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On the couch

By DOUG KIRK
Graduate Psychology Student

Q. Last week I asked a girl to go out with me and she turned me down saying that she had to work on some other things and would not be going out that evening. That same evening I saw her with a guy at the place I wanted to take her. What do you think I should do in this case?
A. There probably isn't a whole lot you can do to rectify the problem. I would say that the girl was wrong in telling you she would not be going out and then going out anyway. She may have had a good reason for what she did — like she had a date previously but forgot that she had it, or finished what she was planning to do so decided to go out. I would be skeptical at accepting these reasons however. The only way to find out for sure is to ask the girl for her honest reason explaining her behavior. But if you do ask her, don't attack her out of anger — that would not accomplish anything.

In all likelihood the girl did not want to go out with you and did not know how to tell you without hurting

your feelings. Sometimes a girl hasn't learned how to courteously turn down a date, so may tend to prefabricate reasons to prevent having to turn you down.

You can probably take one of two courses of action. 1.) You can forget about the incident and act as though it never happened. This may have the effect of perpetuating the problem, though, reinforcing the girl for what she did. 2.) You could confront the girl, stating what you observed and asking why she went out after telling you that she was not going to. This may have the effect of setting the girl straight in the future — getting her to consider what she is about to do before she does it. If you choose this alternative, be sure to exercise diplomacy. The setting exists for a knock-down drag-out fight, which would only serve to produce additional problems. If you approach the girl with the attitude that you are willing to help her (say to teach her how to turn down dates), then I feel you and she will learn a good deal from this unfortunate incident.

Q. I once dated a girl that hates the

girl I just dated. To make a long story short, the first girl has now told the second girl that I am spreading rumors about the second girl that she gave me mononucleosis. The second girl called me on the phone and cussed me out. I have spread no such rumors, nor did I even know the girl had mono. How can I convince the second girl that I spread no rumors and that I am not a liar?

A. You should call the second girl on the phone and explain to her that 1.) You did not spread any such rumors, 2.) you did not know she had mono, 3.) you once dated the girl who is her enemy, and, 4.) you believe that it is possible that the first girl made the statements about you as an attempt to start a fight.

It is possible that the first girl is jealous and is simply trying to get you to break up with the second girl. If you can get the second girl to understand this, perhaps she will cool off and apologize.

Q. My girlfriend and I are very close. The coming holidays will separate us and we dread being apart. Is there any way we can reduce

the anxiety?
A. Get married. That way you will not have to be separated. As a more serious note, perhaps you can reduce anxiety by thinking about when you will be reunited with your friend. Plan to write often and perhaps plan

an occasional phone call. Discussing these modes of communication will tend to reassure each of you that separation does not mean total disunion.

Some anxiety about being separated could be good — a sign that your hearts are in the right place. For present, you will have to live with the separation, but bear in mind that it has often been said that distance makes the heart grow fonder. Have a Merry Christmas.

Q. Somehow I have gotten myself into a vicious circle. What do you do for the "Final Blues" mixed in with the "Woman Worries"?

A. Take two aspirins and go home for the holidays.

OMBUDSMAN

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