car garage. 985 S. Range ~ \$249,000	GARAGE SALE SIGNS Be sure to stop by our office before your next garage sale & check out a couple of signs. Molly J. Oliver

Residential Properties ♦ 1830 W. 5th - \$138,000 ♦ 540 N. Chick - \$59,900 ♦ 1165 Ct. Terrace - \$147,900 ♦ 330 S. Chick - \$56,000 ♦ 665 W. Walnut - \$54,500 ♦ 1385 W. 1st - \$76,000 ♦ 1380 E. 8th - \$158,000 ♦ 265 W. 6th - \$118,900 ♦ 1455 W. 4th - \$61,500 ♦ 915 Mentlick - \$49,900 ♦ 480 Sherman - \$49,900 ♦ 160 N. School - \$57,500 ♦ 840 E. 6th - \$44,500 ♦ 175 E. Hill - \$64,500 ♦ 1015 W. 35th, Goodland - \$159,900 ♦ 635 W. 4th - \$79,500 ♦ 350 E. 4th - \$43,000 ♦ 545 Martin - \$16,500 ♦ 985 W. 4th - \$89,900 ♦ 1240 W. 5th - \$54,900 ♦ 1165 Wheatridge - \$194,000 ♦ 202 - 2nd St, Grinnell - \$69,900 ♦ 1840 W. 5th - \$94,000 ♦ 102 Jefferson, Grinnell - \$55,000 ♦ 215 Kansas Ave, Brewster - \$38,500 ♦ 685 N. Court - \$72,500 ♦ 1161 Summer Sun - \$89,900 ♦ 425 W. 6th - \$96,500 ♦ 1433 - 16th, Hoxie - \$82,500 ♦ 1345 E. 8th - \$83,900

Residential Building Lots ♦ Lots 7 & 8, Block 3, Pioneer Add. #2 - \$13,000 ♦ Lots 3 & 4, Block 2, Monterey Sub. - \$20,000 ♦ Lot 1, Block 2, El Chaparral Add. - \$7,500 ♦ Lots 1-3, E 10th Lot 4, Block 57, Southview Addition - \$12,500 ♦ Lots 11 & 12, Block 57, Southview Addition - \$6,500 ♦ Approx. 4.4 Acre Rural Lot South of Colby - \$17,000 ♦

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