

# Mom counts lucky stars that long-distance romance fizzled

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm a single mother. My two sons are practically grown and out of the house. I haven't dated much over the years, but there was one man I did bond with and cared very much for at one point.

He lived across the country, and the long-distance relationship was difficult. I was reluctant to move my kids across the country for someone I barely knew, so the relationship ended. Thank God, I followed my instinct on that one!

Feeling sentimental one evening, I went online and searched for his name. Up popped a mug shot of him posted on a Megan's Law website, identifying him as a deviant offender. The police code indicated he was someone who had intercourse with a person under the age of 13. I couldn't believe my eyes.

Now I can't stop thinking about what might have happened had I not followed my instincts. I'm afraid to date anyone for fear I'll find another creep. Is there a way to "screen" prospective mates without them knowing -- like a background check for daters, perhaps? — **STILL SHOCKED IN TEXAS**

**DEAR STILL SHOCKED:** The way to screen someone for a criminal conviction would be to go online and search in the state the person lives in or came from. That, however, is no guarantee you won't meet another creep.

Finding Mr. Right is a process that involves trial and error. In many cases, a lot of error. That's why it is better to meet men through personal introductions, volunteer groups or



DEAR ABBY

because you have mutual interests – and even then, take your time getting to know them.

**DEAR ABBY:** May I tell you about an incident that happened last Halloween? I took my daughters, ages 12 and 6, and a co-worker's 4-year-old son trick-or-treating. My 12-year-old is becoming a young woman and appears older. When we came to one house, the homeowner promptly gave the smaller children candy and had a conversation with them, but completely ignored my older daughter. She was very hurt, and it cast a pall on the evening. I was stunned.

I'm the kind of person who doesn't care how old you are -- if you're dressed up for Halloween, you can come knocking and you'll get a treat. I'd rather give someone candy than have him or her feel the way my daughter did.

How should I have handled this? Is there an age limit for trick-or-treaters? — **FESTIVE MOM IN KANSAS**

**DEAR FESTIVE MOM:** If you refrained from challenging the homeowner, you handled it correctly. Halloween is a holiday during which all of those who

participate celebrate their inner child. As my dear mother once said to me, there were times when the doorbell would ring and she wasn't sure whether to offer the trick-or-treater candy or a martini. And I think THAT'S where I'd draw the line.

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm 10 and I have a sister who copies everything I do. For example, I was known for my good cooking until she made "amazing" banana bread. Now nobody thinks I'm the best cook in the house anymore.

My sister tags along with whatever I do. I sell dog treats; she sells dog treats. My mom thinks it's cute and says I should be flattered. All I want is to be unique, but it's hard with my sister who steals the show. Please help! — **FRUSTRATED IN BEND, ORE.**

**DEAR FRUSTRATED:** Talk to your mother again about this. While I agree that your sister's desire to do what you do is cute, it can also create a cutthroat competition between siblings. Your mother could avoid this if she would encourage your sister to develop interests or talents of her own and help you become involved in after-school activities that do not include your sister. Sports or a church group come to mind.

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

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		1	5	6		9		
	5	8	7				3	
2				9			8	7
			8		9		2	4
1		5				3		9
4	9		1		6			
3	1			8				6
	6				2	7	5	
		9		7	3	4		

Instructions for play: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

That's all there is to it. There's no math involved. The grid has numbers, but nothing has to add up to anything else. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic. It's fun. It's challenging. It's addictive!

Solving time is typically from 10 to 30 minutes, depending on your skill and experience. The solution for today's puzzle will be published in Saturday's paper. Or you can go to [www.sudoku.com](http://www.sudoku.com) to find the solution.

7	3	1	6	9	2	5	8	4
9	5	6	1	8	4	2	3	7
4	8	2	3	5	7	6	9	1
5	7	9	4	6	8	3	1	2
8	6	4	2	1	3	7	5	9
2	1	3	5	7	9	4	6	8
1	9	5	7	4	6	8	2	3
6	2	7	8	3	1	9	4	5
3	4	8	9	2	5	1	7	6

## HOROSCOPES

### ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, patience is a virtue you possess, and you must make the most of your patient nature this week. Keep this in mind when dealing with family and coworkers.

### TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, keep things in perspective and you will have your cake and eat it, too. You can coolly handle tough situations, and that ability serves you well this week.

### GEMINI - May 22/Jun 21

Your imagination is working overtime this week, Gemini. Channel that creative energy and get started on a project you have long been considering.

### CANCER - Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, you will be very content for the next few weeks. Enjoy these good times and invite those closest to you to enjoy them as well.

### LEO - Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, your heightened sense of focus on a particular task has left you wondering how to proceed in another area of life. You may want to seek the advice of others.

### VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you may be tempted to throw caution to the wind. While that may make for a memorable experience, it may not prove wise over the long haul.

### LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

You could get caught up in a social whirlwind this week, Libra. Keep your feet on the ground or you may be swept away in all of the energy.

### SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

Staying connected to your feelings is empowering, Scorpio. Even if others don't feel exactly the same way that you do, they may go along with plans to make you happy.

### SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, indulgent behavior won't pay off in the long run. Moderation works best, and you'll be glad you didn't overindulge after the fact.

### CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, work and family responsibilities have put you under a lot of pressure recently. You could be in need of a respite, even if that break is brief.

### AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, it's quite possible you will not get much done this week, as you may be too busy encouraging others rather than focusing on your own needs.

### PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

Compassion is your specialty, Pisces. Others appreciate your warm nature, so accept their gratitude and affection.

### FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

OCTOBER 6  
Jeremy Sisto, Actor (39)

OCTOBER 7  
Simon Cowell, TV producer (54)

OCTOBER 8  
Bruno Mars, Singer (28)

OCTOBER 9  
Sean Lennon, Musician (38)

OCTOBER 10  
Ben Vereen, Actor (67)

OCTOBER 11  
Matt Bomer, Actor (36)

OCTOBER 12  
Hugh Jackman, Actor (44)

## CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS** 40 Squelched

1 Ward (off) 41 Fills com-

5 Mixes up pletely

10 Cheering 42 Patch up

wildly

12 Piano part

13 "Death

Be Not

Proud"

poet

14 Merge

15 Greek

vowel

16 End-of-

proof

letters

18 Ballroom

maneuver

19 Chinese

restaurant

choice

21 Boost

22 Woody

Allen film

24 Mosque

faith

25 Woody

Allen film

29 Prejudice

30 Slob's

creations

32 Rent out

33 Cart puller

34 Phone

bug

35 School

paper

37 Make

blank

39 Play place

### DOWN

1 Like old

photos

2 Hot

3 Generic

4 Football's

Marino

5 Tater

6 High

rating

7 Confes-

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words

8 Confirm

9 Was

out

11 Petition

26 Bothers

animal

17 Badges

20 Loses

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footing

21 An arm

and a

leg

23 Egyptian

pharaoh

25 Afternoon

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38 Zodiac

27 Will topic

28 Logic

29 Conse-

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31 Forgo

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33 Pro

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36 History

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