

Senior Advice: Woman elects to end friendship after political row

by Doug_Mayberry

Q: Last week a friend of 26 years and I got into an argument about a political candidate which ended with her walking out of my house and slamming the door. Being born in the same town, we spent our girlish years laughing, finding husbands, having children and maturing together. I hope she is feeling as I do - there is no legitimate reason why we are mad at each other. Neither of us has picked up the phone to apologize, and of course, I think she should be the one to do so. Am I right?

A: Historical advice about not discussing politics or religion remains as valid as ever. However, in your case it would appear because of your years of friendship even this advice could be ignored. The sudden confrontation brings up the real issue of your friendship. Have either of you changed over time or neglected to tell the other you would like to move on? An unexpected outburst like what happened may not be the real cause in the deterioration of your friendship, but simply serves as an excuse to dissolve your previous closeness.

Could one of you given up on nurturing the other? Are you loyal or have one of you found a new friend with whom you are more compatible? For personal reasons, has one of you begun to withdraw and gotten defensive?

The bottom line is we all change, and perhaps even differences between your husbands serves as an excuse to move on. If you would like to repair the friendship, why not be the first to apologize and ask forgiveness? A written apology would give her time to reveal how she really feels. If she responds affectionately and is also forgiving you can repair your former happiness. It will prove to be a lesson learned: No more sharing of political opinions!

Q: Our grandson is 19 and becoming progressively more negative about life. He complains about the world in general, the war, the devaluation of our dollar plus criticizing his parents and sister. We don't believe he is into any addictions, but is lonely and has only a few friends. His parents have taken him to several doctors, without results. What do you think is going on?

A: I am not a doctor, but on the surface your grandson appears not to love himself very much. If you don't love yourself it is difficult to love others. Perhaps he is making negative choices in an effort to draw attention to himself. Most of us have been exposed to those who do so. He could possibly even be jealous of his sister. His attitude may simply be the results of his believing he can influence and get more attention from his parents if he assumes a negative approach to life.

I remember when I was about 15 and complaining to my mother about the world she pulled me up and said, "Do you want to enjoy life, be happy, have people to love you, and have friends? If you do, you'd better change your attitude."

I chose to take her advice as a wake-up call. It worked. By deciding I most wanted to enjoy and participate with others in our wonderful world I began to focus on the good, not the bad.

Life is about making choices and is not always perfect. Assuming a positive versus a negative attitude has rewarded me with love from caring family and friends. Suggest to your grandson the same approach will also work for him!

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