



Live the *Life* you Love
with the *Love* of your Life

Partners In Life Couples News

August 2006

Dear Coaches,

My wife and I are in conflict about her working outside the home. She doesn't want to, but I want her to. When we've tried to resolve the problem, it winds up with my wife making promises she doesn't keep. What can we do?

I don't want to give up on my need for her to work, but I am amenable to a compromise. I have suggested that she volunteer for 5 to 10 hours a week at a church or hospital. She is a nurse, but hates nursing. The children are grown and still at home. She cooks and does laundry for our grown kids and doesn't want them to pay any board. She wants them to stay at home until they are married.

She needs to continue working to collect social security. We are both 54 years old. We could use the extra money because my pension was just frozen. We've been through more than a year of therapy and the therapist never seems to want to address this issue. When I bring it up, he says "Oh, that's easy." Then he attacks my work values and moves on to something else. What can we do?

Peter from Pennsylvania

Lois responds...

What I've found with my clients is that when one partner imposes their needs and agendas onto their partner, regardless of whether it's valid or not, it's rarely effective. Even if our partner honors our wishes, it's seldom a sustainable change, but more like a "behavioral diet."

When it comes to dealing with resistance, either that of our own or our partner, I suggest shifting from criticism to curiosity. When we become interested in the reason for resistance and explore it more deeply, it's amazing what opens up.

Some questions for your consideration:

What are some other options besides your wife working outside the home that can generate income?

How can a plan for your children to pay room and board be framed as a gift you're giving them, to help them build appreciation for money and independence, while freeing you both up financially?

How might your wife pursue some of her interests and ideas and possibly use them to generate income?

You might also consider visiting a financial planner to work on developing a shared financial vision for the future that will inspire both of you.

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Words of Wisdom

If you are pained by external things, it is not they that disturb you, but your own judgment of them. And it is in your power to wipe out that judgment now.

~Marcus Aurelius

If you open your heart, love opens your mind.

~Charles John Quarto

Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon them and to let them know that you trust them.

~Booker T. Washington