

Beating the fourth date dilemma: Why sex is not the only answer

I call it the "fourth date dilemma." You can hear about it from nearly any divorced woman who's willing to talk about it.

It goes like this: After treating her with the proper politeness and "respect" of a new relationship, her date has now begun to suggest that they might get "physical" with each other. By inviting her to his apartment and, by increased physical affection, he has made an invitation to sex.

What should she do now? They've gone out enough times to establish real intimacy and the likelihood of a permanent relationship.

She's sure that he's attracted to her largely because of her appearance and her sophisticated manner. So, if she now refuses to let him taste the carrot, will she lose his interest?

Or, on the other hand, if she gives in now, what will be his incentive for courting her after he's already gotten what he wanted? If she continues to play "hard-to-get" she could lose him to a more available competitor. But, if she gives in she may be turning a developing romance into a sexual partnership with no depth and no future.

A tough decision, but it's even more complicated when you realize how hard it may be to find someone who is interested enough to pursue you to the fourth date in the first place. And what if he looks like a possible candidate for a permanent relationship?

Yes or no, what's the right thing to say? The key to this dilemma is in how a woman thinks of her attractiveness. The prevailing belief among dating women is that their most important bait is their appearance. If you want to catch a man, goes this belief, you've got to catch his sexual attention first.

So great energy is spent on presenting a sexy, sophisticated, somewhat available image. There's even a competition to smell and look sexier than your rivals. And sometimes this reaches desperate degrees in the single dating scene.

This approach is so widespread that it seems like the correct and natural way to start relationships. But it isn't. In fact, it's based on some wrong assumptions about women and about men, too.

To put such a strong emphasis on sexual appeal assumes that the non-sexual aspects of a woman are not appealing. In the extreme, these other personal strengths are often submerged while physical appearance is dramatized.

And it assumes that men are ruled by their sexual drive. Or, even more demeaning, it assumes that men are threatened by talented, bright women who are more than sex objects.

When you think about it, the emphasis on sexual attractiveness as the way of starting relationships is a tremendous put-down, on men and women. It portrays women as using exotic bait to lure men into their marriage trap. And it says that men are semi-animalistic cavemen who "only want one thing."

It's a terribly prevalent belief. But I don't believe it.

Human beings all have deeper motives and appeals than this suggests. The personality and experience and talents of the real person in all of us are strong reasons for forming intimate relationships.

We are much more valuable and attractive to each other than just our exterior wrappings and trappings. To emphasize our physical appearance or our availability as a partner in sex is to vastly shortchange our real attractiveness.

For the woman who knows these facts, there is no such thing as the fourth date dilemma. She knows that her sexual attractiveness is only one small facet of her whole self. And so she has no fear that the relationship may be kept or lost depending on sexual activities.

Saving yes or no to sex, at any stage in a relationship, should be simply a reflection of a person's values and feelings about their partner.

The person who is wishing to be attractive shouldn't be anything or do anything that doesn't honestly reflect their real self. That's all that's really needed.

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Diabetes update

Dr. David Sutherland will talk about diabetes research and the work he has done with islet cell transplantation at the meeting of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, scheduled at 7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 25, in the Troy Hilton Inn, Maple and Stephenson. The assistant professor of surgery at the University of Minnesota will tell about the process by which diabetes might one day be able to receive injections of healthy pancreatic cells. His talk is free and open to the public.

The Greater Detroit section of the National Council of Jewish Women will hold its opening meeting, a paid-up membership luncheon at noon Monday, Sept. 26, in Temple Beth El, 7460 Telegraph, Birmingham.

The program will be an afternoon of entertainment featuring the Michigan Opera Theatre performing musical excerpts from various operas. The organization and its director Dr. David DiChiera, are recognized nationally as

one of the country's most innovative professional opera companies.

Council members who have paid their 1977-78 dues may attend by paying a reservation charge of \$3. Call the council office, 557-9604, for reservations.

The program committee is headed by Mrs. Eannel Schwartz of Southfield, and her co-chairwoman is Mrs. Richard Prentis of Huntington Woods.

Others on the committee include Marilyn Blumberg, Lisa Barbas, Gertrude Unger, Peggy Frank and Hillary Gitstein of Southfield; Sharon Edelman, Marcia Edelman and Carole Bloom of Franklin; Jan Hauser, Judy Adelman, Sue Moss and Lynne Duetch of Birmingham; Donna Slatkin and Beverly Gordon of West Bloomfield; Myrna Patrick and Bobbi Toll of Bloomfield Hills and Diane Karp of Farmington Hills.

Opera excerpts to feature council lunch

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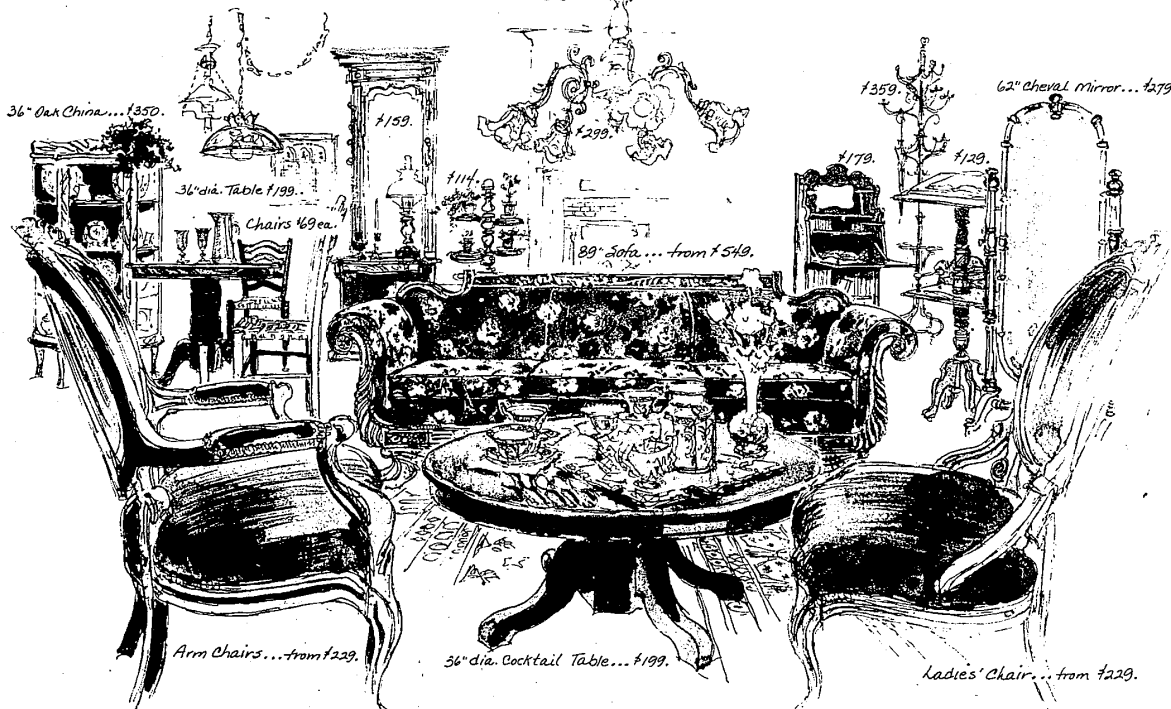


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