“CAN I SLEEP WITH MY COWORKER?”
Got a workplace worry? Take it to the coach

Q: This guy in my office just asked me out. I see sex on the horizon. Am I headed for trouble?
A: God, no—and why not juggle flaming swords at the same time? What, are you insane? Listen, even if the hottie with the soul patch in accounting cuffs your toes next Saturday night, he probably isn’t going to be Mr. Forever (he’s got a soul patch, remember). And you’re not going to want to sit across from him at the next quarterly update knowing he knows that you like it with batteries included. CC’s rule of thumb: Once you’ve seen each other’s ecstasy face, your days of effective PowerPoint together are through.

Q: I’m 28 years old, and I’ve just been promoted to department manager. Which is great, except that my department consists of 10 people I used to hang out with, drink with, talk about sex with. How do I take control?
A: CC was promoted to a huge job at just your age and found that peers are far less accommodating than those a few years older. The chumps’ attitude seemed to be, Why did CC get the big bump? What about me? The way to show you’re in charge is not to blatantly show you’re in charge. Do your job and do it well, with humility, but no false “Aw, shucks, it could have been any of us” BS. You’re management now, kiddo, and they’re going to bitch about you the way you bitched about your boss. No more hanging out with the old gang, alas, and watch those company gatherings. CC quietly begins the night with club soda so that by 2 a.m., when on to pinoos, everyone admires the partying prowess. The stuff of bosses, my friend.

Q: I feel like I’m stuck in a rut. I’ve asked my boss for more responsibility, but it seems like she keeps giving me all the new assignments to someone else. Should I take this as a hint?
A: Yes.

Q: I’m going on my first job interview in 10 years. What should I wear to show I’m up to speed fashionwise without being disrespectful of corporate culture?
A: CC recently had someone show up for an interview in flip-flops, and not designer ones, either. She didn’t get the job. We notice what you wear, and the less you’ve got on your résumé, the more we’re forced to rely on style like that. Now, if you were applying for a job at a place like Marie Claire, CC would advise you to strut your fashion cred (a plaid button down crisp white blouse, perhaps?). But wait, say, a law office, a little more subtlety is called for. Show you mean business: jacket on top and heels below. Also, show you don’t mean sex. It’s perfectly fine—say, appropriate—these days to flaunt your curves, but this is no time to take the puppies out for a walk. And please, please, go light on the perfume. When you sweat, as you invariably will during an interview, it starts to smell like a French brothel here.

You’re welcome. See you next month. mc

Send your thorny workplace questions to cubiclecoach@marieclaire.com.