

Dream could hit verbal snag

Dear Dr. Brothers: My wife and I recently realized a lifelong dream of opening up a small diner right on the outskirts of town. Thankfully, business has been going pretty well, but I noticed something yesterday that may change our luck. My wife loves to talk to customers, asking about their personal lives and really meaning no harm -- but yesterday she asked a customer why she didn't have any kids yet! The woman was mortified. I'm afraid that if it gets around town that our diner makes people feel uncomfortable, people won't show up. What should I do? -- S.A.



Dr. Joyce Brothers
• Ask Dr. Brothers

Dear S.A.: Congratulations on achieving a dream. There are few things more psychologically rewarding than realizing a long-held and difficult goal -- and it's even more fulfilling to share one with your wife. But to keep your good fortune you may want to have a little business talk with your partner. Though your wife may want to create a homey atmosphere to go along with her home cooking, she must understand that she is first and foremost in business, and not a den mother.

That's not to say that she shouldn't be interested in her customers' well-being. Creating an environment where people feel comfortable is essential for running a successful business. But ask her to look out for any cues a customer may give off to give her a good idea of how willing a person is to open up. Those less offended by personal questions are more likely to volunteer information, rather than have it dragged from them.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am the last of four children to go to college. I have to work two jobs just to keep my tuition paid, and it really stinks. Last week, I met a girl who told me I could make a lot of money turning tricks on the side. She does it, and says the guys are mostly homely college boys ... not old men or anything. I want to do this, because the pay is much better than I am making and the work is easier. Do you think I could do it to get through school (two years) and then quit with no bad psychological effects? -- K.G.

Dear K.G.: Have you heard the phrase "know thyself"? Only you can determine whether this kind of scene would leave lasting scars or just be a footnote to your crazy college days. But the fact that you are concerned should possibly be a red flag. If you become a sex worker and find that it is impossible to regain your amateur status -- that is, reserving sex for a meaningful, loving relationship -- this could become problematic. Suppose you want to marry someday -- many men will not want to consider you as a partner if you are honest about this kind of background. And if you decide to leave it, will you be able to live with yourself?

There also are physical issues.

What if you contract a disease? What if you meet someone unsavory who abuses you ... or stalks you? What if you can't collect

what is due you, or you end up entertaining married men and it's against your principles? As long as prostitution is illegal and held in such contempt, I'm afraid you will have to weigh the money against the many drawbacks. If all this sounds too nightmarish to contemplate, why don't you look into little-known scholarships instead? It might be a better investment in your future.

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