



Debbie Does Divorce: Relationship advice column March 11, 2014

Q. I'm going through a divorce right now and I'm having a lot of trouble coping with the fact that my husband is now living with the woman he left me for. We have two teenage children and when my children have gone over their father's house, they tell me his girlfriend is always asking questions about me and trying to be their "pal." My kids have also told me she says I'm too strict and I need to lighten up. This is very upsetting to me. When I tried to talk to my soon to be ex-husband about it, he completely took his girlfriend's side and said that she would never act that way. How do I deal with this situation

A. First, see this woman for who she is. She is insecure, a cheater and clearly does not have your children's best interests at heart or she would never talk about their mom in a negative light. Remember, Karma always comes a knocking. As for your soon to be ex, he is not looking at the emotional well being of his children or he would take the time and look into this. Since your children are teenagers, you can ask them if the live in's behavior bothers them. If they say yes, don't bad mouth the dad but brainstorm with them how they can manage her comments and feel empowered. If they say no, tell them you are really not interested in what she is saying about you unless it is bothering them, to which end, you would rather not hear her negativity. Unfortunately, if your ex will not do anything about it, what she says is out of your control. What you can control is your reaction to two people who clearly deserve each other and in time will reap what they sow. You can control how you empower your children and how you decide to move on. Accepting a situation that you can't control is half battle and letting it go is the other half. Don't give either one of them the satisfaction of seeing you any way but strong while showing your children what it looks like to take the high road

Q. I haven't been happy in my marriage for quite some time and I've been discussing the possibility of divorce with my husband of five years. For the past three years of our marriage, I've been the primary breadwinner. Every time I ask him about his employment situation, he gets defensive and tells me I don't how bad the workforce is now and how many times he's tried to get a job and gets rejected. I'm not sure how much longer I can go on this way. I'm getting resentful toward him and I'm starting to feel like I'm in a relationship by myself already and that I'd be better off alone. Do you recommend we try some sort of marriage counseling? I'm afraid he won't take that seriously either

A. If he won't take marriage counseling seriously, how serious is he taking the marriage? I think you can probably tell when someone is trying their hardest and nothing is panning out as opposed to someone who is mooching. Have a candid discussion with him telling him exactly how you feel and that you want to approach his unemployment as a team; brainstorming a solution. Does he need to revamp his CV, look at other types of jobs or sign up with a headhunter? If he is resistant to this, let him know the next step will be a marriage counselor. If he is resistant to that, be very clear that his decisions are adversely affecting the marriage and then you go and see a counselor or coach to help you clarify your thoughts and come up with a plan. If your feelings and relationship aren't important enough for him to get out of the Lazy Boy, then perhaps you are half way to your answer

Q. I've been married for less than a year and I just found out my husband has changed his mind about having children. We have known each other for three years and before we got engaged, we both agreed we wanted children. I don't understand why he changed his mind, but this is devastating news to me. I have always dreamed of having children but I also don't want to lose my husband. Is there any way I can get through to him that this is tearing me apart

A. It's time for a very, and I mean very, serious conversation even though you may not like what you hear. Ask him if he never had intentions of having children and married you hoping to change your mind or has something taken place within him that he feels he no longer wants to be a dad? As much as you want to scream, yell, cry and accuse, take a deep breath and listen to his answer. If he comes clean and admits he never wanted children, then you will need to evaluate how you feel about someone who intentionally misrepresented himself. If there is something that has changed his mind, calmly inform him you have heard what he said and you respect his feelings, however, you entered into this marriage under the assumption you both wanted the same thing and this little switcheroo might not work for you. Let him know you are willing to go and talk to someone to see if this can be resolved. Stay calm and try to get to the underlying reason he changed his mind. I know this is a shock and upsetting but if at the end of the day he has decided a family is not in his picture, you will have to make a decision. To accept not having the experience of having children and building a family is a very big decision that will affect the rest of your life. Decide wisely

