

Aunt Bossy: The Life Coach Your Mother Never Was

Written by Susan Murphy

Tuesday, 31 July 2012 13:03 - Last Updated Wednesday, 01 August 2012 09:09

Just Be Toothful

Dear Aunt Bossy,



I have a new boyfriend whom I really like. He is smart, successful, kind, and very good looking. The only problem is that his dental hygiene leaves a lot to be desired. He doesn't have bad breath, but his teeth are covered with tarter and look dirty. What can I do? He is really wonderful in every other way. It creeps me out and affects my feelings about kissing him.

At a Loss for Words.

Dear At a Loss,

Nobody wants to hang out with a person whose teeth look like they are wearing little sweaters. If you care about him, which it sounds like you do, this is a good opportunity to see what kind of person he is.

Just tell him. You can begin by reminding him of how much you like him and how handsome he is, and finish by saying, "But your teeth are not worthy of you, and, besides, it is unhealthy. If you hate going to the dentist, I'll go with you and provide moral support."

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If he can't handle that, you can cut your losses. If he is as wonderful as you say, he will step up to the dental chair, and you will have shared a moment that will bond you, perhaps forever.

You have nothing to lose. He has his teeth to lose. Give it a try.

- Common Sense: If you come right out and say what you think, there is less chance of poor communication.
- Good Manners: It is good manners to be tactful in talking about personal issues.
- Discipline: It takes a lot of guts to risk saying something that could backfire.

Political Boils

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I am getting very depressed during the run up to the Presidential election. It seems that both sides are stuck in hating the other candidate and can't talk about another viewpoint or consider another person's opinion. What can I do? I love this country and want to participate in important discussions, but don't want to be dragged down by hate and anger.

Fly Over Gal

Dear Fly Over Gal,

This is very discouraging. The only thing you can do is to immerse yourself in different viewpoints and be certain you are dancing to your own tune and not following a crowd wearing blinders. I recommend "Real Clear Politics" which is a website presenting all viewpoints from all over the world. Read the articles and read the comments particular to each publication which follow the articles.

This will give you a foundation to decide what you believe and will help you to understand what others believe. In order to have a civilized discussion on these things, you must always ask yourself, "How does the other person see this?"

When you have a discussion, try to present various viewpoints to bring real thinking into the equation. If you get stuck talking to someone who can only demonize the other side, you can either walk away or humiliate them by asking specific questions designed to give them a chance to support their opinions. Most fanatics speak in generalities and can't give specifics.

I find that the kind of people who think anyone who disagrees with them is bad and evil – and motivated by a desire to hurt other people – are best avoided. All you can do is infuriate them.

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Their hate begins at home, and there is nothing you can do about that. If you really want to be evil, ask them about their parents.

- Common Sense: Getting educated is a good preparation.
- Good Manners: Listening to another's opinion is polite.
- Discipline: It isn't easy to go easy or walk away when you are talking with an idiot.

Aunt Bossy is Susan Murphy, an internationally known Communication Skills Coach who adores spending every winter and spring in Beaufort. □ Ask for advice @ Bossymurph@mac.com

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