

Is giving advice too embarrassing?

"Sex," said the gentleman with the proverbial Jewish mother, "was never mentioned."

Whether your mother was Jewish, Catholic, Protestant or none of the above, chances are you got no advice on sex or anything else before you got married. The same goes for any advice from your father.

Parents don't lecture young people about to marry on sex. They don't warn them about the pitfalls of society, as Polonius did Laertes. Mothers don't even tell their daughters about household products, except in television commercials.

Possibly the subject is too embarrassing. Possibly parents feel their youngsters have had 20 or so years to learn by their example or have picked up enough in biology, family life or consumer economics classes in school.

But it doesn't follow that new-lweds don't get any advice at all.

"When I announced 'my engagement,'" said a Farmington woman who worked several years before settling down, "all the men in the office said, 'Buy a house while you have two salaries. It's

impossible to do it later.'"

Advice? "None whatsoever," said a Redford woman. But she did recall how she learned about the facts of life.

"Nobody had ever told me a thing, and I was 19 years old. One night a girlfriend of mine was babysitting. We prowled through the young couple's books until we found one on sex.

"I was shocked at the idea of having my person invaded. Neither of us dated for six months after that."

Her story has a happy ending: marriage and two lovely children. Somewhere along the line, the shock must have worn off.

"The only advice we ever had was social pressure to get married because we were 'living in sin,'" said another man.

"It was worth getting married to stop the pressure."

Didn't he save money on income taxes by having some legal deductions? "No, it cost us money because she lost ADC," he answered.

A man from Redford got no parental advice, and his wedding is today just a blur in his mind.



Parents can offer advice based on experience

but he recalls someone telling him, "When you and your wife stop fighting, you stop being married because you're not communicating any more."

"I found that to be the truth," he said. "Fighting doesn't mean

beating each other up; just arguing."

A Livonia couple got one bit of advice from a relative, an elderly but high-spirited great-uncle:

"Buy a bed with a footboard on

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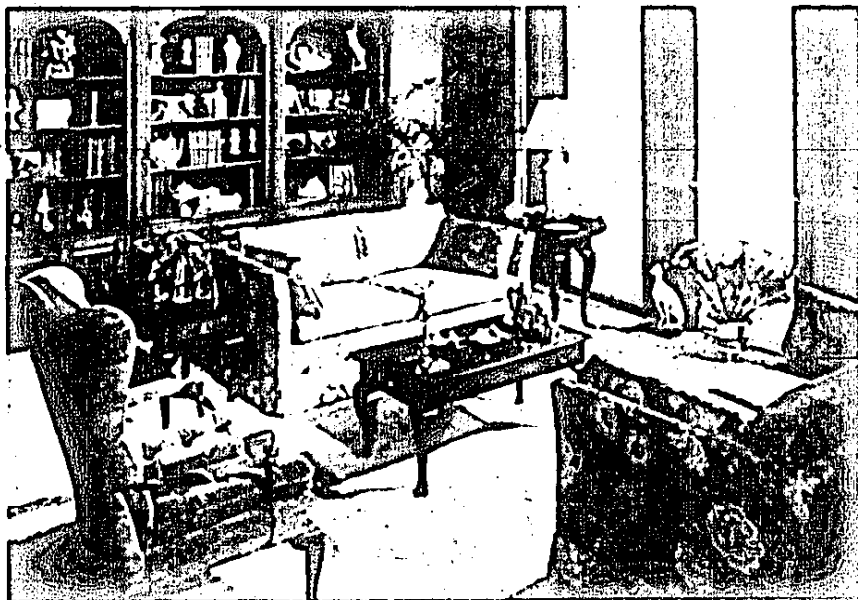
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