Dear Mita

My problem, I must confess, is a little strange, especially because it is happening in a male dominated society. I have been married for the last eight years, we have a child who is seven-years-old. At the beginning of our marriage I discovered that my wife was extremely hotheaded. In the second year of our married life, she slapped me and after that abused me verbally for a trivial reason. Over the years she has beaten me up with several objects, which include an iron spatula and a cola bottle. The reasons are: bringing the wrong item on a shopping list, not having gravy with rice or keeping the toilet door open even though she has told me once to do so. In a fight she has once threatened to kill me by poisoning the food. The funny part is, if you find is funny at all, is that I am the only bread-earner of the family. I have taken all the trouble because of my child and also because I know that she does not have any place to go as her relationship with her parents and friends is not what she can lean on at times of trouble. She behaves with our child in the same way.

Helpless

Dear Helpless,

Your problem is indeed rare as most cases I deal with is the other way round. However, an abusive spouse, irrespective of the gender has a destructive impact on the family. I suggest you have a serious talk with her and give her an ultimatum. Side by side try to understand why she behaves in this way. She must take responsibility for her action and if she is not capable of being a sensible mother and wife then she should decide to do something else. This must be having a negative impact on your child who might grow up to behave in the same way. Perhaps she needs psychiatric help or at least counselling. How ever, she must get a clear message that her present behaviour is not acceptable and if she does not change then you will be forced to take drastic steps.

Dear Mita,

I am 29 years old and recently got married to the man I have been in a relationship with for the last three years. So far, we are happy together. My husband is just a year older than I am and have plenty in common. We both work the whole day and try to have a nice home cooked dinner every night; my husband helps me out in the kitchen and sometimes we even make weekend plans outside Dhaka. My in-laws, who used to live in Bogra, have now decided to come live in Dhaka. They are nice and have accepted me very well, however, they are not as flexible or understanding as their son. If they plan to live in the same house as ours, I am sure they will have problems with everything. For instance, they would hate the fact that my husband sometimes likes to cook dinner while I sit around and watch television, they would never understand my work - I stay out the whole day, except for weekends, because I work in a telecom company (my husband works in a multinational as well) and we usually have our friends over in the weekend for snacks or dinner. There are other little things that they would never understand and would practically force us to change. My husband is not really worried about this for some reason, maybe he will realise it later on. But I can foresee the future very well. For their own good and ours as well, I would like us to live in two different apartments if necessary in the same building. How do I propose this without offending anyone in the family?

Confused Wife

Dear Confused Wife,

What you are suggesting is quite sensible. However, the matter is a little sensitive and might send the wrong message. I suggest you suggest this to your husband in a very diplomatic manner. He seems like a sensible, liberal person. I think he will understand. Often living together spoils the relationship while a little distance improves it. Living in the same building in two separate apartments sounds like a good idea. In that way you can take care of them at the same time have your independence.



Dear Mita,

I have just finished my undergraduate studies from a private university in Dhaka. I am 23-years-old and I am very ambitious as well. My parents, though very encouraging, now want me to get married. I spent a while explaining to them that I am not ready and obviously they cannot force me and they understand this. However, every day ends up in tears and sometimes, loud arguments. My parents are now emotionally blackmailing me to get married. I really need to get out of this place for a while before I get crazy. What can I do to solve this problem and keep myself sane?

Frustrated

Dear Frustrated,

You must be strong and resist their pressure. Explain to them that just getting married does not solve any problem. Tell them about the number of marriages breaking up mostly because young people get married without understanding the seriousness of it. Surely they do not want this to happen to you. Meanwhile, follow your dreams and ambitions and show them that you are capable of establishing your self and then will settle down for marriage which will last and be fulfilling.