



WHEN IS EXPERIENCE NOT NECESSARY?

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My son owns a statement shirt that says, “ Virgins Wanted: Experience Not Necessary”. This particular shirt never fails to elicit silent laughter in me every time my son decides to don it. Thankfully, for my peace of mind, that piece of advertisement has been nothing but, with my son not having taken any girl seriously yet. Apparently, my child did learn a painful lesson or two back in his high school days, which has reminded him about there being no immediate need to indulge in the follies of youth. His priorities now lie in building his young career. I’m praying and hoping that that stays for a long time, though.

Why does everything today always stand on the premise of “experience”? A job applicant needs ‘relevant experience for the job.’ An electoral candidate must possess at least some form of experience at leading people. A pro-active Executive needs sufficient experience at managing, directing and controlling people in order to be considered for a promotion. And of course, any type of job needs a certain amount of experience in order for an individual to be considered successful or thriving in his career. It’s all about building one’s reservoir of experience to be able to get by in an experience-driven world. Ironically, despite an undoubtedly more modern world imbued with changed perspectives on such matters as chastity and faithfulness, if there ever were such things really, women tend to be typecast as creatures who are valued based on their lack of experience —or absence thereof.

A great touch-off point for an interesting debate would be the double standards that have been applied to males and females. For most males, machismo is often demonstrated by having at least some amount of experience. But for females, even the tiniest amount of experience is considered a transgression on a woman’s purity and honor. The Philippines has kept pace with its more “enlightened” neighbors in such matters, but women who stay undefiled until they face the altar still do exist, believe me. Thank the heavens for such saving graces. Apparently, modernization or not, many women still prefer to, well, save the best for their last.

In this modern era where embryos can be produced in vitro and stem cells could just as easily serve as the fountain of youth, let us not forget the older cultures that have kept us solidly grounded and firmly principled. Let us remember that purity never goes out of fashion, no matter what. Let our youth develop their values with ancient but well-ordained concepts that will ultimately withstand time. Let us remind them, despite the danger of being labeled puritanical old-fashioned freaks, that there are still some aspects in life where EXPERIENCE IS NOT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is the double standard that applies to males and females being pointed out in the essay? Why is this concept essential?
2. What has modernization done to the concepts of purity and chastity? Do you honestly think that modernization has played a huge role in all those changes?
3. What is/are your own concept/s on purity before marriage?
4. Would you approve of your child getting into a “living together” arrangement? Why or why not?
5. What could be the consequences of women having “experience” before marriage? How about males?