

TEEN TALK (an original column from The Daily Record)

March 20, 2005

Is *your* question here today? Not if you haven't written it yet! Write to us with "teentalk" in the subject line. Do it today! And remember, *details*, please!

YOU: What should I do on a first date to get the person to like me?

TEENTALK: Now there's a BIG question! You didn't give us much information to go on, so we'll have to respond generally. It's totally natural to be nervous on a first date—we all worry about saying and doing the right thing. But remember that the other person agreed to go out with you, so he or she must already like you at least a *little* bit! And that person they like is not someone who's *trying* hard to be a perfect date—she (or he) is a regular, relaxed, "just being me" person—YOU! Of course, you should be polite—nobody likes a rude date. And you may want to spend some time before the date thinking up a few things to talk about, just in case the conversation lags too much. (Hint: Ask the other person to tell you more about something you know he or she is interested in.) But the main thing to remember is to be *yourself*—that's what you do best, after all! And remember, you'll never be able to *make* someone like you. If this person decides that the first date is also going to be the last, you're not going to change his or her mind—and why would you want to? Just move on. Eventually, you'll find someone *you* like who also likes you back!

YOU: I have anger that can sometimes get out of control. I've tried everything. What should I do?

TEENTALK: Anger can be a tough one to figure out. You didn't really give us the total 411 on your situation, so we have to ask: What do you mean by "out of control?" Are you afraid you might hurt someone—or something? Or do you mean that you feel so overwhelmed that you just don't know what to do? If you're concerned about hurting *someone* or *something*, you need to remove yourself from the situation as soon as you even begin to feel that you might lose control. You also need to find someone to talk to—someone who can help you find a non-destructive way to deal with your anger. A school counselor or teacher you trust is a good place to start. If you just need some tips to help you cope, try keeping an "anger journal." Every time you get angry, write down *why* you feel angry. After a week, read through the journal, pretending it belongs to someone else. Are there other, more positive, ways to respond to these situations? Are there certain times, situations, or people who always set you off? If so, try to anticipate these outbursts. Take a few deep breaths while talking to yourself about "letting it go," walk out of the room, calm down—and then come back. If you notice that you often get angry when other people disagree with your point of view, try arguing an issue from their point of view (to yourself, of course) to see if you can begin to appreciate where they're coming from. If you find that your anger arises from disagreements with the people you care about, look for better ways to work out your differences. Maybe you've heard about using "I" statements? This means that you don't attack or accuse the other person. Instead, you talk about how you feel. So, instead of saying something like, "You're such a backstabber—you gossip about me all the time" you'd say, "I felt used and hurt when you told so-and-so such-and-such." This way you are talking about the only thing you can truly control—yourself. Finally, remember to keep your sense of humor! If you can laugh at yourself and a situation, you can dissipate a lot of anger before it even gets started.