

Get realistic

Housing is a nightmare

by Nikki Gennuso
Collegian Staff

January 8, 1996 - seven of my friends and I pull an all nighter to get housing in the suites next fall. We stayed up all night and got in line at 4:00. Yes, this sounds a tad bit drastic, but the scary part about it is there was already a line when we got there.

What is going on with housing here at Behrend?

Recently, I have heard a lot of complaints concerning the housing on this campus. I'd personally like to know what the deal is.

Being a freshman, I consider myself pretty lucky to get housing, especially after I found out about the number of freshman who have to live off-campus. I expected that I would have guaranteed housing for next semester also, but I was wrong. If I hadn't stayed up all night and gotten in line at such an obscene hour, I would probably still be

stuck in the dorms next semester, for all I know I still might be. I can't complain though; I got campus housing when many of my friends who have it now didn't.

What I would like to know is, what is the problem?

We had a week to fill out our housing cards and get them into Housing and Food Services. We were led to believe that as long as we got the cards in within the week, that we were guaranteed housing for fall '96. However, some of my friends are finding out that even though they lived on campus this semester and turned their card in within a week, they didn't get housing.

Many students are having to look for alternatives in colleges simply because they cannot get housing. This is ridiculous, not to mention detrimental to the university. One friend in high school was seriously looking at Behrend as her choice for college.

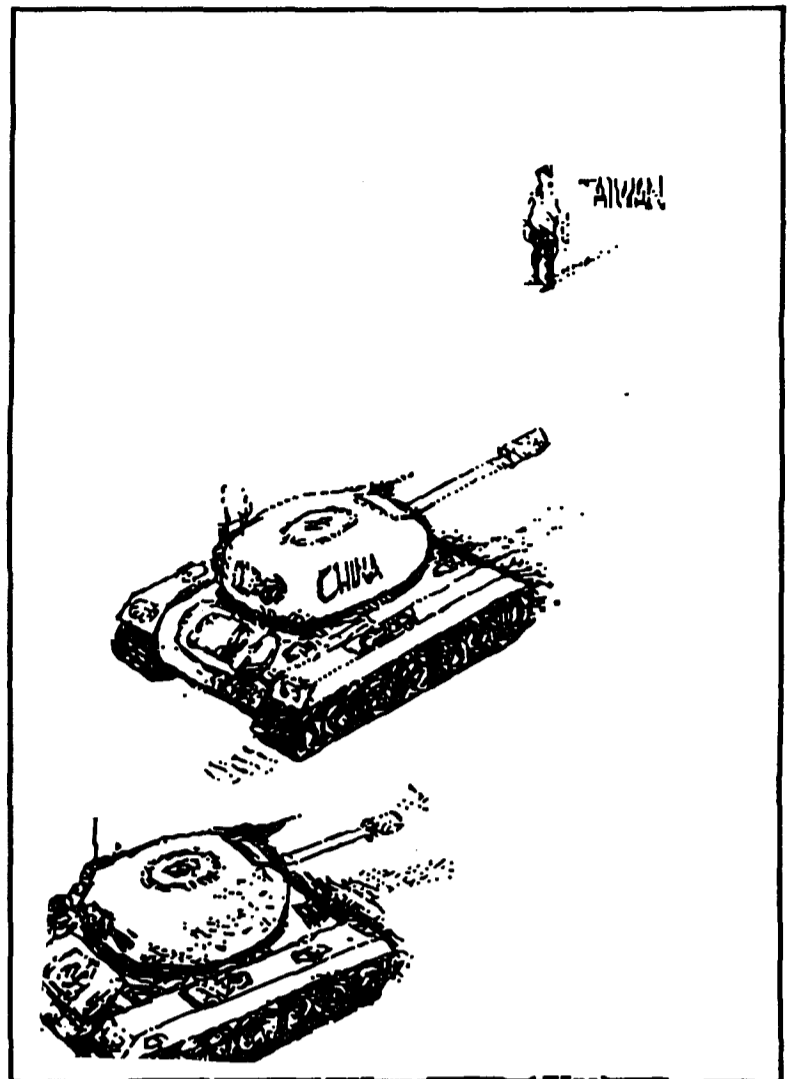
She didn't want to attend U.P. because it was too big; but when she received a notice in the mail saying that there was no housing for her at Behrend in the fall, she had to decide to attend another college.

