

Broadway

From Page B8

same man for many years, she points out proudly. "If he had lived, we would be married 32 years last March," she said, adding that she feels "terrible" about the huge divorce rate nowadays. "People used to stay together because they looked upon marriage as sacred; they fought harder to stay together even if they had to take a lot of guff from the husband or the wife. But now the word that's banded about is 'love,' and I don't think that most people

know the real meaning of love. They say 'I love you' the way they say 'I want a glass of water.' It just doesn't seem to mean as much. They think 'love is the moment.' I'm not saying there aren't good, full relationships. I'm saying that some of them are so fragile. That's the reason I had one marriage and I haven't married since."

The much-loved TV actress has equally strong feelings about child-rearing. Noting that her

own mother was strict, Isabel says she never spared the rod herself while raising her children. "I had to work and leave my kids at home, so I had to be very strict with them. If they disobeyed me when I was gone, I had to take a stick to them... I didn't spare the rod. I used a strap. And I was speckled just as much as they were because I didn't know how to do it very well. I'd hit myself in the back with the strap, swinging it... and then I'd go in my own room and be rubbing my back, it

pained so much. It really hurt me more than it did them."

It was Isabel, and not her late husband, Sonny, who called the tune with the children, she recalled. "He'd tell the kids to 'wait until your mother comes home.'"

He was like a kid himself, Sonny was, at least the kids treated him like that. So I never had to say in my life 'Wait until your father comes home.' If I found something wrong, I got out the strap and took care of it."

Yolonda Gayles

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The woman is the worst mother I've ever seen. The little girl is always dirty and she goes to school looking hungry and pitiful. The child's hair is never combed, and sometimes she wears the same outfit two or three days in a row. On the other hand, the woman leaves home each morning looking as if she's some big executive -- hair done, nails manicured, the whole bit. To me, that's wrong.

The kids around her won't play with the little girl, so she's pretty much a loner. I usually see her playing on the sidewalk with her dolls.

What kind of a mother would allow this to go on? A real

mother would show more concern. Should I call someone? I really don't want to interfere, but the child looks so bad. Please advise.

Dear H.L.B.: Yes, do make a call. But the person you should call should be an official at the school she attends. You might call and say that you've noticed how poorly kept the child appears, and suggest that someone there keep a close watch.

I wouldn't say that you are interfering. I would say that you are trying to be of some help to a

child that might need it.

Unhappy and Bored

Dear Yolonda: My problem is not my job, my husband, or my children. My problem is me: I'm unhappy, and I don't know what to do about it. It's nothing big, it's just a lot of little things that seem to get me down. Nothing seems to cheer me up.

When I tried to talk with my husband about my problem, he tells me to have another baby. (We already have two kids.) But that's not my problem. I guess I feel that life is passing me by. I feel as though I'm in a rut.

What can I do? Please don't suggest that I find a counselor. I'm not depressed, I'm just down.

Joanne J

Dear Joanne: Instead of saying you're down, how about saying you're bored?

If boredom's your problem, then your solution's simple: You simply need to find new interests -- interests that expand your world. Try volunteering at a local hospital, or the PTA at your kids' school. My message is involvement beats boredom.

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