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Title: You ask, Laura answers

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Writing and talking about sex for a living means that Chicagoans are constantly asking for advice on their love lives. Here are my answers to recent questions. If you have a question, send it, signed or unsigned, to casualsex@tribune.com.

A single mother of two who owns her own business wrote in to ask how to break up with her boyfriend without hurting his feelings. She said she provides for herself and her daughters but that her boyfriend's financial instability is driving her nuts. Plus, she has lost her physical attraction to him.

Dear Banked,

You're going to hurt his feelings. The only way around it is to marry him. And if finances are non-negotiable, that's not an option. Just be honest, he'll benefit from your truth. Many women would find a lack of financial security a deal-killer. This shouldn't be a major surprise to him. Let him know you need a partner able to contribute to the family's security. But keep the loss of attraction to yourself. Let him keep the assets he's saved.

A woman I met at a party told me she and her boyfriend are thinking about getting a Web cam for their bedroom. She said she is typically pretty traditional but heard they could make good money, and they're both strapped for cash.

Dear Do-your-parents-have-access-to-the-Internet?

No matter how much money you make, you can't buy back your self-respect.

A 31-year-old woman stopped me in a downtown restaurant recently, lamenting that she goes on tons of dates but has never been in a serious relationship. Despite her efforts, she said they never work out because she leaves anytime she gets close to committing to someone. She said it has a lot to do with the fact that there are no good guys left.

Dear Avoider,

Being non-committal is a decision, not a disease. Take responsibility. If it's your past that's got you jacked up, get control of it. Hire a professional and work through the issues. You deserve the chance to be happy. Hiding behind excuses does you no good. This is about you, not about the selection: Chicago has delicious offerings. So, change your patterns and start working on yourself. Take time away. You can't play victim if you don't have an audience.

A 19-year-old man wrote in who wants to propose to his girlfriend. They have been dating for a year and a half. She is a virgin; he is not. She wants to wait until they get

married, which he said is OK because he wants to spend the rest of his life with her. But he wonders: Is he moving too fast if he asks her to marry him?

Dear Trojan,

Getting laid should not be a reason to get married. This engagement sounds like it has more to do with the desire to have sex than the desire to spend a life together. Love at 19 can be real, but that does not mean it's forever. Forever can be marked when you have enough life experience behind you to look forward and know what you want. Or at the very least until you can legally toast at your own wedding.

A female acquaintance who recently broke up with her boyfriend said she tried to have a one-night stand but that it just doesn't fit her personality. She is used to having regular sex and asked for my suggestions.

Dear Possibility,

Other than chasing tail, cats like to spend their spare time taking care of themselves. Cats are smart.

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