

Well, I'll Tell You . . .

Advice from an average girl

By Kit Sheppard

Q. I just moved to a new city, by myself, for work, and I don't know anyone. I know it seems like a no-brainer, but how does an adult go about making new friends. It's not as easy as being in the same homeroom or after school club.

A. Well, I'll Tell You...I applaud your courage. I don't think it's easy for most people to pick up and move into unknown territory (I've thought about it, but never got further from home than Raleigh- woo hoo, the BIG city!).

It's certainly not as easy to produce new friendships in adulthood as it is when you're a kid. Depending on what type of work you do, you spend 40+ hours a week with the same group of people, after which, it's usually home until the next day, and there's the problem. As adults, we tend to fall into a routine that we don't let go of easily; so, we aren't usually in the position to meet new people. Add to that, how wary we are of strangers, particular in the world we now live in, and how exhausted we are once we get done with our daily grinds, and the result is not a socially favorable one.

There are always your co-workers (although, more and more companies are frowning on fraternization outside the workplace, so check your policy), but then you see them at work and after work. It's a little hard for someone to take you seriously when they've seen what you're like after that third pomegranate martini!

Try going to places where there are people that share your interests, or take a class that you wouldn't have normally tried in your former town. I've met some great (and yes, some strange) people when I took up yoga. Or check the local paper for events that you might like, such as yard sales, festivals, or poetry reading, or try volunteering a couple hours a week, somewhere like the YWCA. Basically, think outside the box and get out of your comfort zone (just a little), and you never know who you'll see (and if you spot someone in baby blue yoga paints and a Hello Kitty tee, who happens to have an excellent tree pose, say hi! I might even treat you to some cocoa!).

Q. My best friend just came out as a lesbian, and I fully support her choice. What I don't like is her new girlfriend; who's completely controlling and manipulative. How can I let my friend know her girlfriend's a jerk without coming off unsupportive?

A. Well, I'll Tell You...It's always difficult, and tricky, to tell our loved ones when we don't approve of their dating decisions (it's also difficult and tricky to indicate which "she" I mean, since there are three of you, so to keep me from confusion, your best friend will be Ann, and the girlfriend is Sue). There's always the chance that Ann will be upset and rebel against your input. Your position is even more difficult since Ann may not see it as just disagreeing with her dating choice, but her sexual preference. Give it a little time, and try to get along with Sue as much as you can (if Ann has to choose, she may choose someone who seems to understand what she's going through). Try to include Sue in some, (not all, your relationship with Ann needs some time, too), so that your Ann will see that you're attempting to accept the situation. But, point out the things that Sue does that demean or take advantage of Ann. Remind Ann that she's allowing Sue to get away with things that she would never have tolerated from a guy; and that she doesn't have to lower her standards or be mistreated for anyone, regardless of their gender, and she could easily find someone better suited for her. As long as you're being the same supportive friend you've always been, I think things will work out.

And, if all else fails, the PRIDE festivities will soon be upon us; take Ann out to see just how many options she has (and yes, I know PRIDE is not about finding a date, but if it happens, then good for her!).

Well, I'll Tell You . . . Advice from an average girl is written by Kit Sheppard. If you would like to submit questions or request advice from Kit please email her directly at ksheppard@galmag.com.