



*Dear  
Abby*

by  
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## **NEW WIFE'S WARDROBE DOESN'T MEASURE UP TO COUSINS' TASTE**

**DEAR ABBY:** My cousin recently married a lovely girl, someone he'd been dating for a couple of years. Our whole family loves her, and she's always been very sweet to us.

She's very intelligent and kind, but the issue is her wardrobe. She's pretty but refuses to wear nice clothes. Instead she wears baggy, boring clothes. Our family is fashion-conscious, and I know my cousin has suggested to her several times that she buy new clothing -- to no avail. He thinks she's self-conscious about her body.

Her birthday is coming up, and my sister and I would like to take her shopping as a birthday gift to buy her some nicer clothes. My cousin thinks she might not appreciate it, but he agrees that she needs new clothes. He also suggested buying her a gift card to somewhere, although that wouldn't solve the problem of which clothes she buys with it. Do you think that taking her

clothes shopping for her birthday would be appropriate?  
-- FASHIONISTA IN CONNECTICUT

**DEAR FASHIONISTA:** I think it is a nice idea, as long as you do NOT frame it the way you have to me. A better way to make the offer might be to invite her for a lovely birthday lunch and some "retail therapy." If you then decide to peek into a couple of clothing stores, she might be willing. And if you find something appropriate and offer to treat her as a birthday gift, she might accept. Keep it light, do not pressure her, but compliment her when she tries on things that flatter her.

**DEAR ABBY:** My family is surrounded by neighbors who are all friendly. We have cookouts together regularly. Everyone contributes to the budget and food preparation except one neighbor. He's a single dad of 12-year-old twins, and they show up to every BBQ without bringing a dish or their own drinks, yet they all eat heartily. We have run out of food for the intended participants (who paid for the food) because of them. What's the best way to handle this situation without making an enemy of a neighbor? -- FED UP WITH FREELOADING

**DEAR FED UP:** Your neighbor may not be clear about the rules. It shouldn't earn you an enemy for life if you point out to this single dad of twins (with growing appetites) that these get-togethers are potluck, which means everyone is expected to contribute to the cost of the food as well as bring a side dish so the food won't run out. TELL him what to bring. They should also help with the setup and cleanup. If he's uncooperative after that, he's a moocher and you all will be well rid of him if he takes offense.

**DEAR ABBY:** My husband of 12 years and I have an ongoing disagreement about the language he uses when he texts women friends. He opens his text with "Hi, Beautiful" or, "Good Morning, Gorgeous." I consider this to be flirting, but he regards it as harmless even though he knows it hurts my feelings because he doesn't text that way to me.

I trust him and don't feel there's anything going on with any of these women, but I think he's playing with fire. The wrong woman may interpret it differently, and that's how affairs start. Do you think I am overreacting?  
-- MISUNDERSTOOD IN THE MIDWEST

**DEAR MISUNDERSTOOD:** Yes. Your problem with your husband isn't that he's calling other women beautiful and gorgeous. It's that he ISN'T complimenting you, and I think you should point that out to him. Shame on him!

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbook Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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