

Shower could turn stormy if troubled friends attend

DEAR ABBY: My sister had a childhood friend, "Denise," with whom she was very close in elementary school. They were friends only intermittently as they grew older, and Denise started getting into all kinds of trouble.



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

When they were in college, my sister house-sat for my parents while they were on vacation, and Denise stayed with her. While she was there, she stole some expensive jewelry from my mother.

Although the family never confronted Denise about it, it was obvious that she took the jewelry, and my sister did not remain in contact with her after that.

My sister is now 40 and expecting her first child. I have offered to throw a shower for her.

A couple of years ago, Denise got in touch with my sister and they became friends again.

I don't know much about her last 20 years, other than that she spent time in jail and is now a single mother to a teenage son and works for a non-profit agency.

Given her history with the family, I definitely do not want to invite Denise into my home for the show-

er, and my mother is adamant that she will not attend the shower if Denise is there. My sister wants to invite Denise because they are friends again, and she doesn't know how to tell her that she isn't invited. What do we do?

— "LORETTA" IN LOS ANGELES

DEAR "LORETTA": If your sister is not already aware of your feelings and your mother's, she should be enlightened.

If she still wishes to invite Denise to her baby shower, then it will have to be held somewhere other than your home — and your mother will not be there.

However, considering the circumstances, I think it's time your sister grew a backbone and explained to Denise that the theft left lasting hard feelings with the

family — which are understandable — so she should not expect to be included at any family functions that include your mother.

DEAR ABBY: One of my closest friends, "Louise," has informed me that her husband just moved out and is requesting a divorce. She is hoping to repair the marriage. She has not given me a reason why, nor have I asked.

I am trying to be a good friend and be supportive.

My problem is, on a recent trip to visit my grandmother in a nearby city, I saw Louise's husband being very cozy and affectionate with a very pregnant woman.

Louise was never able to have children, so this will come as a big blow to her. She has also started drinking a great deal, and is having

all sorts of people at home for parties. This is not typical behavior for her, but I understand why she's doing it.

Louise lives a financially secure life because of her husband's income.

He is already asking about how to liquefy the assets, and she is in denial. I don't know if I should tell her about the pregnant woman or express my concerns about her drinking. I feel she needs to wake up and smell the coffee and start securing her assets. What should I do?

— WORRIED ABOUT MY FRIEND

DEAR WORRIED: Your friend may already know about the woman and the baby, but on the chance that she doesn't, she should be told what you saw. And because you are concerned about her drinking, you should express that, too.

There are difficult times ahead for your friend. She's going to need her wits about her — not be added or living in a fantasy world. She's going to need legal advice and, of course, all of the emotional support her friends

can give her.

DEAR ABBY: My older sister, "Alia," is being married in November at a fancy resort.

Her fiance manages the place, so they are getting a reception for next to nothing.

Because it is a nighttime, black-tie affair, Alia prefers to have no children at the reception.

Children will be welcome at the church, and baby sitters will be provided during the reception afterward.

Furthermore, the children will be treated to a pizza party, games and movies.

Alia has never related well to children, but she doesn't want to offend anyone.

However, my "Aunt Julia" (who has three small children) has gotten wind of this, called Alia and chewed her out, and said her children go "everywhere" with her and that excluding them is an "insult." (These are the same kids who ran wild at our cousin's wedding last month, and one of them spilled red wine on Alia's bridesmaid dress.)

Is my sister being rude by excluding children from the reception? Our little sister, "Emily," is 9, and she will be in the children's room and not at the main reception. (And frankly, she's more excited about that than anything.)

Please advise, because Alia is sensitive and doesn't want to offend people.

— CARING SISTER, KENTWOOD, MICH.

DEAR CARING SISTER: If your sister wants an adults-only wedding reception, then she's entitled to have one. Aunt Julia was out of line to criticize. The

bride is being more than gracious, and providing generously for the children's supervision and entertainment after the ceremony. And if Aunt Julia feels she cannot be separated from her little angels for even a few hours, then she should attend the children's reception with them.

DEAR ABBY: I have heard advice given to childhood abuse survivors that it is all right to avoid their abusers, even when the abuser is a parent.

My situation is unique. I was emotionally abused by both of my parents for years.

A couple of times when I was young, my mother attempted suicide (to get attention) and blamed her attempts on me. I will never forget the time she told me, "I tried to kill myself because you are such a horrible daughter."

I am still in my mother's life. (I am 47.) I do not wish to see her very much, but I feel responsible for her. I would prefer never to see her again because of all the years of abuse, guilt and inappropriateness she heaped on me.

Is this possible? I have had therapy and have come to terms with my past. I guess I am looking for "permission" not to see her. Thank you in advance.

— CHRIS IN NAPA, CALIF.

DEAR CHRIS: You're welcome. You not only have my permission, you have my blessing.

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.

Governor urges Kansans to get healthy

State officials are working toward a healthier Kansas and encouraging Kansans to take the Healthy Kansas pledge at the state fair in Hutchinson which started this week.

The pledge, which is sponsored by Governor Kathleen Sebelius and Roderick Bremby, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, will run through Sunday.

The cards are available in the

Meadowlark Building on the fairgrounds.

Participants are asked to do the following:

- Increase physical activity levels to at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week;
- Eat a healthy, nutritious diet with at least five servings of fruit and vegetables a day; and
- Stop using or significantly reduce consumption of tobacco products.

"Whether it's increasing physical activity each week or eating a more nutritious diet, changing these behaviors for the better can result in a much healthier Kansas," Sebelius said.

"I'll be at the fair this week and encourage all Kansans to join me in taking the Healthy Kansas pledge."

All Kansans taking the pledge will receive a signed letter and certificate from Sebelius and Bremby

offering their congratulations for committing to healthy lifestyle changes.

Editor's note: For those unable to attend the fair, information on how to achieve a healthy lifestyle can be found at: www.HealthyKansas.org. The newest feature of the Healthy Kansas Web site is "CheckUp," a free health manager software tool that allows Kansans to create a secure personal health record.

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