

TALES FROM THE FRONT

Readers sing the praises of waiting

It seems that for some of you, abstinence makes the heart grow fonder. Let's hear it for virginity...



CHERYL LAVIN

• **Our advice columnists:**

Sunday, Thursday:

Cheryl Lavin, "Tales From the Front"

Monday, Friday: Judith Martin, "Miss Manners"

Tuesday, Saturday: Harlan Cohen, "Help Me, Harlan!"

Wednesday: "Elder Wisdom Circle"

Shannon: "The pleasure in waiting till marriage is the anticipation, the getting to know each other, the step-by-step assurance that you want to be tied to this person for life. And you can still have an incredibly rich fantasy life, which is often more pleasurable than the real thing."

Sydney: "A woman is the potential baby sanctuary, not a toxic waste dump."

Richard: "Sex is the surrendering of one's emotional core to another. Isn't it true that the sexual experience reaches its ultimate pleasure if the emotional bonding of the participants exists first?"

J.R.: "Why save yourself? Because God said so. Pretty simple. He created us; he makes the rules, not us. When seen in the light of eternity, this life is short, just the width of a hand span, the Bible says."

Gigi: "Sex is a gift from God intended to be shared only between husband and wife."

Rose: "Sex is for having children. Pleasure is secondary. One of the factors leading to divorce today is sexual infidelity brought on by a bored spouse. If you can play the field while you're single, you'll find it extremely difficult to give up variety as a married person. You may constantly compare your spouse's bedroom skills to previous lovers. Unmarried people should remain virgins their entire lives. To procreate outside of family weakens the family structure. When everyone has sex whenever it feels right, we send our teenagers the message that it's a-OK to do it whenever they feel like it. Sex often feels right at the moment, but there's a lot of regret, hurt, unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases the next moment."

"Like everything else in marriage, you have to work at being sexually compatible. My husband and I have been married 23 years. Without other sexual experiences to compare it to, our sexual relationship is the best — fulfilling, loving, committed and joyful. You can't ask for anything better"

Jennifer: "My husband and I both waited. He was 28 and I was 20. After our wedding night, I told him I wished that I had never even kissed anyone else. It's a special gift that you give to one person. Maybe it is something you can't explain but must experience to understand. Perhaps the majority of marriages fail because they are based on physical attraction alone. Physical attraction is important, but it's not the glue that holds a marriage together. When you wait, you know you love the person for their beliefs, convictions, passions, etc. In a loving relationship, sex can be worked on so that both people are satisfied. It's not the center of your connection as a couple, but an extension of your love. We've only been married for 10 years, so I'm not a complete expert. But we have parents with over 60 combined years of marriage that began with a simple commitment: To share the experience of sex only with each other."

Chloe: "Sex is only part of life. It's not life itself, except to a few very narrow-minded obsessed individuals. Having a sexual relationship before marriage muddies the waters, particularly for men. It's very difficult for them to get into the emotional intimacy part of the partnership when their biological urges are in the driver's seat. For the record, Cheryl, I'm 45 years old, married 25 years, not a virgin before I was married and regrettably had several extramarital affairs. My husband and I stuck it out, and have a wonderful partnership now. And, yes, we do have fantastic sex three to four times a week."

Did a friend or family member try to break up your relationship? Send your tale to **Cheryl Lavin**, Tales From the Front, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611.