

## **Feb 14 – Romantic Love in Overrated – Reading**

### **From Tell Me About it – Advice Column in the Washington Post by Carolyn Hax**

**Dear Carolyn:** My wife has a habit that totally annoys me. Whenever we go to a restaurant, she always asks for a bite from my plate. I tell her that if she wanted that dish, she should have ordered it. She insists that people share food samples all the time and I am being selfish.

*Background: My mother did the same thing to me growing up and I resented it, but I have told my wife about this and she still insists on asking for “a bite.”*

*What is the etiquette on this? Is it proper to ask for a sample? Help!!!!*

### **Off My Plate**

**Off My Plate:** This is a marriage, so if we’re bringing etiquette in to referee it, you’ve both already lost.

Strictly speaking, your wife is wrong to keep pressing the issue. Recurring arguments are a failure to take no for an answer. And, while couples ideally are both generous with each other and careful not to burden present coexistence with past emotional baggage, we’re all entitled to mulligans from our partners for a peeve we can’t seem to master. You’re clearly all bunched up about this, and so the pragmatic move for her was drop it already, years ago . . .

However. Your honking at her that “if she wanted that dish, she should have ordered it!” not only belongs in the killjoy hall of fame, but it also fails to hold up logically.

It feels weird to have to spell this out: I can order the chicken, be glad I ordered the chicken, enjoy the chicken and still be curious about the fish. So while I suppose I could order both dishes for myself at excessive cost to my wallet and waistline, what I’d really like is to enjoy my chicken and have just a taste of the fish my companion ordered. I don’t see how this violates any rules of entree ownership — especially since I will happily give you a bite of my chicken. Do you taste the rosemary in it? And what’s that other flavor? I can’t quite make it out . . .

Oh, wait. You don’t want this to be a shared sensory experience.

See what I mean?

She’s your wife. You love her. You chose her over all others. Maybe if you trade a bite of each other’s dinner, you’ll both have a teensy something new to talk about, a better idea of what to order next time and, best of all, that little warm glow you get from choosing to be open where you could — out of cantankerous habit — just insist on staying closed.