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Q&A Forum - Review

Handling Dad's Extramarital Affair

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Fellow Q&A-ers,

Greetings! I am trying to pick up the pace now, aren't I? I have one more question in the hopper and will get to that, hopefully, by the beginning of next week. If you have questions, now would be a good time.... A special thanks to Allison and Patty who contributed the bonuses I used in today's q&a - even though they contributed them over a year ago! :) I appreciate the feedback I get on the q&a service and welcome it. Here's one comment I received recently from Christine on the one of the quotes I used: "Loved the quote...it was just what I needed to ponder :)" Keep them coming. Have a peace-filled day. - John

Q: Dear John, I am 29 years old and my parents are separating. I think my dad has had an extramarital affair, but nobody knows for sure. I am not looking forward to the time when he breaks the news to me that he is moving out and leaving my mother, I hear he is coming to tell me this weekend. He has already informed my siblings (I am the youngest) and they basically just accepted it with an "oh well..." attitude. I don't think I can say "oh well." I really am so angry at him. He's been a terrible husband and an absent father. He has so many issues and doesn't think that therapy is for him. I keep practicing in my head, all kinds of things I want to say to him to make him realize how awful he has been to my mom. I really want to ream him out, but I know I probably won't. Should I let him have it or should I stay out of my parents' marital problems, as it is about their relationship, and not me? I just don't think it is fair for him to bail out on her when she has stuck by him and tolerated his dysfunctional and twisted problems for 35 years. What do I do??

A: I understand your dilemma, and your anger. From a logical perspective it will not help if you "blast" him -- you may feel relieved in the short run but I doubt anything productive, for you or he, will develop in the long run. The logical choice is to stay detached, not take sides (if either he or your mother try to pull you in). Yes - it is about their relationship and not about you, though you are affected by it. Your task is to protect yourself, engage and use your support system i.e. friends, coworkers, professionals, spiritual guides, pets, etc. who will love, support and guide you unconditionally during this difficult time. To help with venting your anger, I suggest you start journaling about your self and your feelings. Perhaps you could write a letter to your father, and another one to your mother, expressing your true feelings to them (and NOT mailing them). Finally, your comment about "his dysfunctional and twisted problems for 35 years" indicates that there is more to this than just "an extramarital affair." If so, I would encourage you to definitely seek professional help because you, no doubt, have been directly affected by at least 29 years of this dysfunctional twistedness and you deserve to learn how to untangle it now so that you do not remain affected for the next 29 years. Professional help will prevent you from unknowingly affecting those you care about. Peace, John

Quote: "You have exactly the same number of hours per day as Martin Luther King Jr., Madam Curie, Thomas Jefferson, Martha Graham or Bill Gates." - unknown

Bonus#1: No Wonder English Is So Difficult To Learn

We polish the Polish furniture.
 He could lead if he would get the lead out.
 A farm can produce produce.
 The dump was so full it had to refuse refuse.
 The soldier decided to desert in the desert.
 The present is a good time to present the present.
 At the Army base, a bass was painted on the head of a bass drum.
 The dove dove into the bushes.
 I did not object to the object.
 The insurance for the invalid was invalid.
 The bandage was wound around the wound.
 There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
 They were too close to the door to close it.
 The buck does funny things when the does are present.
 They sent a sewer down to stitch the tear in the sewer line.
 To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
 The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
 After a number of Novocain injections, my jaw got number.
 I shed a tear when I saw the tear in my clothes.
 I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
 How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

I spent last evening evening out a pile of dirt.

Bonus #2

Ruth went to her mail box and there was only one letter. She picked it up and looked at it before opening, but then she looked at the envelope again. There was no stamp, no postmark, only her name and address. She read the letter:

Dear Ruth,

I'm going to be in your neighborhood Saturday afternoon and I'd like to stop by for a visit. Love Always, Jesus

Her hands were shaking as she placed the letter on the table. "Why would the Lord want to visit me? I'm nobody special. I don't have anything to offer."

With that thought, Ruth remembered her empty kitchen cabinets. "Oh my goodness, I really don't have anything to offer. I'll have to run down to the store and buy something for dinner. She reached for her purse and counted out its contents. Five dollars and forty cents. "Well, I can get some bread and cold cuts, at least." She threw on her coat and hurried out the door. A loaf of french bread a half-pound of sliced turkey, and a carton of milk... leaving Ruth with grand total of twelve cents to last her until Monday.

Nonetheless, she felt good as she headed home, her meager offerings tucked under her arm.

"Hey lady, can you help us, lady?" Ruth had been so absorbed in her dinner plans, she hadn't even noticed two figures huddled in the alleyway. A man and a woman, both of them dressed in little more than rags "Look lady, I ain't got a job, ya know, and my wife and I have been living out here on the street, and, well, now it's getting cold and we're getting kinda hungry and, well, if you could help us, lady, we'd really appreciate it."

Ruth looked at them both.

They were dirty, they smelled bad and frankly, she was certain that they could get some kind of work if they really wanted to. "Sir, I'd like to help you, but I'm a poor woman myself. All I have is a few cold cuts and some bread, and I'm having an important guest for dinner tonight and I was planning on serving that to Him." "Yeah, well, okay lady, I understand. Thanks anyway."

The man put his arm around the woman's shoulders, turned and headed back into the alley. As she watched them leave, Ruth felt a familiar twinge in her heart. "Sir, wait!" The couple stopped and turned. She ran down the alley after them. "Look, why don't you take this food. I'll figure out something else to serve my guest." She handed the man her grocery bag. "Thank you lady. Thank you very much!" "Yes, thank you!" It was the man's wife, and Ruth could see now that she was shivering. "You know, I've got another coat at home. Here, why don't you take this one."

Ruth unbuttoned her jacket and slipped it over the woman's shoulders. Then smiling, she turned and walked back to the street...without her coat and with nothing to serve her guest. "Thank you lady! Thank you very much!"

Ruth was chilled by the time she reached her front door, and worried too. The Lord was coming to visit and she didn't have anything to offer Him. She fumbled through her purse for the door key. But as she did, she noticed another envelope in her mailbox. "That's odd. The mailman doesn't usually come twice in one day." She took the envelope out of the box and opened it.

Dear Ruth,

It was so good to see you again. Thank you for the lovely meal. And thank you, too, for the beautiful coat.

Love Always, Jesus

The air was still cold, but even without her coat, Ruth no longer noticed!

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