

Aunt Bossy: The Life Coach Your Mother Never Was

Written by Susan Murphy

Wednesday, 13 August 2014 06:48



Feeling Jilted

Two for one, or two for four, or the cheese stands alone. Two separate questions about the same kind of problem came Aunt Bossy's way this month.

Dear Aunt Bossy,

This might seem like a silly question, but a situation is causing me a lot of pain, and maybe you can give me some insight.

My husband and I have some good friends whom we see regularly, or as regularly as anyone with jobs and a young family can. It is not easy to find a couple in which you like both of the people, and we like them a lot and have always felt the feeling was mutual.

Not too long ago, we invited them to dinner with another couple we like, but don't know as well. Now they are a foursome, seeing each other way more frequently than they see us. I feel left out and hurt.

*Am I being silly?
Sincerely, Diane*

AND

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Dear Aunt Bossy,

I fear that I am being replaced. My best friend of 16 years has moved across the city and into a home with a mutual friend. In our years of friendship we've never had a single fight, disagreement or even hurt feelings. I think that's why feeling like I'm being replaced hurts so much.

My best friend and her roommate have so much more in common than she and I do. They are both attractive females who are single and in their early 30s, meaning fewer responsibilities, more freedom and disposable income.

I know our 16-year history cannot be rewritten, but I fear that I will have a lesser role in the new chapters of her life.

How do I keep from feeling replaced and understand that I may not always have a starring role on my best friend's life? How do I keep from being replaced when it's only natural that my best friend and her roommate will grow closer?

*At my wit's end,
Francie*

Dear Friends,

This is such a tough situation, no matter the circumstances. On the one hand, your pain is based on your love for your friends, single or couple, and you don't want to do anything to hurt them; but, on the other hand, there is hardly a more distressing feeling in the world than being rejected or left out. Even the Farmer in the Dell game where the cheese stands alone at the end used to distress a young Aunt Bossy.

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I wish I had an answer, but the only answer is in communicating to be certain you really do have a problem and, if you do, changing the one thing you all have control over, and that is how you feel about the relationships. That is not a very satisfying answer, I am sure. However, all adversity opens up opportunity.

First, you all should talk to the friend, or the member of the couple to whom you feel closest, and say how you feel. Explain it the way you did to me. Don't over talk it, but just say how fond you are of the person/people involved, and say you don't want to lose your friendship with her/them over this.

Admit that you feel like a fourth grader here. That is human. We have all been there. Acknowledge that you don't feel "ownership" of the friend/friends, and realize that all the parties involved have different life demands, but make it clear you want to see her/them as you always have.

If your friend/friends say there is no problem, then you must be sure you invite them regularly, both alone and with their new friends. When you get together without the others, do not discuss them. Not one word. If they want to say what the others have been doing, fine, you can have a conversation, but you don't get to bring it up without sounding like a jealous cheerleader.

If this does not alleviate your pain, then you have a spiritual exercise on your hands. You will have to make an effort not to let your feelings be hurt, not to find out whatever you can about what the others are doing, and let it go a bit.

I am hoping the problems are not as big as you think, and that, instead of losing friends, you are acquiring some new ones.

Just so you know, Aunt Bossy will never forget walking out of the house one Saturday night and seeing one of her regular dates picking up her two-houses-down neighbor and best friend since preschool. She still cringes at the memory.

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