

Ask A Demolitions Expert

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Dear Bruce MacInnis,

My husband and I split last year. We're still good friends, though, and lately he's been seeing a new person, someone I feel isn't right for him at all. Should I say anything? I know I'm not jealous—after all, I wasn't right either. What's my move?

—Protective in St. Paul

Dear Protective,

When choosing dynamite, remember that it's a tricky substance to work with. For most jobs, you should be using "40 percent" dynamite as per U.S. Bureau of Mines chart #14-A, which is best in the controlled-shock wave aspect. You want your expansion rate right around 9,500 feet per second. Anything more powerful, like 50 percent or liquid oxygen accelerant cartridges, and you're looking at a negative safety aspect.

Dear Bruce MacInnis,

I work in a large office, and I'm in love with the woman in the next cubicle. I'm wary of office romance, though. Could the answer be as simple as switching cubicles if things don't work out? Or am I giving myself an excuse to do something I know is wrong?

—Discombobulated in Detroit

Dear Discombobulated,

Bringing down the entire building in one blast may not be a good idea. Before you do anything else, check the structure for unusual materials like four-chrome/18-tungsten reciprocate vanadium industrial tool steel, which was standard for load-bearing members in the mid-'70s. For that you'll need Krupp esterless cross-colloided nitrocellulose number 16, or even higher. Your safety aspect with this material is important, because it can predetonate mildly, which isn't often fatal, but it can give you a pretty good scare. Buildings are a demolitions expert's bread and butter, so just go slow, hit all the beams, and synchronize all your blasts to bring her down all at once.