

CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson

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PHARMACY

McPherson

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Abuse victim will need cousin's support

Dear Abby: I have a very close cousin (and friend) who is in a toxic relationship with a man who breaks up with her repeatedly, manipulates and abuses her emotionally, and probably cheats.

It has made me sad to see her go through the same pattern with him for so many years.

They were supposed to be married soon, but are having the same problems again. She's unsure what steps to take, even though family and friends are advising her against marrying him. I don't support the idea either, but I don't want to create a rift with my cousin.

If the wedding takes place, can I decline to be part of the wedding party? Is there anything I can do to make her "see the light"? It's hard to watch a good person go through this.

I know it's her choice, but it's wearing on our relationship as well. — *Concerned Cousin in Wyoming*

JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

Dear Cousin: Have you been asked to be in the wedding party? If it hasn't happened yet, you may be putting the cart before the horse.

Because you haven't been able to get your cousin to see the light before this, I doubt anything you can say will accomplish it now because love is blind and often deaf. This doesn't mean you shouldn't tell her you think she deserves better than what she's getting, and that it pains you to see her hurt the way she has been. However, at the same time, let her know that whatever she decides, you love and support her and will be there for her, because if he actually marries her — which he may not — she's going to need it.

Dear Abby: I recently started a new job, and the past three months have been wonderful! One co-worker in particular has contributed to that. He's a tall, handsome man with a great personality. We get along wonderfully, socialize outside of work, and we flirt ... a lot. We have briefly talked about being friends with benefits, but I'm not sure how I feel about it. I have never been FWB with anyone before, and I am very nervous about the possible downside.

I am very attracted to this co-worker, but I also consider him a great friend who could potentially someday be even more than a friend. I am scared that being FWBs would ruin our friendship and any possible future we may have. Should I accept being an FWB and enjoy it while it lasts, or decline and explain to him why? — *Friends Without Benefits in Virginia*

Dear Friends: If I were you, I'd enjoy the flirtation for as long as it lasts and pass on being his FWB.

While "friends with benefits" may seem enticing, what it really stands for is "sex without commitment or responsibility," and in the majority of instances it leads to — nothing. Couple that with the fact that if you do, and someone else attracts his attention, you will not only have to cope with hurt feelings, but also the embarrassment of still having to work with him. So start thinking with your head, and don't do anything you might later regret.

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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Daily Horoscope

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Is it possible that there is great beauty inside the mess you're trying to clean up? Perhaps you are too focused on what you think it's supposed to look like to see the gorgeousness that's already there.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your questions will be answered through practice. Repetition is the only way to mastery. There are no shortcuts. Break down the action to an easily repeatable size.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Hope for the best, and don't fear anything less than that. Fear of mistakes only creates more of them. Besides, falling brings opportunity, too. Getting up after the fall — that's the very best time to shine.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). If there were a prize for "most stamina," you would have won it by now. Hold on longer if you can, because the real prize will be the direct result of outlasting everyone else.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Maintenance requires thinking ahead. There never seems to be a good time for it. You have to make the time. Superior work comes from sharp tools. Take the time to keep yours up, and you'll prevent future delays.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Self-examination takes courage and confidence. You have both. Looking into your own heart for the flaw is not

the easiest way, but it's the gentlest and least disruptive way.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). When it's hard, slow down, but don't stop. Keep a determined mindset. There will be power in your adjustment. People will notice and hasten to assist you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You want to win, but winning comes in many forms. Often, the one with the prize who is taking a bow in a wash of applause is not the real winner. There's something thrilling for you under the radar.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). How can reflection make you wise if you don't have much to reflect on? Get in there and make your mistakes. That's what will make wisdom accessible to you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Unlike monkeys, cats and birds, goats do not feel the need to constantly preen themselves. You can relate. You're in a no-fuss, come-as-you-are kind of mood, and someone is falling in love with your confidence.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). By the time you read this, something will have already happened to drain a bit of your willpower. The bottom line: It will be very challenging for you to get yourself to do anything you don't feel like doing.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You wish you cared about something, or liked it, or wanted it as much as those around you seem to. But it's great that you don't! It frees you to find the thing that will really set your heart sailing.



HOLIDAY MATHIS