

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy

Tuesday, 28 June 2016 15:45 - Last Updated Wednesday, 29 June 2016 06:54



Pushover

Dear Aunt Bossy,

My wife is a total pushover and makes very bad decisions about people. She has friends who are on the dole with no intention of getting off. She has other friends who are at the opposite end of our political views, gay friends, black friends, people with whom we have nothing in common at all.

She even has friends who lie about stupid things, cheat on their spouses and have no discipline when it comes to food and liquor. I try to be polite, but live in fear that her propensity for bringing disreputable people into our home will be a bad influence on her and, more importantly, on our children.

□□□□□□□□□□ *My wife thinks these are good people and says they just have weaknesses like everybody, but my wife and I don't have these kinds of weaknesses. She seems to have no sense. I will admit most of them are smart and entertaining, but that is not enough.*

Help!
Terrified

Dear Terrified,

Sounds like you chose well when you chose a wife!

Listen, nobody is perfect and, unless you can tell me exactly what each of these people has done that is wrong and exactly what motivated them and how they feel about it, I can't tell you anything about their true moral values.

Did it ever occur to you that none of us really know what goes on in another's life? Perhaps her friends on the dole have mental or physical problems that keep them in that prison. Maybe one of her "liars" has a weak moment once in a while and is really a good person. Maybe the person cheating on the spouse is in a desperate situation and just trying to stay above the surface (I'm not saying it is ok). Maybe the gay and black people were born that way (DUH!) and are fabulously wonderful people making great contributions to society. Maybe the people who eat and drink too much (in your opinion) are fighting devils they would love to slay and perhaps will with enough support from their friends. And maybe the people who hold opposite political views are too busy to be informed or are lovely people who just think differently than you do. (And maybe they are just not very smart, but still very nice people.)

Bottom line is that none of us really knows what drives or stops others. We can only guess. Unless these people are mean to your wife, or pressuring her to change the way she lives, they probably add a lot of variety, interest and good to her life. Try to get to know them as individuals. Find out what even you can recognize is good about each of them. And for those you have identified as members of a "group," please spend time with them individually and get to know who each of them is beyond looking or acting like the other members of their "tribe."

In any case, you should be proud that your wife has a bigger horizon than most people and support her love of the different and the "other." And, don't forget, all of her friends probably wonder why she is married to such a straight laced and possibly unimaginative guy. Maybe she also recognizes qualities in you that others don't see. Maybe. Don't push it.

Brand Whores

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Dear Aunt Bossy,

□□□□□□□□□□ *My friends are rich and they buy lots of stuff, which they enjoy. The thing that bothers me is, when they talk about their stuff, they always mention the brand. It doesn't matter if it is a car or a pair of socks, they say the brand.*

□□□□□□□□□□ *I think this is tacky and embarrassing. They also refer to their lovely "home" and refer to people as "wealthy."*

□□□□□□□□□□ *Should I tell them this behavior is not how the well bred behave or talk?*

□□□□□□□□□□ *Sally, the Socialite.*

Dear SS,

Nope.

Best,
Aunt Bossy

Aunt Bossy is Susan Murphy, an internationally known Communication Skills Coach who adores spending every winter and spring in Beaufort. Ask for advice at bossymurph@mac.com

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