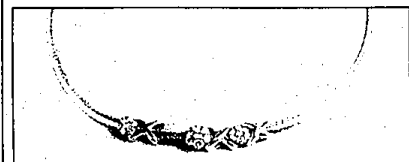


STREET SEEN

Denise Susan Lucas

Our intrepid Street Scene reporter is always looking for the unusual and welcomes comments and suggestions from readers and entrepreneurs. Send those to this column in care of this newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or call 591-2300, Ext. 2131.



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STREET SENSE

Try to talk it out problem

Dear Barbara,

This is another long story. I hope I don't bore you.

My girlfriend (let's call her Carol) and I have been close for five years. Our families celebrate holidays together and travel together. She and I shop and socialize without our families. She has always been a private person, so possibly we are not as intimate as some friends are, but by most standards, we are good friends.

Last week, Carol called to ask me what I was wearing to a dinner that we had both been invited to. She said she was sick of us looking like the "Bobby Twins," as she said that we had at a previous party.

At that party, she wore a blazer, skirt and a camisole. I wore a blazer, pants and a blouse instead of the camisole. I had worn previously. I thought all this commotion over nothing was strange but did not think further about it.

The night of the dinner we would both be attending, I started to put on

the silk shirt and found it was missing two buttons. I couldn't find a needle and thread to sew the buttons back on and so I wore a lace body-suit.

The entire evening Carol seemed strangely cold but I chalked it up to moodiness and didn't dwell on it. When I called her the next day, she was furious at me. How could I have lied to her that way, she yelled. "We looked like the 'Bobby Twins' again," she sputtered.

I told her what had happened with the buttons and asked why this issue was more important than our friendship. She said she hates to be dressed like other people. She never apologized for yelling at me.

I don't know how to understand this. It is true her father has recently died and that she has been somewhat depressed. I want to be understanding, but I don't want to be a fool and continue being hurt by her.

Ruth

Dear Ruth,

You have not bored me. I look forward to receiving and appreciate all the letters readers send me. Thank you for taking the time to write.

The problem with answering your question is that I am lacking sufficient understanding of your friendship to be insightful. That means that there may be undercurrents between you and Carol of which you are not aware. With more information, I could help you be more objective, but since I don't have those details, I can't. Therefore, I will take you at your word, "we are good friends."

That being true, don't worry about being a fool. Carol's father died recently and this is upsetting. Mourning takes time. Many of us tend to be irrational under stress. Overlook Carol's hopefully temporary change in behavior, as you would for any loved one. I am sure that if you were in need, you would want a good friend to be accepting and understanding with you.

If you can, try and talk it out with her in the spirit of understanding not of blame.

Your letter brings up another is-



Barbara Schiff

sue. You did not ask me about it but I will answer anyway.

Becoming "hurt" places a burden on the other person by making them responsible for you and your feelings. That seems one of the hardest principles to grasp. We are responsible for our feelings, others do not cause them.

Barbara

If you have a question or comment for Barbara Schiff, a trained therapist and experienced counselor, write to Street Sense at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

clarification

The Monday, May 20, issue of Street Scene should have indicated that there is a nominal \$2.95 charge for birthday cakes at Bennigan's restaurants in the metropolitan area.

It also should have indicated that the 50 percent discount for a party of two or alone is applicable to the food portion of the bill at Dennison's, 37716 Six Mile, Livonia.

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