Don't lower dating standards just to 'hang out' with guys

In single (via divorce), attractive and most many guys of different ages and stages, in all types of women. I have no problem meeting them, just puzzled by what I am finding — guys who want to 'hang out' but not really "go out." They don't seem to know how to, or care, to ask a woman out on a "typical" date, where the goal is spending time and getting to know each other. They just want to meet spontaneously at a club or coffee shop. I'm pretty open-minded, but this can be frustrating. I'd like to move it along a bit. Is this a trend you've noticed? Any tips for getting through it, or any advice on how to change this scenario?

— Troubled in Troy

Dear Troubled:

Yes, there has been a definite decline in chivalry among this generation. The MTV-watching, reality-show junkies have forgotten all of the principles of courtship. Stick to your dignified values or you'll find yourself "Married by America." — Robert

I don't think dating needs to be so up-to-date and formal. Meeting at these types of places takes the stress off dating and allows new natural and relaxed environment. You'll find that conversation will flow much more easily when you're not so worried about which item you stress to put on the table and which for the escargot.

— Leena

Obviously, those guys want to "hang out" because they only want you as a friend and not as a romantic partner. When men find a woman that are really attracted to, they will put their best foot forward and take you there.

— Rhyn

Yes, I too, have noticed a lack of attention paid to arranging for a respectable date. You need to make your expectations of how you'd like to be treated clear from the onset, for instance, a guy asked me recently to meet him for drinks. I finally agreed, but only if he would pick me up and make a dinner reservation. He quickly backed off and adjusted his style. Don't lower your standards just for the sake of dating.

— Rhyn

My mother and father recently divorced after 30 years of marriage. I am almost to myself and found the divorce stressful. I have somewhat come to terms with their separation, but am a 19-year-old brother who still lives with dad. He seems to be following the advice of my father by ignoring my mother and me. He won't meet her, go to her house or even call her on the phone, unless he needs money, which she readily gives him in an attempt to keep contact. I don't know how to tell my dad his negative comments about his mom are going to severely Damage the relationship between my mother and brother. I have tried to talk to my mom to just leave them alone and ignore them both, but she can't. And, frankly, I am sick and tired of being in the middle of all their issues.

— Angry in Allen Park

Dear Angry:

Your brother is just as much your responsibility as your parents. Grab that little bit by the ear and set him straight. Let him know that he needs to pay your mother the respect she deserves as his father. If you are firm and consistent in your beliefs, he will listen to you. Tell him the issue is between your parents and his role should be to listen to both parents and respect them both.

— Rana

No, no, Rana. It's not the child's place to set the tone. The weak-minded mother needs to demand respect from her teen-ager or she will never get it. Merely offering it is far too desirable and should not be a replacement for good parenting. She needs to give a backbone and take control of the situation now before it gets even worse.

— Robert

You said it yourself: You're stuck and tired of being stuck in the middle, so the solution is simple — don't! Everyone is all adults. You need to try to keep some of them work out their own issues. Refuse to discuss it with any of them. And, if you're not going to be able to change their stubborn minds, They'll have no choice but to accept forgiveness from each other on their own.

— Leena

You may have come to terms with your parents' divorce, but your brother obviously has not. Divorce is a traumatic experience on everyone, but he is still dealing with the aftermath. Give him some time to work through his feelings. Once he has accepted the divorce, maybe he will feel better himself to mom again.

— Rhyn