

Will Your Relationship Survive the Holidays?

by Con Chapman

The holidays are a stressful time of the year, straining both long-term relationships and brief flings that begin as drunken come-ons at office parties. How does one cope with competing and often conflicting demands of “significant others” that clash with family obligations, year-end business demands and last-minute shopping? Ask your Holiday Relationship Advisor, that's how!



“Mmmffftthngg!”

Dear Holiday Relationship Advisor:

For eight years I have been living with a man named Darren Fletcher, who I will refer to as “Bud” to preserve his anonymity. Bud is a homebody and does not like to travel since he is on the road so much for his job as a salesman for Arch Pneumatic Fasteners. This year Bud surprised me at Halloween by announcing that he wanted to go see the Grand Canyon for Thanksgiving. I was overjoyed and I told him so, but he said “Uh, Earleen, I want to go by myself.” I was hurt, but I realized if I am ever going to talk Bud into marrying me I have to be tolerant of his “quirks.”



"There's some kind of beetle in your ear!"

Anyway, the night before Bud was going to fly out of KC International a woman shows up at our door and asks is this where Darren lives and I said yes, who are you? She says she is Judith Marie Oehrke and is going to the Grand Canyon with Darren—I mean Bud.

Well, I was polite and told the woman to have a seat and I went in and gave Bud "what for." He says calm down, it's a charter flight and Judith Marie has driven up from Camdenton, we're going to ride to the airport together to save gas. Okay, I says, I understand, although I was a little bit "put out."

After dinner, which was Pork Chops Hawaiian Luau-Style with Kraft Miniature Marshmallows on top, Bud says he's tired and is going to get a good night's sleep, and Judith Marie says me too, so I says "You two go pack your bags I'll clean up," which I did. When I was finished I went into the bedroom to get some sheets for the pull-

out couch and what do I see but Bud and Judith Marie under the covers together big as life, she's reading a Southern Home magazine from my nightstand!



"We'll buy you a souvenir at the Grand Canyon gift shop, okay?"

Well, there was probably smoke coming out of my ears by then, but Bud just looks up at me and says "What?" as if he can't understand why I'm mad. I nodded my head at the "interloper", and he says "There's plenty of room and you wouldn't want Judith Marie to sleep on the couch—she's gonna be stuck on a plane all day tomorrow."



Take care of your spit curls, and they'll take care of you.

I didn't want to make a scene, so I brushed my teeth and put on my nightgown and Scotch-taped my spit-curls to the sides of my head and climbed over Bud and got in the middle. I was *not* going to let my two "vacationers" turn my bedroom into a "bridal suite" if you know what I mean.

Next morning I get up and fix them breakfast and say goodbye in the driveway, but now I am haunted by the fear that I may be losing Darren. Am I wrong to be suspicious?

Earleen Walters, Knob Noster MO

Dear Earleen:

I'm afraid I'm going to have side with Darren and Judith Marie on this one, Earleen. If we as a nation are ever going to end our dependency on foreign oil, car-pooling is a must. Don't let your feelings for Darren get in the way of energy conservation—or we'll all be the losers, not just you!



Dear Holiday Relationship Advisor Lady:

A few months ago a new fellow started working in our mail room, his name is Keith. I will be right up-front about this—I have a gigantic crush on him, and I think the feeling is mutual.

Keith delivers our mail every morning around 11:30, although he is actually supposed to get it done by eleven under his job satisfaction goals. He is very “social” and likes to talk to people as he makes his rounds, this slows him up—or down.

Yesterday Keith came by my cubicle and handed me an inter-office envelope, the goldenrod-colored kind with the holes in it. He was giggling when he gave it to me, and said “Here's something for you from the guys in the supply room.” I squished it in a couple places to see if I could figure out what was inside, but I gave up after a while and unwound the string.

Office supply room: Men go mad from the tedium, if not the pressure.

Holiday relationship lady, I nearly fainted when I unwrapped the white tissue paper inside and a white mouse with a red ribbon around its neck jumped out at me! I squealed but by then “Keith” was gone and Jim Ray Houchens and Ernie Bott from the supply room came out from around the corner and started laughing at me.

Needless to say, I filed a grievance with Human Resources and now Jim Ray and Ernie have named Keith as a witness. Do you know any way I can avoid dragging Keith into this mess? I don't want to spoil my best chance at romance since that stupid fishstick Ray West dropped me for the hostess at the Round-Up Steakhouse.

Maureen Eberly, Paducah, Kentucky



Dear Maureen:

Jim Ray and Ernie have a constitutional right to a fair trial, and they *did* use an envelope with holes in it so the little animal could breathe. I see no way out for the “object of your affection”—perhaps you and Keith can set up a “deposition date” where you prepare for your testimony while you share a late-night dinner of take-out Chinese!

Living the dream.

Hello Holiday Relationship Person:

I have a question for you. Last month you told “Confused in Chillicothe” that he should not give a Best Buy gift card to a woman on their first Christmas together because it was “impersonal.” I beg to differ—giving a woman a gift card lets her know *exactly* where she stands with you, she can see the amount you spent right on the card. She gets to pick out whatever she wants and doesn't have to waste time returning something she doesn't like. She also doesn't have to lie to you when you go over to her apartment and say “Hey, where'd you put that print of the tiger and the reflecting ball I gave you for Christmas?”

I don't know where you get off trying to run people's lives. Maybe that's good advice in the “ivory tower” where you live, but not for regular folks down here on the ground.

Clint Weller, Jr., Stillwater OK

Dear Clint:

I certainly didn't mean to offend you or “Confused in Chillicothe”. All I meant to convey is that women appreciate it when a man puts a little thought into a gift, instead of just plunking down his credit card at the check-out counter of a soulless, big-box retailer. If you have had success with pre-paid gift cards by all means continue to

give them to your girlfriends. Or you might just use cash, and get yourself a real hooker.

