

The Salt Lake Tribune

Lately, something has come between America and me



BARB GUY

Dear Friendly Advice
Columnist,

My girlfriend America is my best bud. I have loved her since I was born and I am quite proud of her. I grew up in her protective embrace and she has kept me safe and lucky. She is generous and beautiful and kind and she gives everyone a chance. What I have always loved about her is she tries to treat everyone equally and she likes to let people speak up and say what's on their minds, whether she agrees with them or not. That's just her way. She is super-amazing!

Lately something has come between us. America has started to act really stuck up. She thinks she can tell everyone what to do all the time and she has become an expert at pitting people against each other. She seems happiest now when she's stirring things up.

When the people around her have disagreements, instead of

leaving them alone, she gets right in the middle and makes everyone way madder than they were until people are not only mad at each other, they're mad at America, too.

She's also getting a really big head. She thinks she's smarter than everyone else and everyone should do things her way. It's like she is losing all of her coolest traits!

What brought this all on was a boy. He has come along and made her do crazy things she wouldn't normally do. This boy is filling my friend's head with dangerous notions and I'm seeing her behavior worsen. She doesn't want to listen to everyone's ideas anymore and she seems to truly think that she should decide everything. She just wants to fight all the time. She doesn't care about people the way she used to. She thinks she's entitled to everything in the world, even things that were never hers. And it's like she thinks there will always be an unlimited supply of everything.

This clueless boy seems to think that he can act all boyish and stupid and funny and my best friend will just roll over and give up all her principles. I'm concerned she might become completely consumed by him. She's not acting like herself and lots of her friends are really worried about her. She is so much better than this. Lately I am hearing really bad things

about her from other people and this is so sad because she is normally so nice. I was always taught that when it comes right down to it, a girl's reputation is all she has.

Help! This boy is ruining America's reputation. What can I do?

Sincerely,
Concerned about America

Dear Concerned,

It's depressing to see the damage one boy can do. But your friend sounds strong. I think people who really care about her need to remind her of what she stands for. A girl can't have all the impressive qualities you describe and be turned away from them for very long. I think America will eventually see this boy for who he is – a divisive person who just wants to see how far he can push things. He clearly doesn't have your friend's best interests at heart. With the help of some good friends, I think America will wake up. I suggest you get all her true friends together and sit down with her to tell her how you feel. Tell her how much you love her. Be respectful and kind but tell her you are concerned that this boy could ruin her reputation. Remind her that she does best when she's nurturing people, not starting wars between them. Remind her that people look up to her as a leader.

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It also wouldn't hurt to let the
boy know that you're onto him.
Tell him you and your friends are
going to stand up with America.
Tell him you won't rest until
America earns back her good
reputation.

Best of luck,
Your Friendly Advice Columnist

*Barb Guy writes a biweekly column
for the Opinion section.*