

Features

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The Kozouz sisters answer your relationship questions every Tuesday in *The Detroit News*. Send your questions to Lowdown@detnews.com or write to *Motown Lowdown* c/o *The Detroit News*, 615 W. Lafayette Blvd., Detroit, MI 48226.

Don't lower dating standards just to 'hang out' with guys

I'm single (via divorce), attractive and meet many guys of different ages and stages, in all types of venues. I have no problem meeting them, just puzzled by what I am finding — guys who want to "hang out" but not really "go out." They don't seem to know how, or care, to ask a woman out on a "typical" date, where the goal is spending time and getting to know each other. They just want to meet spontaneously at a club or coffee shop. I'm pretty open-minded, but this can be frustrating, as I'd like to move it along a bit. Is this a trend you have noticed? Any tips for either getting through it, or on maybe how to change this scenario?

— *Troubled in Troy*

Dear Troubled:

Yes, there has been a definite decline in chivalry among this generation. The MTV-watching, reality-show junkies have forgotten all of the principles of courtship. Stick to your dignified values or you'll find yourself "Married by America."

— *Ruba*

I don't think dating needs to be so uppity and formal. Meeting at these types of places takes the stress off dating and allows a more natural and relaxed environment. You'll find that conversation will flow much more readily when you're not so worried about which utensil to use for the caviar and which for the escargot.

— *Leena*

Obviously, these guys want to "hang out" because they only want you as a friend and not as a romantic partner. When men find a woman that they are really attracted to, they will put their best foot forward and wine and dine you.

— *Reham*

Yes, I too, have noticed a lack of attention paid to arranging for a respectable date. You need to make your expectations of how you'd like to be treated clear from the onset. For instance, a guy asked me repeatedly to meet him for drinks. I finally agreed, but only if he did it the right way, by picking me up and making a dinner reservation. He quickly stepped up and adjusted his style. Don't lower your standards just for the sake of dating.

— *Rana*

My mother and father recently divorced after 30 years of marriage. I am almost 30 myself and found the divorce heartbreaking. I have somewhat come to terms with their separa-

tion, but have an 18-year-old brother who still lives with dad. He seems to be following the advice of my father by ignoring my mother and her calls. He won't meet her, go to her house or even call her on the phone, unless he needs money, which she readily gives him in an attempt to keep contact. I don't know how to tell my dad his negative comments about my mom are going to severely damage the relationship between my mother and brother. I have tried to tell my mom to just leave them alone and ignore them both, but she can't. And, frankly, I am sick and tired of being the glue in the middle of all their issues.

— *Angry in Allen Park*

Dear Angry:

Your brother is just as much your responsibility as your parents'. Grab that little brat by the ear and set him straight. Let him know that he needs to pay your mother the same respect as he does your father. If you are firm and consistent in your beliefs, he will listen to you. Tell him the issue is between your parents and his role should be to listen to both parents and to respect them both.

— *Rana*

No, no, Rana. It's not the child's place to set the tone. The weak-willed mother needs to demand respect from her teen-ager or she will never get it. Merely offering him bribes is despicable and should not be a replacement for good parenting. She needs to get a backbone and take control of the situation now before it gets even worse.

— *Reham*

You said it yourself: You're sick and tired of being stuck in the middle, so the solution is simple — don't! They are all adults. You need to let the three of them work out their own issues. Refuse to discuss it with any of them. Besides, you are not going to be able to change their stubborn minds. They'll have to come to accept forgiveness from each other on their own.

— *Leena*

You may have come to terms with your parents' divorce, but your brother obviously has not. Divorce is a traumatic experience and, evidently, he is still dealing with the aftermath. Give him some time to work through his feelings. Once he has accepted the divorce, maybe he will find himself needing Mom again.

— *Ruba*