

Aunt Bossy: The Life Coach Your Mother Never Was

Written by Susan Murphy

Tuesday, 24 September 2013 15:25



Fit to Be Tied

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I am about to get married to a lovely gal. She is beautiful and smart and a good cook and likes to do all the things that I like to do like hunting and fishing and camping and boating. Only problem is that she is a complete control freak and everything has to be perfect or she gets very upset.

Since she is willing to put in the work to make things perfect, I generally just go with the ride, but this wedding preparation has made me start to think I might be getting into a relationship that will make me miserable.

I know girls are into the wedding stuff, but she has taken it to a degree that is insane. Everything from the toilet seats in the bathrooms to the tablecloths will be decorated in "our colors" and no detail is too small. I didn't even know we had colors. That is just one of the things that is over the top.

She is driving my groomsmen nuts with her directions about everything, even wanting to supervise their haircuts and grooming beforehand. They are giving me a very hard time.

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What should I do?

Randy

Dear Randy,

Get to a marriage counselor immediately! Immediately. Let your future spouse choose the person, but go ASAP.

When you tell your bride-to-be that you want to get counseling, she will naturally be very upset because your request is the ultimate loss of control for her. When she rears back, tell her that it is not negotiable and your going through with the wedding is dependent on this. Assure her that you love her, but also impress upon her exactly how miserable her obsession with detail and control is making you and how it has impacted your relationship with your friends. Then reassure her that you love her.

Don't allow the talk to descend into a rancorous fight. Just state the facts, even if you have to do it over and over between the "Don't you care about what kind of wedding we have?" and the "If you loved me, you would want our wedding to be perfect." Also, whatever you do, do not quote your friends. They will be the enemy for life if you give her that ammunition. Just keep telling her you love her, you love that she is so good at organizing things in your life, but that her attention to detail makes you uncomfortable and you don't want to move forward until it is addressed.

If you have a good relationship with her parents, talk to them as well. If they don't acknowledge this as a problem, that will be your first clue that you are up against a very thick wall. If they say, "Yeah, she drives us nuts," that is a good thing because it means her behavior hasn't necessarily been fostered and encouraged by them over the years.

If, on the other hand, they smile and say how proud they are that she is so organized and that she has always been like that, the future does not look bright if you are expecting some behavior modification. Remember, people don't change, but they can modify. This isn't likely if

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her parents have praised her all her life for a behavior which they, and she, count as the measure of her success.

This will be a very difficult problem to handle, and the timing is awful. However, what would be more awful is for you to marry a woman with control issues. If you think a wedding gets her attention, just think of what a child will do. Handle this to your satisfaction now, and, if you have to move on, do it swiftly.

Good luck.

Woeful Wife

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I have a very old college friend, a friend of fifty years who is a widower. We all loved his wife and we love him.

Two years after his wife died, he started dating and got married shortly thereafter. His new wife is awful. All of his friends agree.

She is opinionated, uninformed, stupid and won't shut up. She just talks over anyone who tries to express another opinion, or even have a conversation.

Our friend is very, very nice and seems to be able to ignore her behavior, however no one wants to visit this very social fellow as often as we used to.

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What should we do?

Ralph

Dear Ralph,

You should bite the bullet, visit your friend just as often as always, be pleasant to the new wife, and pray that he outlives her.

As awful as she is – and don't be so sure he doesn't realize what a pain in the neck she is – he appears to have figured out a way to live with his decision to remarry. Try to support him. He needs his friends now more than ever.

Since you have been friends for fifty years, I'm assuming he is at least seventy. The last thing he needs in his last thirty years is to lose his real friends.

Also, maybe the sex is great, and that makes up for it. (Just trying to put you off your feed!)

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

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