

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy

Tuesday, 13 January 2015 09:39



Sister's Keeper

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I, a female, was recently at a very expensive restaurant with a female business client. Seated near us were a flashy and overdressed man, who looked like an actor in a movie about the mafia, and his nervous and very sexy date. He was in his late forties or early fifties. She was in her early twenties.

□□□□□□□□ *It was obviously a first date and the young woman was obviously in over her head. She was giggly and awkward being in such a fine restaurant and he was lording it over her while lavishing her with compliments about her looks.*

□□□□□□□□ *My client and I would have thought she was a professional escort, except that she was so out of her element in the restaurant. Everything from reading the menu to using the cutlery was an adventure for her. It was sort of sweet.*

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□□□□□□□□ *The fellow kept filling her glass with wine and she got up to go to the lady's room, a bit unsteady on her enormous platform stilettos. As soon as she turned her back, we saw him drop something in her drink.*

□□□□□□□□ *We did not know what to do. We whispered back and forth, and I finally decided to call my husband, who always knows how to handle things.*

□□□□□□□□ *My husband was worried about my safety if I got involved, even if I went into the lady's room and told the girl what I saw. He said we don't know what kind of weird game they might be playing. He was also afraid that if I confronted the man or called the police, I could put myself in danger.*

□□□□□□□□ *In the end, we finished our meal, and I informed the maître d' on my way out. I don't know what happened after that.*

□□□□□□□□ *What would you have done?*

Dear Sister's Keeper,

Well, this is a tough question that seems to have a very simple answer. However, as usual, it isn't that simple.

Your husband is correct that you should be careful. On the other hand, being in danger does not let us off the hook when another's safety may be involved.

My instinct would have been to go into the restroom and tell the young woman. On second thought, I can see how that could backfire. If she confronted her date he could take her by the arm and march her out of there before anyone knew what happened and could also have someone waiting for you when you left the restaurant. And, as you mentioned, it could be a game they play.

Ideally, it would have been good to call the police and hear what they would recommend, but time was of the essence. The same applies to the management of the restaurant.

I would have been frightened, but I would have headed to the restroom and told the girl. If she were cooperative, I would have called the police from the restroom, and then gone out to tell her "date" that she was sick and we were helping her. Then, I would have informed the highest-level person employed by the restaurant. And then I would have gotten out of there, making sure the police knew how to reach me.

If the young woman did not appear to take this seriously, I would have immediately left the restaurant and called the police and the restaurant management. If I didn't think there would be enough time for me to exit before she ran back and alerted her date, I would have locked myself in a bathroom stall and waited for the police, as well as calling the management of the restaurant. Isn't hindsight wonderful?

And, if my client got freaked out over all of this and I lost the business, I would count my blessings.

By the way, I got scared just writing about this scenario. I'm not positive about my answer and would love to hear from an officer of the law and a restaurateur or bartender as to their thoughts on how to handle this.

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Enough!

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I love my wife and we have been married a long time. My friends have always said they don't like how she treats me, but I work around her. I have my job that I like and I have my friends, even though we don't have any friends together.

□□□□□□□□ *Unfortunately, she is getting much worse. She has always been selfish and inconsiderate, but now she is in overdrive.*

□□□□□□□□ *She didn't even get me a Christmas present. She said she couldn't think of anything, but I know it's because she just can't be bothered.*

□□□□□□□□ *She leaves the kitchen filthy, puts barely washed dishes away, and lets spills sit until they are hard to clean up, which I end up doing. She has used the same bathroom towel for months now. I am fascinated by that and am waiting to see when she will change it.*

□□□□□□□□ *She never asks me anything about myself or my work or my friends, but will sit and outline all of her doings and interests for hours. She gets very upset if I don't pay a lot of attention.*

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□□□□□□□□ *I am a nice guy. She even remarks on how considerate I am of other people. I have tried to ask her to be more considerate of others and me. I have told her how it bothers me to walk into a filthy bathroom or kitchen. She gets infuriated and says I'm nagging. That is after she yells that I never give her credit for anything and on and on.*

□□□□□□□□ *I am getting very depressed and worried about myself. She won't consider marriage counseling because she says there is nothing wrong with her. I do not want to get divorced. I've asked her what I can do so that we can get along better and she just tells me to stop criticizing her. I would give anything not to have all this stuff to criticize, and, believe me, I say a fourth of what I think and feel, at most.*

□□□□□□□□ *I even feel sort of stupid writing this letter because I don't know that there is an answer besides my trying not to let it bother me. I am so lonely I could cry.*

Sad Sack

Dear SS,

Oh, my, this is dreadful. Let me see what thoughts I can share with you.

Firstly, we all know there are two sides to every story, but I am going with yours unless I hear from her. You do not sound like an unreasonable person. You sound like someone who would do anything to change this situation. You aren't asking for much, just simple human kindness and appreciation. (If she is as you have outlined, I imagine her answer to that one: "YOU want kindness and appreciation? What about me?")

Secondly, you need someone to talk to about this. It can be a psychiatrist, counselor, religious leader or friend, but it is unhealthy to hold this kind of grief in. And, yes, it is grief.

The only thing you can do, if you can't treat the illness that is your marriage, is treat the symptoms. The symptom is that you are miserable, so you have to find a distraction if you can't leave the illness behind. See your friends more often, find some new things to do outside the house. You might even invite her to come along and see if that softens her. Join a book or film club, volunteer, offering solace to someone who has it harder than you do, and, trust me, there are legions.

I also think you should stop mentioning anything negative to her. She has made it clear she does not accept that kind of criticism. I am also a big believer in visualization. See yourself happy. Smile when you walk in your door. Pretend like she is a happy person, too.

That doesn't mean that you should kowtow to her when she is inconsiderate to you. In those cases, you should get some distance between you, go for a walk, go to a movie. Just go.

It's not fair for you to have to bear the burden of this lopsided relationship. However, unless you are willing to leave, this is your best chance for a decent life.

□□□□□□□□ Yikes, I even sound like a nilly nelly to myself, but I really don't know what else to tell you.

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

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