Love and Sex

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By the time most girls reach junior high school, they have learned "the facts of life." But information about the facts of sex is different from an understanding of the feelings involved in boy-girl relationships. Here, a psychologist offers special advice to girls.

You are lucky to be growing up in a time when sex has emerged from its cover of shame and secrecy. Today's relative freedom, however, brings its own problems. While you no longer have to fight ignorance and taboos, you have choices and responsibilities your mothers and grandmothers didn't worry about because decisions were made for them and usually accepted without question.

The make-it-yourself decisions that you face boil down to your personal standards about your relationships with boys. These decisions should never be made lightly; yet help in making them is hard to come by. Many girls are reluctant to talk about sex with their parents, and many parents, unfortunately, are just as glad to be let off the hook. Just going along with your crowd—or with what you think your crowd is doing—means that you're not really coming to grips with personal standards. Talking things over with your girl friends can be a great relief: it's always helpful to know that other people share your problems. But you can't expect a girl your age to be a fountain of wisdom and information.

The fact is that most teen-agers talk a lot more sex than they actually practice. You should realize that a great deal of bravado and self-deception—whistling in the dark—comes into play when a girl describes her experiences to another. Susan is much more likely to report a sexual adventure as "marvelous and exciting" than to admit that it was awkward and embarrassing. And that she now feels quite guilty and humiliated. Similarly, the feelings of sex are exaggerated—and often exploited—in most of today's novels; but it would be a mistake to take lessons from them. For, as novellists tend to deal with the more sensational, eccentric and revolutionary aspects of people and experience. If you're planning to be sensitive, eccentric or revolutionary, it's advisable to wait until you're mature enough to handle the great problems that will inevitably accompany such behavior.

There are, however, some helpful books written for young people which can give you insight and practical guidance to the world of male and female, truly an enjoyable world if you know how to get along in it. I can recommend Facts of Life and Love by Evelyn Mills Duvall and How To Be a Successful Teenager by William Menninger, M.D.*

Certain questions about sex come up again and again when I talk to teen-age girls, and if you know the answers to them you will have a head start in working out your own, individual solutions.

Are boys' feelings about sex different from girls'?

Though it's not "sugar and spice and everything nice" as opposed to "snips and snails and puppy dogs' tails," there is a great biological and emotional difference between adolescent boys and girls. Sexual desire comes to boys in a great rush of emotion—an immediate, specific desire, quite separate from feelings of love. Development varies greatly, of course, but most boys are past voting age before they begin to experience a fusion of sexual drive and the deeper emotions of love and tenderness. A boy can be sincerely in love with one girl and at the same time be strongly physically attracted to another.

While there are some girls who can separate love from physical attraction, most of you will find your sexual desires closely bound to your thoughts and feelings of romantic love. Unlike a boy, your mind and heart figuratively work together. Many girls don't experience frank sexual feelings until they are awakened in a powerful, romantic love relationship.

Boys, then, are able to—and likely to—be much more casual about sex than are girls. But though they are more casual before and after, they are also more urgent in the immediate moment of sexual encounter. Girls, with their over-all emotional involvement, tend to read deeper meanings into these encounters than boys do. Unless a girl understands this psychology, she is bound to be confused when a boy makes advances to her. It doesn't necessarily mean he loves her.

So it isn't an insult if a boy "makes a pass" at you; in a sense, that's his nature. But it is also not an insult to him if you refuse. Your own slower-rising, longer-lasting emotions are actually your protection against the consequences of allowing a boy's urgency to prevail—consequences which are much more serious to a girl than to a boy. For it isn't the boy who becomes pregnant or loses his good name, or even sits by the phone waiting for a call from a girl whose "line" he believed. As you grow older and wiser, you will be able to discriminate between the boy who really cares for you and that one who is simply expressing his maleness.

Among girls, even more than boys, sexual interest is highly individual: some girls at twelve are very much attracted to boys, and others—if they weren't—would be oblivious of the opposite sex until the late teens. There is no question of right and wrong when it comes to these feelings; it is rather a question of physical and psychological make-up. The rights and wrongs pertain to what you do with these feelings or nonfeelings.