Unfortunately, the loss was not only her's, but Behrend's, considering she is an excellent soccer player who would have been more than just an asset to the girl's team.

As for the new dorm being built, I would like to know why it was not built last year when it is needed.

There needs to be a system implemented in the housing policy which gives housing by seniority. The system they have now is obviously not working, and it's losing students for Behrend.

Let's get realistic about the problem, stop talking about it, and start building some new housing.



Getting Together:

Why can't he express himself?

By Judith Sherven and James Sniechowski
College Press Service

Dear Judith and Jim,

Although my relationship is really pretty good, I get frustrated because he won't admit to his feelings. What we have is fine but it could be so much more meaningful.

H.L. Tallahassee, Florida

Dear H.L.,

On the surface, your situation seems like a simple one. All you have to do is get him to open up and more depth would immediately become available. In theory, that's true, and it would true if all that's required is an act of will, a choice, a decision -- just make it and what's inside comes easily out. But, there's more to opening up than most people realize.

There is a myth about feelings, prevalent in our culture, that creates vast confusion and leaves in its wake a lot of unnecessary damage.

Far too many people believe that just because somebody feels something there should be no problem articulating it. So, when they encounter someone who isn't emotionally expressive, they unthinkingly assume that person must be withholding, or is being manipulative, or has a closed heart, or is in some way intentionally unresponsive. And, this goes for both women and men.

From the tone of your note, you don't seem to be caught up in suspicion. Nevertheless, as a caution, we ask you (and anyone for whom this rings true) to check yourself out.

Do you believe that the man you're with is willfully holding back? Are you feeling manipulated? If not, what do you think is going on? Have you talked with him about this?

Because of the myth, most people don't realize that emotional awareness is a skill. They believe "It should just happen." But, emotional sensitivity, articulation and expression must be learned and practiced to understand and reveal what's going on inside.

How skilled is the guy you're with? How skilled are you? This is important because many people ignore their own limitations. Even more importantly, how emotionally skilled are you together?

If he were to express his feelings, how prepared are you to receive who he is inside? Of course, you can't really know that until he does. But, are you prepared for his anger, fear, confusion, uncertainty? Are you prepared for his feeling lost and needing you to be the strong, directive one? What about those times when he will disagree with you, or even dislike you?

Many women back away when their men open up. When they say -- "I want him to express his feelings" -- what they really want is only those feelings that are romantic, adoring, caretaking, strong, sexy. Too often, their fantasy about his "opening up" doesn't include the challenges, disappointments and differences that every real relationship brings.

Another part of the myth assumes that if someone is emotionally expressive then depth and meaning will follow automatically. Quite the contrary. Surely, you've known someone who was always talking about their feelings, but without any sense of depth or even connection.

Depth requires character, and meaning is not something that's just out there in the ozone waiting to appear. Meaning is co-created. The meanings that will emerge from your relationship will result from the effort and commitment you both give to one another and will reflect the mutuality and the unique quality of who you are together.

For example, as part of our wedding vows, which we wrote, we included the promise that, in times of conflict, "Neither one of us will leave the room." By that we mean we will

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not dismiss, ignore, "forget" or in any way shove conflicts under the rug. We will hang in with each other until we reach a resolution that satisfies both of us. That can take a

day, a week, in one case it took us almost two years. The payoff is that neither one of us ever feels shortchanged. Just the opposite, we both feel larger, creating the relationship that honors and supports who we really are, individually and together.

Remember, women and men are socialized in very different ways. Men are raised to not feel, or, rather, to focus on what's around them and ignore stuff, disregard what's going on inside. Because feelings are not supposed to be a man's stock in trade, many men won't admit to them. But, even under the pressure of macho stereotypes and clichés, men are very feeling creatures.

We suggest you ask him what would make it comfortable for him to talk about his feelings with you. Find out if he feels safe with you. Can he trust you with his vulnerabilities, his wounds, even his joy? Do not give up your need to know him better. But, remember, you both must be satisfied before whatever resolution you reach is going to work.

Husband and wife team, Judith Sherven, Ph.D. and James Sniechowski, Ph.D., are internationally recognized gender and relationship experts. Send your questions or comments to them at 12021 Wilshire Blvd. #692, Los Angeles, CA 90025 or e-mail address: ShervSniec@AOL.com. They will respond either in "Getting Together" or by return mail. You can learn more about them and download a free article from their World Wide Web Home Page: http://www3.imall.com/Magic_Of_Differences/

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