



Up In The Air

By Wayne and Tamara

I am a 21-year-old college senior looking forward to graduation in four months, pursuing a career and possibly my first love. So here's the question...

I've been in love with my first boyfriend, with whom I shared my first time, since I was 15. I knew I cared about him then, but I thought it was puppy love. Although the relationship didn't last long, we dated again sophomore year of college and began "hooking up" again five months ago. We both dated other people in the interim. I'm beginning to realize I am really in love and thinking about a future with him. The problem is we go to school four hours away from each other. I'm 21, he's 23. We also feel we deserve to "have fun" our last semester at college. The big problem is neither of us knows where we'll end up after graduation.

Plus, I'm not sure he knows how very much in love with him I am. I'm scared he'll find somebody else if I don't tell him. But I'm also not sure how he'll take it if I do. He doesn't show his emotions much. Am I insane in thinking everything will work out if I tell him? We've talked about it, and he's never felt so "comfortable" with anyone before, but I'm not sure how he feels about a future with me. I think he feels the same or we wouldn't keep going back to each other. Either way, I don't want to scare him away by confessing my love and my hopes for a future, but I need to tell him how I feel!

Kira

Kira, when we read your letter, we wondered what it was really about. Is it about nothing ventured, nothing gained? Is it about the power of first love? Or is it about something else? Though we often tell people to be brave (ask the girl for a date, go for that job you want) we don't think that's your main issue. Though the "first time" can leave an indelible mark, we don't think that's the issue either.

Look, you two are hooking up and "having fun" with multiple partners. By definition, that's not love. You say he's comfortable with you, but we'd bet he's comfortable with every woman he hooks up with. Comfortable enough to be having casual sex with them.

Near the end of the movie Up in the Air, a young woman is shown interviewing for a job in San Francisco. This will be her second job after college. When the interviewer asks why she took her first job, a dead-end job in Omaha, she answers candidly. "I followed a boy."

That's what your letter is about. "I graduate in four months; I don't know what job I'll have; I don't know where I'll be. Everything is unsettled and I'm scared."

You are moving on to a completely different stage of life, and of course you are scared. But this man doesn't love you enough to say, "I'm not comfortable with you hooking up with other men." You don't love him enough to say, "I'm not comfortable with you hooking up with other women." Sex with no strings attached is the opposite of a genuine relationship. But at 21 with a college degree, all the possibilities of life are open to you. Don't think about marriage and forever with a hookup.

Go on! Get your new life. Hightail it to your college placement office and schedule job interviews. Explore all the possibilities. Embrace this challenge. Above all, don't become that young woman who has to explain a blunder in her life by saying, "I followed a boy."

Wayne & Tamara



Stay Grounded with a Blueberry Bush

Common Sense Health – Diana Gifford-Jones

When the weight of the world feels too heavy, I find solace in going back to the basics. I look for something wholesome and dwell on it, or better, nurture it. In this instance, it was a roadside stand and a basket of blueberries that caught my attention. How wonderful to uncover the stories and possibilities of this little fruit, each one borne of an ovary of a single flower. Wholesome indeed.

Most people still know, one hopes, that blueberries were only wild food not so long ago. Indigenous peoples across North America gathered and preserved them. One traditional name, "star berry," refers to the tiny five-pointed star at the blossom end of the fruit. Just over a century ago, a New Jersey woman set blueberries on the course of a commodity food. Elizabeth Coleman White was the daughter of a cranberry farmer at Whitesbog in New Jersey's Pine Barrens. In 1910, she read a paper by Frederick Coville, a botanist investigating blueberry cultivation. Coville had discovered that blueberries required acidic soil, explaining why they flourished naturally in the Pine Barrens.

White hired local woodsmen to search the surrounding countryside for bushes producing high volumes of large and sweet berries. The finders were paid for promising plants, and some varieties eventually carried the names of the people who discovered them. The Rubel variety was named for Rube Leek, who found the original wild bush.

By 1916, a collaboration between White and Coville resulted in the first commercial crop of cultivated highbush blueberries.

Today, there are sophisticated blueberry-breeding programs around the world. Researchers are developing varieties that can tolerate heat, resist disease, survive shipping and, perhaps most importantly, withstand mechanical harvesting. Blueberries have traditionally required hand-picking because ripe fruit is easily damaged. Now breeders are trying to produce berries firm enough to be harvested by machines, while remaining attractive and delicious to the consumer.

Scientists are now using DNA markers to identify desirable traits. The best blueberries that Elizabeth White's workers selected by walking through the woods are now being selected with genetic information.

Blueberries provide fibre, vitamin C, vitamin K and manganese, along with anthocyanins – the plant compounds responsible for their deep blue-purple colour. These nutrients are what make the blueberry stand out as a good choice to support cardiovascular and metabolic health.

If you have a sunny patch of garden, it's possible to grow your own bush. And breeders are making it easier to select the variety that suits your local conditions. Blueberries need acidic soil, along with good drainage and plenty of sunlight. An inexpensive soil-pH test from a garden centre can tell you whether your soil is suitable. If it isn't, a raised bed with properly prepared soil may be the easier route. With the right conditions, a blueberry bush can produce for decades.

Not everyone has a garden, of course. Frozen blueberries are an excellent alternative, with most of the nutritional value staying intact.

And there's an additional benefit of having blueberries at hand. It's a simple test for how well you are looking after your teeth. Eat some blueberries, then brush and floss your teeth. After swishing water in your mouth, if you spit out little bits of blueberry, it means there's more work needed to clean between your teeth and around gums after meals. If you take the blueberry test regularly, you'll keep your own teeth for a lifetime. Plus, you'll get the benefit of general good health that comes when oral health is maintained.

This is the time of year for pre-ordering plants from nurseries for pick-up or shipping next Spring. I have put in my order.



Turn your home equity into flexibility in retirement

'By Bruno Scanga
Financial Columnist

Is a reverse mortgage something to consider?

For many Canadians 55 and better, much of their wealth is tied up in their home. A reverse mortgage by is a flexible financial solution designed to help you access your home equity, without having to sell your home or change long-term plans.

What is a reverse mortgage

A reverse mortgage such as the CHIP Reverse Mortgage, is designed exclusively for Canadian homeowners aged 55 and better, giving you access to the savings and capital in your home.

You continue to live in your home and retain full ownership. It's your money and your house, with no required monthly mortgage payments.

How it works

Access up to 55% of your home equity as tax-free cash

Receive funds as a lump sum or over time

No required monthly mortgage payments

The loan is repaid when the home is sold

What people commonly use it for

- Supplementing retirement income
- Travel or lifestyle goals
- Supporting family financially
- Funding home improvements
- Paying off existing debt
- Covering healthcare or unexpected expenses

Retirement is yours to define

Whether it's pursuing new interests, supporting loved ones, or simply having more flexibility day-to-day, a reverse mortgage can help you access your home equity to support what matters most.

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905 432 2657
NEWSPAPER@OCENTRAL.COM
WWW.OCENTRAL.COM

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the love they gave. ♡