

Senior Advice: Meet, greet - it's sweet

by *Doug_Mayberry*

Q: I feel I have missed many opportunities in my life. I know I am too conservative and nervous and have always been afraid to meet new people. My husband usually led the way, but died in an auto accident when he was 52. Since then, nearly 10 years ago, I find myself being even more reclusive.

How can I overcome this?

A: We are all alike and don't realize others are not comfortable about meeting strangers. There is no reason to be afraid to speak to individuals you have never met. Churches, libraries, retirement communities and senior centers serve as "safe" environments to become involved with others.

Tipping points in life revolve about your needs. Casually opening a conversation with an unknown person is your choice. To simply say, "Good morning, isn't it a wonderful day?" is an easy opener. If there is no answer or a negative one, move on.

There can be many reasons why others don't respond positively. Some days we don't feel well, are grouchy, are in a hurry or just don't want to take the time to be friendly. Often the other person is just as afraid as you are to open up. It's a little like being a salesperson. The more times a salesman asks you to buy something, the greater the chances you will do so.

There are many ways to begin a conversation. Simply ask a question about upcoming events, where you can find bargains, or what their favorite restaurant is. Volunteering, joining group activities that you enjoy, signing up for a day's bus trip, learning how to use a computer at your library and spending time at your local senior center are opportunities to spread your wings.

The bottom line: Most of us welcome new friendships. Plan to say "hello" to someone new every day. Strangers don't bite!

Q: I am widowed, and my only grandson plans to marry in June. I love his choice, as does our entire family. I think I was a fairly good husband, but I carry some guilt for not letting my wife know how deeply I cared and appreciated her.

My grandson has asked me what makes a good husband. Can you help me?

A: Unfortunately, perfect husbands don't exist. A short list of "good" things for husbands to be includes: being his wife's best friend, showing her daily affection by word and deed, making her feel important, being patient and sexually considerate, consulting with her about financial commitments, and being sympathetic with her moods and setbacks. Honesty and faithfulness are top priorities. Taking time to ask about her feelings, complimenting her regularly, being friendly with her parents and attentive to her in public, and placing the interests of his wife and children ahead of the relatives are good options.

Taking his wife out for recreation, making it possible for her to enjoy leisure time and outside interests will benefit both of them. Most marriages are now dual working partnerships, which usually creates even more responsibilities for wives,

A complete guide to being "good" is not available. No doubt you can add to the list based on the success of your marriage.

Your grandson's attitude reflects how much he values your opinion. You have a right to be proud of him!

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