

By Harriett Muhammad

Dear Harriett: I am seventeen years old and I live with my mother and two brothers. My father doesn't live with us because my mother is now separated from him.

MY MOTHER has a boyfriend and this boyfriend of hers lives with us. Instead of saving her money and getting her divorce, she would rather commit adultery. I don't like this, and what makes the whole thing worse is that this man rules over us and plays the role of a father when he is not our father. If this man was to marry my mother, then I would accept and respect him as a father, but my mind won't allow me to do this now.

This man also has a wife and children of his own. I don't think it is right for them to live together like this until they get their divorces.

PLEASE tell me what I should do—respect this man and treat him like a father or keep out of his way and don't allow him to rule me? I need your advice because others have failed to give me intelligent advice.

Sincerely yours, Miss M.
R. Philadelphia, Pa.

DEAR MISS R.: I understand how you must feel—you are living in a very frustrating situation. You are right, of course in your views—your mother is doing wrong by living in adultery—according to most people's moral standards. But there is such a gap between the way things **SHOULD BE** and the way they **ARE**. You must learn how to accept this part of life and develop the ability to work with things the way they are until they change.

If you had a sincere talk with your mother and let her know how you feel about what she is doing, you may start her to thinking about her actions, and cause her to change. This is being optimistic—let's look at the other side of the coin. Suppose your talking doesn't do any good and her feelings for this man are strong enough to withstand your criticisms.

THEN EVEN if you can't condone her actions (and I hope you can't), try to understand why she is living like this, and you will face the situation in a more mature manner. Your mother is weak and has let her personal satisfaction become

more important to her than anything else. This is what happens when morals collapse. Learn from her mistakes and keep your morals up so that you don't have the same problem in the future.

Now about this man. You are seventeen and legally still under your mother's jurisdiction. If your mother has placed herself under this man, then she has placed you and your brothers under him too—like it or not. I don't think you owe him any sort of special loyalty but you do owe him respect since he is in a position of authority over you.

As long as you live in the same house and benefit in even a small way from his support, then you come under his jurisdiction. Suppose you defy him or arouse his anger by avoiding or ignoring him. Whose going to catch hell? You.

So why should you create unnecessary problems if you're not in a position to defend yourself. You only have a few more months be-

fore you'll be old enough to leave and lead your own life the way you want—hang on. If your brothers are much younger and will be under these circumstances for a longer period of time, then if you raise up the spirit of rebellion in them, they'll have it that much harder.

LETS FACE reality. When you're in a bad situation and are powerless to do anything about it, then you will only stay frustrated if you aren't able to face things as they are. I don't say give in—no no. But wait until your day comes.

Something on your mind? Write and tell me about it.

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Recruit Jobless Girls

WASHINGTON — Recruitment of unemployed girls between 15-21 to serve as a woman's auxiliary corps for the war on poverty has been suggested by R. Sargent Shriver, director, Office of Economic Opportunity.

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