

PERSONAL BEST

NO MORE 'UGLY TRIPS'

The somber child with "droopy Burnett eyes," stringy brown hair and buck teeth overheard her curvaceous mother, Louise, profess that "Carol's a real Burnett."

"That means homely," the girl whispered to herself, secretly maddened by her absentee parents.

"Both daddy and mom," Carol Burnett recalls, "were drunks — couldn't stop themselves," so the disheartened 7-year-old, who lived with her "Nanny" in a \$35-a-month flat on welfare, would ask her divorced parents over and over: "Do you love me?"

"They would say 'yes,'" Burnett says, "and I would answer: 'Then, if you love me, don't drink.' But they drank anyway, and I thought they didn't love me."

Then hope appeared: "When I was 10," remembers Burnett, "my dad's mother contracted leukemia. And he promised her that, as long as she was alive, he would never drink again. For an entire year, daddy was on the wagon, and I was ecstatic."



TURNING POINT

GLENN PLASKIN

Then shattered. "When daddy's mother finally died, he came over to Nanny's, told me he had had a few beers' after his mother's funeral. This was the low point of my life. My heart felt like lead. A few hours later, I found him lying on the floor unconscious. I thought he might be dead. But he was just drunk. Then I became livid and hysterical. I socked him with my fist right in his face, really hard — again and again," and the hysterical girl had to be pulled off her father.

Even years later, when 21-year-old Burnett saw her 46-year-old father, Jody, dying in a charity hospital with tuberculosis — "I was crying, telling



Carol Burnett
"Daddy really did love me."

him I wanted to be an actress" — she had not yet recovered from that fateful day so many years before.

"But then, just seven years ago," Carol smiles, the year she started writing a diary, "I realized daddy really did love me, that he couldn't help himself, that he had a disease that could have been treated."

Three daughters and one divorced husband later, "I have finally stopped laying an 'ugly trip' on myself," says Burnett, soon to star in a weekly sitcom called "Carol & Company," debuting on NBC this spring.

"Each week I play a different comedic character but not one of them has a hangup about being ugly. That's an awful thing to live with and it's taken me years to recover from it. Even during the days of my TV series, I was always putting myself down to get a laugh. Nowadays," she says, "my consciousness is raised through yoga and I know, deep inside me, I'm a mature woman, a mother, and I'm not going to do that anymore."

X-rated isn't her brand of bliss

Dear Dr. Brothers: A guy I recently met always tries to get me to watch porno flicks with him even though I hate them, and they really turn me off.

He says he wants to marry me, but also wants a woman who doesn't mind if he goes to massage parlors after the wedding. He makes me feel as if I'm a prude because I won't submit to what I consider to be bizarre and demeaning sexual habits. What should I do?
— R.Y.

Dear R.Y. If you feel that what he wants you to do is demeaning, don't do it. It's wrong for you. There are many different sexual practices, but any that humiliate or hurt another person are wrong. Any man who pressures and insists that a woman do something that is offensive to her is showing his immaturity and insensitivity. The man who needs strange and unusual gimmicks in order to be sexually aroused is usually suffering from deep-seated sexual inhibitions. If he continues to pressure you, then perhaps this is not the man you want to marry.

Dear Dr. Brothers: My mother has always thought I was married to the perfect man, because he treats her like a princess. Unfortunately, he treats every woman he meets that way, but with the younger ones, this includes sleeping with them. After five years of a marriage that has had almost constant infidelity, I'm getting a divorce. The hardest part is, trying to tell my mom. How can I do it without shattering her?
— V.L.



DR. JOYCE BROTHERS

Dear V.L.: I'm sure that your mom is a lot tougher than you think. Don't be afraid to tell her the truth. Let her know that you need her support. If she realizes that her daughter has been hurt and made to suffer, believe me, her feelings about your husband will quickly cool.

Dr. John Vincent, a professor of psychology at the University of Houston, says a lot of adults fear that their parents will be surprised and angry at them over an impending divorce. Usually this isn't the case. Your mother may be more aware of your husband's weaknesses than you realize.

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The Caesarean battle rages on

Dear Ann: I became really angry when I read the letter from the reader who said women who have Caesareans feel "less womanly," because they are unable to give birth in the way nature intended. Subsequent letters went on and on until I was ready to scream.

I am 23 and have been an insulin-dependent diabetic ever since I was 11. My doctor advised me not to become pregnant, but I was determined to have a child. My pregnancy was extremely difficult. When my kidneys failed, the doctor advised me to have an abortion. I refused. Our little girl was healthy and perfectly beautiful. I wouldn't have cared if they had pulled her out of my ear.

I cannot imagine why any woman would make a big deal out of the method of delivery. As always, arriving at the destination is far more important than the road traveled to get there.

— G.M. (New Orleans)
Dear G.M.: Hundreds of women wrote to express themselves on this intensely personal subject. Some of the letters were too hot to handle, so I hauled out my asbestos gloves. Here's a sampling:

Dear Ann: It burned me up when I read the letters from women who thought they were missing something because they had their babies by Caesarean instead of "as God intended." I wish I could have traded places with them.

I am a small person, 5-feet-1 and 105

pounds. My doctor must have had other things on his mind, because I labored for far too many hours before my 9-pound, 10-ounce son was born.

The baby did not move one of his arms for several months, and we now know that he never will have full use of it. But thank God, he is otherwise healthy. Needless to say, I was in rough shape myself after that nightmarish delivery, and it took months of counseling to get me squared away. Any woman who is told in advance that she should have a C-section ought to be thankful. I wish I had been so lucky.



ANN LANDERS

— Lafayette, La.
Dear Ann: You were so right when you said, "It doesn't matter how you have the baby, just be thankful that it is healthy."

I wonder how those ladies who were doing all the yelling would like to have both a vaginal birth and a Caesarean in one day. I did. After eight hours of hard labor, I delivered a healthy son "naturally." I knew I was pregnant with twins, but the second child simply wouldn't position himself properly, so my doctor had to do an emergency C-section. I do not feel that the bonding with the first child was any closer than with the second.

— J.E. in Spokane
Write for Ann Landers' new booklet, "How to Make Friends and Stop Being Lonely." Send a self-addressed, long, business-size envelope and a check or money order for \$4.15 (this includes postage and handling) to: Friends, c/o Ann Landers, P.O. Box 11562, Chicago, Ill. 60611-0562.
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Bedwetting Problems?

By Dr. Jeffrey J. Felixbrod

A technological breakthrough has led to the development of a device which can safely and rapidly eliminate the problem of bedwetting. Bedwetting is a source of great embarrassment, and can lead to psychological and learning problems if it is not corrected.

Advice by pediatricians that the child will "outgrow" the bedwetting is painfully misleading, since bedwetting often continues for years and years. Furthermore, approaches such as waking the child during the night, restricting liquids before bedtime, rewards and punishments, medications, and the use of poorly designed buzzer alarm devices, have generally not produced lasting results.

The new treatment is usually available at little or no out-of-pocket expense, and is provided through a house call or office visit. It is effective for 96 percent of children (including deep sleepers) ages four and older and adults, when bedwetting is not caused by a medical problem. For further information, call 1-800-445-7272. Toll Free.

Dr. Jeffrey J. Felixbrod is a behavioral psychologist and a former bedwetter. He has directed bedwetting treatment programs at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Westchester, and has served on the staff of the Child Development Clinic of Long Island Jewish-Hillside Medical Center. At present, Dr. Felixbrod is Director of The Enuresis Institute of New York, a center specializing in the treatment of bedwetting.