

[back](#)[next issue...](#)

The Crux

six

May 2002

My mother and I just changed therapists. We're in therapy because she doesn't like me (she denies this). This February, my mother and I decided that it would be best for me to move out of her house and into my father's full time. She told me that it was partly because she had to protect herself from my anger, and partly because she thought I would be happier with my father. That's the order she listed the reasons.

As you might imagine, I came away from the experience feeling like my mother kicked me out of her house. Yes, I know, you're all thinking: "if you were my kid I'd kick you out of my house, too." Point taken.

Anyway, we got rid of our last therapist because he liked me even less than my mother does. He told me that I was unpleasant, and that maybe I didn't have as many friends as I thought I did.

To avoid using names, I'll call him Dr. Donut.

Here's why Dr. Donut hated me so much: every time he asked me how I felt, or what I thought, I would go and tell him how I felt and what I thought. I often disagreed with my mother about where the conflicts were coming from, and I often expressed thoughts that weren't very nice. I understand how upsetting it might have been, but they told me to be honest, so I was. Dr. Donut kept telling me that I was being disrespectful, and that it didn't matter whether what I said was true or not. He said, "you're not wise. She is. You'll understand when you're older."

I said, "do you understand that when you say 'you'll understand when you're older' to me, that it just makes me more arrogant? Have you ever said that to a teenager and gotten a pleasant response?" The big Boston Crème just looked at me for a second. Then he told me that the respectful thing to do would be to acknowledge my lack of life experience, and just to admit that he was right and I was wrong.

We had an interesting argument here. Because my mother said I should be honest when I was in therapy with her, I kept offering insights as to what was going on in both my mind and her mind. I tried to explain her behavior to her, the way I was seeing it. When I thought she was lying to

People say, "respect your elders," but the respect for one's elders doesn't come from automatic subservience, it comes from the fact that adults should use their life experience to act in a way that a teenager would find worthy of respect. Maybe this used to happen a lot. Now, adults that don't act in a way that deserves respect still expect kids to respect them.

Telling me that no one likes me was a stupid thing for Dr. Donut to do. He felt threatened by my lack of dog-like admiration and deference, so he wrecked the therapy in one final attempt to put me in my place. And why is my place below him? Because I'm younger? And he's going to go and call me arrogant if I treat him like an equal? And he's going to get all mad that I turned out to be more insightful than him? And taller? Mr. Big-shot? You'd think he'd appreciate me. It's not easy being the smartest person in the world.

If kids don't respect adults, there is something wrong with the adults' behavior. If you teach a class that kids like to skip, then there is something wrong with your teaching. (It's really bad if your class sucks so much that you'd skip it.) In fact, there are so many awful classes at this school that they had to make rules about skipping to keep kids from running out of the building with their hands over their ears. I don't recall there ever being a rule like that at the movie theater. In fact, people pay to go, and you can learn a lot from movies. It's the same with books.

But the school's solution isn't to make classes more entertaining, or pleasant, is it? No, the school says, "those damn kids," and they think up stricter rules. I guess I'm just really concerned about the teachers' and the administrators' self-esteem. How does it make you people feel to know that you are standing in front of a roomful of kids who don't want to be there? Talking to ears that don't want to hear you talk? In some classes, teachers tell kids where to look. Are you guys telling me that you can't think of anything interesting to say at all? You have to yell at kids about *what direction their eyes are pointing?*

Some people will say that we have to come to class because of a liability issue, but that's just slimy and they know it. A solution to your liability problem would be to stop

me or herself, I told her. This is where the good doctor comes in. He kept telling me that no one knew my mom better than my mom. I disputed this, because I think that we know ourselves the least. I openly applied this theory to myself, and told the therapist that I believe my friends know me better than I do. He called me arrogant, and told me to speak more respectfully. I was astounded that even when teenagers are in therapy with their mothers, they are still expected to withhold their thoughts and feelings in order to preserve a ridiculous and dishonest atmosphere of respect. I have little or no respect for Dr. Donut or my mother, and to pretend to would be false and counterproductive.

designing such lame-ass classes. Otherwise, I'll jump out of the window in the middle stairwell, and I'll scream "I tripped" just before my head explodes all over the cafeteria entrance. Then you'll have a liability issue. Here's the deal. Administrators and teachers obviously haven't thought about this, because they still have yet to commit suicide or make interesting classes. By pointing out the true nature of this high school, I am bringing you to the fork in the road against your will. Are we going to start earning respect and stimulating students (Mr. Myers, it's a different use of the word "stimulating"), or are we going to have one big group liability issue?

Three Important Things to Think About

1. So... who wants to write my college recommendation?
2. I think that the world would be a much more pleasant place if we remembered to stand in each other's shoes, even if it means we have to empathize with jerks. Kittens, for example. They're miserable little bastards, but they just want what we all want: for people to like them.
3. "No returning for 'forgotten' items?" What the hell kind of a sign is that to have in the high school cafeteria? You people hate us quite openly, don't you? For every day that sign stays there I'm just going to mush another cupcake into "The Graphic" mail slot.