DEAR DR. HARTMAN

Clichés can be fun

Hello patients,

As the weather begins to cool, and the time for snuggling under warm covers on rainy Sundays is about to come around again, the thoughts of many of my patients have been turning to the question of psychosexual loneliness.

In recognition of your plight, I present for you now, the famous Dr Mary Hartman Five Point Plan For Getting a Boy or a Girl, Depending on Your Sexual Preference. This plan is based upon years of academic ivory tower. Not at all! 'nineties! I want to assure you that this plan was not developed in some psychiatric hospital. Or go to a dance. Most important of all, you drive the car on the night, because it will give you that all-important sense of power and control which is necessary to reduce anxiety.

On this second social encounter you must remember to touch the object as often as possible, even if apparently inadvertently. I personally recommend that, early on in the evening, you look the object right in the eye and say something like, "We're going to get off together tonight, aren't we?" or "Let's fuck" or whatever is appropriate to your social context. The object will laugh nervously, not unlike yourself. But you'll have got it off your chest and you won't have to spend the whole night worrying about when it's finally going to be said.

STEP FIVE, of course, is IT. We don't give detailed information about it. Other health professionals cover that area, and we don't like to interfere in the way the market, sorry, the profession, has been divided up.

Just one final word of warning. If you do find yourself late one night sitting in a car with an object and you hear yourself saying something really pathetic like, "Can I come inside for coffee?" for God's sake, DON'T DRINK COFFEE! If you do, your tension will rocket into a ball of anxiety in your stomach.

As soon as you get inside the object's front door, grab them and kiss them as quickly and as hard as you can!

Send your problems to Dr Hartman's secretary, Julie McCrossin, c/o ALR.