

3 DON'T KEEP BOOK ON HIM. Too many wives look upon marriage as a balance sheet to be tabulated monthly and adjusted as necessary. Thus, if the record shows the husband attended two baseball games, one poker party, and selected most of the television shows the family watched, the balance-sheet wife will insist on an equal number of nights where she dictates the entertainment. This attitude is all the more insidious because it often skulks under the guise of "fair play" or "50-50 equality."

Marriage just doesn't work this way—at least not among mature adults. There must be give-and-take in marriage, but the emphasis should always be on the "give." The wife who throws out the balance sheet and encourages her husband to do the things he enjoys because she wants him to be happy will find that he will be anxious and willing to do the things she enjoys, too—and for the same reason.

4 DON'T SECOND-GUESS HIM. Family life is fraught with decisions, and even though these should be discussed at length, someone eventually has to make an unequivocal choice. This usually—and correctly—falls to the husband; but it places him in a peculiarly vulnerable position to be second-guessed. The wise wife will avoid this bait.

Some friends of ours who have been married for 15 years bought a house last Summer. They debated for several months between a smaller new house and an old, rambling residence. The wife kept weighing the advantages of each and couldn't make up her mind. The husband, finally forced to make the decision, bought the older house. Since they moved in, they have encountered costly heating and plumbing problems, and the wife has made life very uncomfortable for her husband.

Repeatedly she says: "I told you we shouldn't have bought this place, but you insisted. Now we're stuck with it."

He is irritated and resentful—as only someone who is second-guessed can be. It's a poor policy any time, but especially bad in marriage.



5 DON'T COMMIT HIM IN FRONT OF OTHERS. Chatting with a group of people after a PTA meeting, I heard one of the school officials express chagrin that they couldn't find a parent willing to put up some decorations for a forthcoming school program.

Quickly one of the wives in the group said: "Don't you worry about a thing. My Henry will be happy to do it."

Her Henry, an accomplished architect, was standing nearby, and I saw him flinch when she said it. But it was too late for him to back out. There were a number of reasons why Henry had neither the time nor the inclination to do the job. But he did it—all the while reflecting on the thoughtlessness of his wife. Don't loan out your husband's services as if he were a household appliance. Talk it over with him and probably he'll cooperate gladly.

6 DON'T DISCUSS PRIVATE FAMILY MATTERS IN PUBLIC. We once knew a woman whose husband didn't want children. The wife was terribly distressed about this, and would bring up the subject whenever they were in a social gathering. Apparently she thought that the pressure of opinion would bring him around. Of course, it had just the opposite effect.

Family grievances should not be aired in public. Humiliating your husband in front of others never helps settle a private disagreement.

7 DON'T BARTER YOUR AFFECTIONS. A woman has one constant and powerful weapon to hold over her husband—her affections. She shouldn't tie strings on them or barter them in return for some concession from her husband. This is the most blatant—and probably the most common—type of husband exploitation. Both husband and wife should give freely of their love because each of them wants to give—and for no other reason.

History is full of examples of men debasing themselves in return for the affections of a woman. This is hardly a sound foundation on which to build a stable and happy marriage. The wife who gives of herself because she wants to will find her husband replying in kind. The dividends from such a relationship are limitless and wonderful—for everyone concerned.



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