

can this marriage be saved?



We asked Jenn Berman, Psy.D., a psychotherapist in Beverly Hills, California, to answer your questions about power struggles in marriage.

Q Since my husband earns more than I do, he thinks he can make all our financial decisions. I practically have to beg him to get the roof fixed, but he doesn't hesitate to buy every electronic gadget there is.

A Money is a tricky issue in a marriage. By insisting on making all the financial decisions, your husband is trying to control your relationship. He may feel that because he's the primary breadwinner, he has more of a say.

But in a healthy relationship, the balance of power must be more equal—which isn't easy if your husband has always controlled the purse strings. You need to talk about this with him during a calm

Do you have a marital problem that you just can't seem to resolve—

over money, sex, kids, work, the in-laws? Send your questions to ctm@meredith.com. Although we can't answer letters personally, we'll choose selected ones each month for our guest therapist to answer.

Who's in charge here?

Our guest therapist solves your toughest dilemmas **By Margery D. Rosen**

moment, rather than in the heat of an argument. Ask each other: What does money mean to you? Who made the family financial decisions in your home, and what did each of your parents teach you about saving and spending? You'll both learn a lot about your individual money attitudes this way.

On a purely logistical level, you need to sit down together and jointly decide what your financial priorities are. If your husband balks at this, consider speaking to a

and the mutual mood won't have sex very often. Try a little compromise and planning. Give your husband a window of opportunity for lovemaking before the morning routine starts. That might mean setting your alarm 15 minutes earlier once in a while—not a bad trade-off. You may be more open to a quickie if you know it won't make you late for your day. And he may find the stamina to be intimate in the evening if you do the seducing; ask him what you can do to get him in the mood.

Q My husband keeps letting the kids do things I've forbidden. How can I get him to stop?

A The two of you need to come up with a joint child-rearing philosophy. Draft a list of your five most common discipline problems and agree upon a solution for each. Neither of you should invoke a different consequence for any of those misbehaviors without first consulting the other.

professional money manager—or even seeing a couples counselor, who can help you break out of destructive old habits.

Q My husband likes morning quickies, but I can't get in the mood with the get-to-work and get-the-kids-ready routine looming. I prefer evening lovemaking, but he's too tired by then. How can we get our sex life in sync?

A In today's busy world, couples who wait for the perfect time

It also sounds like the two of you could use some time together without kids, so schedule a regular date night. It doesn't have to be expensive; just grabbing a burger or going for a long walk can give you the chance to focus on each other. Also, try to take a vacation alone—even a weekend or an overnight will allow you to experience each other as husband and wife, not just Mommy and Daddy. Have friends watch your kids once a month so you can get away; then return the favor. ■

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