

Aunt Bossy: The Life Coach Your Mother Never Was

Written by Susan Murphy

Wednesday, 28 August 2013 05:30 - Last Updated Wednesday, 28 August 2013 06:50



Jumping the Gun

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I just did something with the best of intentions, but it was wrong and stupid and now I don't know what to do.

I recently got in touch with an old friend. We hadn't talked for years and years but traced each other down on Facebook. It is very exciting because we always liked each other and have had lots of adventures to share.

She mentioned that she had another friend who lived near me who was going through a fight with breast cancer – a fight I am very familiar with – and said that her friend and I would really like each other. She said she would check to be sure it was okay with her friend and then introduce us via email.

I looked up the friend, and was so excited to find another American in a small town near me in the foreign country in which I live – who is going through what I went through! – that I messaged her myself.

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As soon as I did, I realized I was supposed to wait for permission.

I feel like such a dork, and so selfish to jump the gun like that.

What should I do?

JTG

Dear JTG,

Not much. You should let your friend know that you are sorry, that you were acting out of enthusiasm and made a mistake. Period.

What you did is not naughty, bad, or weak. What you did showed a true enthusiastic desire to reach out to another who might be in need and to spread the love you share with your old friend. There is only good there.

Once, a long, long time ago, Aunt Bossy volunteered to help a very chic designer friend out by volunteering to man (or 'person,' but this was before THAT!) her booth at a boutique buyers' show. The very chic and reserved artiste of a designer left to go to the ladies room and left AB alone in the booth.

A very unimpressive looking woman, dressed very simply and classically without a nod to contemporary fashion, much less the body to wear it, walked into the booth. I noticed her nametag said "Buyer, Saks Fifth Avenue" and I went nuts. I leaped over to her, put my hands on her shoulders and exclaimed, "I am SO happy you are here. Wait till you see these great designs!"

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Just as I did that, the designer walked in. Her face twisted into a pretzel and she asked me to step outside where she reamed me for my unsophisticated behavior. I was embarrassed and horrified, but after a breath, realized she was wrong. I told her I knew I had overreacted, but that most humans are happy when someone is thrilled to see them, and that all the elite chic who populated the show probably ignored this woman.

Bottom line: Even though I acted like the big wet and dirty dog at a garden party, the buyer bought and my friend ended up with the Christmas fashion windows on Fifth Avenue.

Another time, I was reviewing a group of possible ad campaigns for Club Med for whom I worked. The advertising firm team was there, as well as a number of people from American Express, who were co-sponsoring the ad.

When the second of six campaigns was presented, I exclaimed, "I love this one!" Dead silence ensued.

Afterwards one of the very successful and very corporate gals walked up to me and told me she admired me greatly. I asked why and she said it was because I was willing to state my opinion before I heard what everyone else had to say. Enthusiasm again.

Needless to say, my corporate career wasn't stellar, but the wet and dirty dog has a lot of fun.

What I am telling you is that I know what you are feeling, and think you should not change. Next time you might want to take a look before you leap, but no harm done here.

Enthusiasm is sometimes not an excuse for iffy behavior, but it is always a wonderful thing to have in your life.

Go, Girl!

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Energy Conservation

Dear Bossy,

I invited a neighbor I know to come for drinks with her houseguests and asked her to get back to me. This was by email. She didn't.

Should I call or email again? I have a lot to do and if they don't come it is fine, but I do like them and would welcome them.

Time and energy are always at a premium, and I don't have either to waste.

Dumbfounded

Dear Dumbfounded,

It depends. If you desperately want to see them and think there is any possibility that she didn't receive the email, reach out again.

If not, hit the hammock with whatever you were going to serve and view it all as an unexpected bonus vacation.

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You might want to stock up on something to serve, just in case they show up.

Relax, either way.

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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