Does a contract for a date include a good-night kiss clause?

Some girls feel guilty if they don't kiss a boy on their first date. Others feel guilty if they do. There are all kinds of kisses, and there is nothing wrong with a light good-night kiss if you like the boy, had a good time and would like him to know it. But a kiss is a token of affection and it would be silly—not to say insincere—to kiss a boy just to pay him off for taking you out. There is nothing wrong, either, with a squeeze of the hand and a warm "thank you" after the most delightful date.

Kissing good night is a case for "doing what comes naturally." Most girls don't really feel like getting too close too quickly. If you follow these feelings, you probably won't find yourself in uncomfortably close situations with boys you don't know well. But if you do let a goodnight kiss become a big production, don't blame the boy for thinking you're fast.

What's the difference between necking and petting?

Necking is better defined as physical contact between a boy and girl above his necktie and her string of pearls. Actually, it is more a question of intensity than geography. Necking is light sex play. In our culture, it can be very casual, beginning with party games like spin-the-bottle and going on to less formalized kissing in more private surroundings.

Petting is the intense physical contact that creates and propels sexual excitement. In the great scheme of things, petting is activity really designed to prepare a couple for sexual intercourse. Certain parts of our bodies are particularly sensitive to sexual stimulation; again, the sensitivity varies greatly from person to person. Petting includes the exploration and exploitation of bodies between a boy and girl, short of actual sexual intercourse. Enormous physical and emotional pressures are unleashed. It is during petting sessions that (continued on page 728).
Is there a comb that doesn’t snag your hair?

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many boys and girls feel their relationships are surrounded by a cloud of gloom. Indeed, we usually only think of growing old in a dreamed of a flock of doves, a happy marriage, and a warm, loving family. It is often forgotten that relationships, no matter how ideal they may seem, are not always smooth sailing. Even in the best of relationships, there are bumps in the road, and it is important to keep communication open and to work through any differences.

Here are some tips for maintaining a healthy and happy relationship:

1. Communicate openly and honestly.
2. Listen to each other's concerns and feelings.
3. Show appreciation and gratitude for each other.
4. Spend quality time together.
5. Be patient and understanding.
6. Work through conflicts calmly and respectfully.
7. Maintain a healthy level of independence.
8. Remember that love is a journey, not a destination.

Yes. Buy an Ace. Its smooth, polished teeth can harm your scalp, either. Ace teeth have been made stronger, smoother and last much longer.

Can I maintain my standards and not jeopardize my popularity?

Popularity is based more on personality and compassion than charm, which can often drive a wedge between you and those around you. Your standards should be based on personal integrity and moral principles, rather than on the approval of others.

For example, if you believe in honesty, then you should always tell the truth, even if it means sacrificing popularity. This will not only keep you true to yourself, but will also earn you the respect of others.

Though, I must warn you, there are trade-offs to consider when setting your standards. For instance, if you are very strict about never being late, you may lose some friends who are not as punctual. However, it is important to remember that your personal integrity is more important than popularity, and that the people who truly value you will respect your standards.

After all, isn’t the saying, “You can’t buy happiness, but you can buy Ace toothpaste, which will make your hair smoother and more manageable.”

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subsidized, watching Aunt Karen prepare a tray of more tea, and this time they were out of sheltered hands. Karen was as quick and efficient as the kitchen she should have married, turned furiously for the moment. What didn’t she want. And then Barbi’s hand jerked up for her to see in the pocket. Karen, who lived alone in a lonely apartment of the place, opened it and to the images, inside and out, and from the way it lay on the table, it was clear that someone had put the money in there. Karen opened it, and to the images, inside and out, and from the way it lay on the table, it was clear that someone had put the money in there. Amanda sighed over her own part, she started. But marriage was easier than she thought. It took her around a pleasant cup at the front of her daughter's. Her personal price way was out of the habit.