



How to Set Boundaries and Respond to Insensitive Questions as a Woman Without Children

A guide to gracefully handling all those insensitive personal questions that you can't believe they had the audacity to ask!

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As much as it seems this guide shouldn't be necessary because surely people should understand that a woman's reproductive experience is a private matter, they often don't. Making matters even more frustrating, these questions are not something men without children commonly face, which says a lot about the different standards and expectations society has for women and men.

Remember: you don't owe anyone an explanation of any sort. If you do choose to respond, you don't owe anyone any part of your truth that you aren't comfortable sharing. You can choose how and how much to respond based on what feels right for you at that particular moment.

I've come up with several responses for each question listed. Some set gentle boundaries and some set firmer boundaries. For each question, I included one response meant purely for the fantasy of putting someone in their place. I DO NOT recommend using these ones in real life because they're not likely to be constructive. I included them because they can be cathartic to imagine saying after getting these questions for the 100th time!

So, if you're tired of coming up with responses to these personal questions, I've got you covered. Here is your handy shortcut for responding to some of the greatest hits. You know the ones...

Why don't you have kids?

When are you going to have kids?

Don't you like kids?

Who's going to take care of you when you're old?

Aren't you worried you'll regret not having kids?

Don't you think it's selfish not to have kids?

And, my personal fave: Have you ever considered adoption?

1. "Why don't you have kids?"

I wanted to have children, but circumstances just didn't pan out. I appreciate your understanding and support.

I did want children, but personal circumstances haven't allowed it.

I wanted children but it didn't work out that way. I'd rather not get into the details.

It's what's right for me in my circumstances.

I made the choice that works best for me and my lifestyle.

I appreciate your curiosity, but it's a sensitive topic I'd rather not talk about.

Fantasy response: "Why DO you have kids?"

2. "When are you going to have kids?"

I had hoped to have children, but life had other plans for me.

I had planned on it, but life had other ideas. It's been tough, so I'd rather not discuss it.

I decided that having children isn't in my plans right now. I'm focused on other aspects of my life, like [insert anything you'd rather talk about].

I appreciate your interest, but that's really personal. I'd rather talk about [insert anything you'd rather talk about].

Fantasy response: Hmm, good question. Let me just dust off my crystal ball...

3. "Don't you like kids?"

I actually love kids and always wanted to be a parent but circumstances prevented it.

I adore kids! I wanted to be a parent but unfortunately, it didn't turn out that way.

I do like kids and I enjoy having them in my life in other ways.

I do like kids and I appreciate spending time with them, but it doesn't necessarily mean I need to have my own. There are lots of meaningful ways to be involved in children's lives.

Fantasy response: Nope. Hate em.

4. "Who's going to take care of you when you're old?"

I'm making arrangements for my future care.

I'm making plans and arrangements for my future, just like anyone else. Having children is not the only way to ensure care in old age.

I'm working on a plan for my later years. I prefer not to assume it's anyone else's responsibility.

Fantasy response: Your kids.

5. "Aren't you worried you'll regret not having kids?"

I do have moments of sadness, but I've come to terms with the circumstances that prevented me from having children. I'm finding fulfillment in other areas of my life.

I think it's normal to have concerns about life decisions, but I'm comfortable with my choices. Everyone's path is unique.

I do have moments of sadness, but I'm coming to terms with my circumstances. I'd rather focus on the present and future.

I appreciate your concern, but I prefer not to dwell on potential regrets.

Fantasy response: I'm just glad I'll never have to regret having a child who turned out to be a real *&&%@#!

6. "Don't you think it's selfish not to have kids?"

I wanted to be a parent, but sometimes life doesn't cooperate. I'm doing my best to find happiness in other ways.

I understand that some people might have different perspectives, but my choices are in line with my values.

I don't think it's selfish. Let's agree to disagree.

Fantasy response: I actually think it's pretty selfish to have children given the state of our environment and the number of children already in the foster system.

7. "Have you ever considered adoption?"

That just wasn't my dream.

I've thought about it, but it's a complex process.

Adoption is a great choice for some people but it's a really personal decision, and I'd rather not talk about it right now.

Fantasy response: No, I never thought of that, thank you for solving my problem.

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I am a licensed therapist and mental health coach. I have an MA in Women's Spirituality and an MA in Counseling Psychology with a specialization in Drama Therapy. I help women without children identify and process their ambiguous losses, dismantle harmful societal narratives, find resilience, rewrite their personal narratives, and find new meaning in their lives so they can embrace their unique journey with confidence, satisfaction, and a sense of peace and purpose in the world.

I always thought I would be a mother (and I would've been a damn good one) but I never would have been able to imagine the ways I've found fulfillment and purpose in my unexpected life path. I believe we are a powerful force; our maternal energy is a valuable resource in this world!

I would love to hear more about your story and where you are on your journey.

Book a call with me now to discuss how I can support you along the way!

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