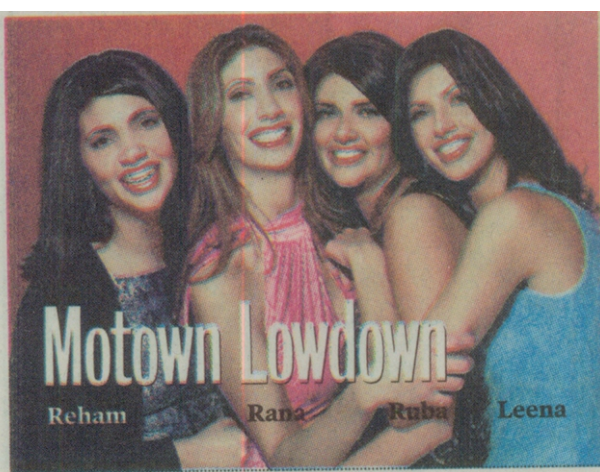


Features



The Kozouz sisters answer your relationship questions every Tuesday in *The Detroit News*. Send your questions to Lowdown@detnews.com or write to *Motown Lowdown* c/o The Detroit News, 615 W. Lafayette Blvd., Detroit, MI 48226.

What's more important, the ring or the man?

I was recently engaged and have to say that I am embarrassed by the engagement ring my fiance purchased for me. He makes decent money and, quite honestly, I was expecting much more. We've talked in the past about what I like in terms of size and style, but this ring is nothing close to that. I feel bad, but I have to live with this thing on my finger for the rest of my life. I'm thinking about taking it back to the jeweler and getting something else more my style. What do you ladies think?

— Stewing in Sterling Heights

Dear Stewing:

Cut the guy some slack! He obviously bought what he can afford and what he felt was appropriate. Not to mention, reality check: Do you have any idea the expenses forthcoming in putting on a wedding? If you feel strongly disappointed about the ring, you can always fancy things up with your wedding band and complementary pieces later on down the road. Milestone anniversaries are a great occasion to upgrade. Until then, unless you plan on marrying Ben Affleck, the 6.1-carat pink diamond definitely isn't in your future.

— Reham

I think you have a valid claim. You have to wear this ring on your finger for the rest of your life and, if you look at it with disgust, it'll wear on you and your attitude toward him. Honesty is an extremely important quality to possess. Don't hide your feelings from him. Talk to him about how you want the perfect ring to reflect your perfect relationship.

— Leena

Jeez, you're such a shallow chick! I used to work at Saks Fifth Avenue in high school when I noticed the "Benzo costs more than the house" phenomena. Women who were all dressed up and flashy would spend the least amount of money. People who have to dress rich to show off and impress are not rich. The most understated people usually have the biggest bank accounts. Keep the ring you have and show you have style.

— Rana

An engagement ring would be the most sentimental gift a man could give me. It may not be what you wanted or expected, but count your blessings that you have one. There are a lot of single women out there looking for a good man. Be grateful you have a man who loves you and is committed to spending the rest of his life with you, and stop complaining about the size of your ring.

— Ruba

For about a year-and-a-half, I have been taking my 3-year-old son to a children's play center, where I met a woman named Jill, who has become a good friend. She has a son about the same age as mine and lives nearby, which has made it convenient to schedule play dates. But lately her son has become a terror. I cannot begin to describe how out of control this kid is. He screams, he hits, he's very destructive. I enjoy Jill's company, and I love that my son has a playmate, but I'm nervous this little boy is going to adversely affect my son the more time they spend together. Any suggestions?

— Rattled in Rochester

Dear Rattled:

People claim that they are good friends when they just pretend to play nice-nice all the time. I think you are a much better friend if you tell her the truth. I would have no problem telling my good friend that her kid is out of control and that, as a parent, she should enforce more discipline on her child before it is too late. A real friend will respect your courage, honesty and concern.

— Rana

Measure the pros and cons of the situation before making a decision. Does your son enjoy his friend's company or does he leave crying every time? Does he look forward to the visits or does he beg to stay home? Is he learning from and enjoying these play dates or is he walking away cussing like a sailor? Between your sound judgment and your child's behavior, I am sure you will come up with the correct answer.

— Ruba

Hmmm, sounds to me as if you've described the majority of 3-year-olds. That's what kids do: run, scream and destroy. Don't try putting your child in an antiseptic bubble. Allow him to continue his friendship with the terror. As long as you instill as much moral and ethical guidance as you can into your child, he will learn right from wrong on his own, not by what he is witnessing.

— Leena

Jill's sinister little son sounds like quite a terror. Children at this age are so impressionable, and to subject your child to such negative behavior is not setting a good example for him. There are many bad influences in society today that we can't control. My advice is to control the ones you can. If you enjoy Jill's company, then schedule some time alone with her, excluding this destructive distraction from the "play date."

— Reham