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By Marcy Sugar (/author/marcy-sugar)

By Kathy Mitchell (/author/kathy-mitchell)

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Dear Annie: My husband and I have a blended family with his two girls and my three sons. I am so grateful that we both took on this challenge.

We had some good times, and we had some bad times, and when I say bad, I mean horrible. Our children are all adults now, and we are still butting heads over them, mostly my boys. He has given up on two of my sons because he says they don't respect him, not to mention some less than legal activity they decided to embark on in our home while we were on vacation.

But, Annie, I feel as if he has never really cared for them. I try to help them with rides or letting them wash clothes at our house or whatever I can do. People mature at different levels, and maybe I help too much, but they are my kids. At what point am I supposed to turn my back on them? My husband says that because I help them against his wishes, it means I love them more than him. That isn't true.

One son is homeless and has to look for a place to stay every night. That breaks my heart. My husband found him downstairs sleeping one morning and told me that I'd better get him out or he would call the police. He won't even allow me to let my son shower here.

I realize the boys need to make it on their own, but am I supposed to turn my back on them when they need help? At what point do you give up on your kids and choose your husband instead? I feel like such a horrible mom. — Worried for Them

Dear Worried: Your husband should not be issuing ultimatums wherein you must choose between the man you love and the children you love. This is unfair and creates tremendous resentment. Your husband may have good cause to want the kids out of the house, but it's difficult to do when they have no place to go. How old are they? Do they have jobs? Would you temporarily assist with their rent if it got them out of the house? Are there substance-abuse issues that need treatment? Try [Because I Love You \(bily.org\)](http://BecauseILoveYou.org), and ask your husband to work with you on this.

Dear Annie: I am one of five siblings. My brother was married last fall in a small ceremony that was put together quickly so my mother could be there before she died. He is having a celebration of his marriage later this summer, and the party is being held in another state on the day before my wedding anniversary.

My brother's party would require travel, hotel and meals. My husband and I have already booked (and paid for) a nonrefundable weekend getaway and made arrangements with his parents to watch our kids. We did this three months before my brother sent out his save-the-date cards.



How do I break the news to my brother? I should add that I am rarely included in anything the rest of the family does, and I worry that if I miss this event, I will never be included in anything again. — Little Sis


Dear Sis: Call your brother and let him know you have a conflict. Tell him you are heartbroken to miss his party and wish you could find a way out of your nonrefundable reservations, but it's not possible. Then send him a lovely wedding gift to make up for your absence. These things happen. There's nothing more you can do.

Dear Annie: This is for "N.N.," whose husband is depressed. Please tell her to have him tested for celiac disease. Depression is one of the symptoms.

My husband was depressed for a long period of time and even threatened to take his life. We were finally able to determine that he had celiac disease. Doctors are not that familiar with the symptoms. — Betty

"Annie's Mailbox" is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar. This column was originally published in 2018. To find out more about Classic Annie's Mailbox and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit Creators Syndicate at www.creators.com.

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