

# Things I've Learned as a Professional THIRD-WHEELER

FATIMAH AKHTAR

The first thing you must be wondering as you begin to read this is "What even is a professional third wheeler?" Well, to my personal belief, anyone who has been a third wheel for 5 couples or have exceeded that number should count as a professional third-wheeler. These professional third-wheelers tend to know all the tricks of the trade, and generally have a more of an objective view of a relationship than the parties involved in the relationship themselves. And after 20 years of professional third-wheeling, this third-wheeler has a few words of wisdom to share:

**1) It's always for the free food:** Sometimes you might feel awkward that you've pulled your friend along with you on your date – either out of guilt or because you don't want your parents to find out that you are with a member of the opposite sex. And that friend has inevitably ended up third-wheeling, which probably makes you feel guiltier. But fear not, there is a solution: Free food. None of the third-wheelers really care about being left out all that much as long as there is food. Third wheelers know there is a reason you pulled them there – whether out of guilt or to successfully lie to your parents. It's cool. As long as there's free food.

**2) Don't talk to me, talk to each other:** Why is this something that even needs to be said? If you are in a relationship with someone and bothered by something that someone does, talk to *him/her* about it. Not to the third wheel. The third wheel doesn't care. The third wheel only

wants food. Also the third wheel can't really do much. So talk to your significant other. It's much more of an effective solution.

**3) You're both probably wrong:** The not-so-elusive third wheel always has the perks of being the objective entity when the couple gets into a fight. They are the fair third eye. All of that jazz. And from the very fair and objective perspective it's always obvious to point out that in a fight, generally, both people are wrong. It's easy to pretend it's always the other person's fault, but honestly, you always have some fault of your own. Even if the tiniest, own up to it, communicate. Not with the third wheel, with your significant other.

**4) Sisters should be over misters, sometimes:** Third wheelers don't mind third wheeling unless of course you're making them third wheel *all the time*. If you were planning on spending the day with your friend, don't randomly just call your significant other over. We get it you have a boyfriend/girlfriend, so does a significant number of the population of upper middle class youth in Dhaka. It's nothing special. I'm sorry.

**5) You can tell us to leave:** I mean it, we don't mind. We understand that you need your privacy, and as third wheelers – we're always happy to accommodate. Just give us food before we leave.

*Fatimah Akhtar is a food and fiction enthusiast with a soft spot for bulldogs. Redirect all your complaints, queries, and feedbacks to her at fatimahaakhtar@gmail.com.*



# KNOWING WHEN TO SHUT UP

MYAT MOE KHAING

Knowing when to open your mouth and when to keep it shut is valuable wisdom. There is nothing wrong in speaking our hearts out, but we also need to recognise the thin line, crossing which irritates others.

**When someone's (almost) asleep** You're at that point when you are just done with the first semester final exam and you have to start prepping for the next exam. Sweet heavens! It's on the next day. You're straight off to your room to nap but your friend has decided to check the answers. You are half-sleeping with the phone on one ear and periodically saying their answers were correct.

Friends forever doesn't really mean being sleepless zombies together.

**Pause, please** The Oscars had happened and you might be making a list of movies you've missed out on watching. Imagine watching a movie with a friend. All he does is keep pausing the movies because he doesn't understand the storyline. To make matters worse, he feels the need to discuss everything happening in the movie. "Is he the same guy in the beginning? Do you think the villain is the girl shown in the restaurant?"

You might want to tell them "Look, if you're confused about something happening on the screen, I am watching the same screen. Accept

what is happening and shut up."

**Being hopelessly romantic:** Sometimes life gives us the grand responsibility of being someone else's confidant (oh joy!). However, when we have to endure repeated renditions of how the person got rejected on Valentine's day because he thought a billboard proposal would be a good idea, we simply feel like taping our ears shut.

**Redundant conversation with a stranger on journey** Making friends during journeys is fun. Often, we strike up conversations with strangers to realise the striking similarities we have. But that doesn't mean life is the movie *Highway*.

A lot of people will draw the line that says they aren't willing to talk. Don't go on talking about their *desh bari*, its chairman and fall in farming production.

Words have made gaining perspectives and knowing the world plausible. But we should know the limit of our spoken words in the parameter of when, how and why. Taming our tongue is important, so is keeping our mouth shut at the right time.

*Myat Moe is an occasional philosopher whose favorite pastime is confusing people with her nationality. Reach her @145michelle@gmail.com*