

Senior Advice: A word to the wise - No

by *Doug_Mayberry*

Q: Our son and daughter-in-law have been married almost 11 years and have two wonderful grandchildren for us to spoil. We have recently become aware from our son's comments their marriage is on the rocks. His wife has threatened divorce. If this should happen, it would break our hearts.

Should we get involved and take sides?

A: No, no, no!

As the old saying goes, "After the curtains go down, you don't know what's going on inside." Both partners are seeing their relationship from different points of view. It takes two to make and keep a relationship, but it only takes one to change it. Hopefully your son's next move will be to choose professional counseling, which is the only counsel you should be giving. If they are unable to afford it, it would be a good investment to offer to pay for it.

What's their problem? Self-examination is mandatory if they choose to keep the family together. One possible solution to consider is that each partner write down the positive things about the other and exchange lists. After acknowledging the good things the next exchange of lists is why they are unhappy together. These lists will indicate to them if their differences can be resolved by compromise and a change in habits.

Issues such as the lack of caring, time spent together, being too judgmental, sexual needs differences, how to discipline the children, accountability, caring and, surprisingly, in some cases a feeling of abuse by one partner or simply lack of communication could be at the forefront.

By focusing on both the positive and negative positions it may be possible to strike a balance. Children seldom win in marital confrontations.

The years invested in loving each other and creating a family should not be tossed away lightly. Amazingly, such simple things as kissing each other when you separate for work, telling your partner how much you need her and letting her know she is your best friend are reminders of what a wonderful experience it is to be a family could be a good start toward reconciliation.

Perhaps offering to keep your grandchildren for a few days to let them spend a vacation alone would be just the ticket to encourage them to rebalance their relationship. Give it a try!

Q: With more and more concerns about possible infections by being exposed to crowds, I am getting a little paranoid about getting involved where crowds mingle. I now carry extra tissues and a bottle of antibacterial soap in my purse. I even use the tissues to open and close the bathroom doors.

Am I being foolish?

A: No. Germs float around us on an ongoing basis. The majority of them do not infect us, but why not take precautions to help make sure they don't? When we wash our hands, doctors recommend we do so for least 30 seconds. Often, in public restrooms we feel rushed.

Other ways to avoid infections include not kissing mouth-to-mouth (try hugs), turning away from coughs, always air drying your toothbrush and razor, releasing the extra water in shower heads, closing the toilet lid before flushing to avoid splashes, and using warm water for washing towels. Doctors cannot provide evidence yet that the antibiotic soaps kill all harmful bacteria. Using straws in restaurants, being careful of drinking fountains, washing fruits and veggies before storing, and teaching younger children to do these things will help us all to avoid infections.

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