

# Girl wants to confront negativity toward teens

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm a 14-year-old girl who often hears negative comments directed at teenagers as a whole. The other day I was sitting in a bookstore, quietly reading, when an employee commented to a customer that "some teenagers were just in here — that's probably why the display is a mess!"

I have heard other strangers make remarks about teens being lazy, slovenly, apathetic and rude. If these comments were directed at specific ethnic or religious groups, they would be regarded as discrimination, so I want to know if my saying something to these people would be appropriate — and also why ageism, clearly a hurtful form of stereotyping, is acceptable when it's directed at young people.

I am tired of being followed by store owners and watching other passengers on the bus grab their belongings and scoot away when I come near them. What should I do?

— *Sick of Ageism*  
in San Francisco

**DEAR SICK OF AGEISM:** Although times change, human nature does not. While I agree that many upstanding teens get a bad rap, it might interest you to see this 5th century B.C. quotation attributed to Socrates: "Our youth now love luxury. They have bad man-



**Abigail  
Van Buren**

Dear Abby

ners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders, and love chatter in places of exercise. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble food and tyrannize their teachers."

In your case, I don't think scolding or lecturing the offenders would be helpful. Any intelligent person knows that the vast majority of teens today are honest, hardworking, law-abiding and upstanding.

Therefore, if you are being followed around by store owners, and bus passengers grab their belongings and scoot away when they see you, it's time to take a critical look at how you present yourself. Is there something about your appearance that could be considered weird or threatening? If the answer is "maybe," then it's time for a makeover.

**DEAR ABBY:** I was married last weekend in a small family setting. It is the second marriage for both my hus-

band and me. My father left right after the ceremony, took Mom with him, and missed our wedding reception in order to watch a college football game. He had never met my in-laws before.

I am furious and embarrassed, and I'm not sure how to get over the hurt of knowing a game he could have taped on his VCR was more important than being with me at such an important event. Can you give me any advice?

— *Wounded Bride*  
in Nebraska

**DEAR WOUNDED BRIDE:** Your father either dropped the ball, or he was sending a message to you and your new in-laws. Perhaps he is still upset over the failure of your first marriage. Or, he may not like your new husband. But the way he chose to show it was cruel and insensitive, and has probably created a rift where he had an opportunity to build a bridge. Sad for you, but sadder for Dad.

Try to forgive him, concentrate on building a successful marriage, and do not look to your parents for approval — because if you do, you will only leave yourself open to more disappointment.

Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.