

10 ways to lose a wife

With women, it's the "little things" that count—and that includes hubby's minor faults, which can produce a major marital crisis

BY LESTER DAVID

Several months ago, *Family Weekly* published "10 Ways to Lose a Husband," describing the wifely habits that can rock the marital boat. But how about the other side of the coin? What irritates wives most about husbands? Here are the answers, required reading for all wives and, of course, husbands.

EVERYONE REALIZES that excessive drinking, gambling away the pay check, infidelity, and other major transgressions can cause domestic woe for a man. Few understand, however, that there are other ways to lose a wife—with trifles!

This article, then, deals not with the major faults of the male animal in his domestic habitat but with his minor ones. Sociologist Dr. Ray E. Baber calls them "tremendous trifles" which seethe for years, then possibly explode a marriage.

Of course, an occasional husbandly lapse is harmless. The seriousness, marital experts agree, hinges on a wife's boiling point and the frequency of the offense.

So here are 10 shortcomings the wise husband will avoid as much as possible if he wants to keep a wife happy—and, ergo, himself.



"My husband treats me like a baby."

Overprotecting a wife can be just as bad as overprotecting a child. Dr. Rebecca Liswood, director of the Marriage Counseling Service of Greater New York, points out that men who want to play father to their wives are much more common than many persons suspect.

"For a woman who wants to be independent, this male attitude can rankle and eventually cause a break," says Dr. Liswood.

Tip: treat her like a grownup—she is, you know!

"It's nag, nag, nag, or boss, boss, boss!"

Nagging is by no means exclusively a feminine characteristic. When the American Institute of Public Opinion (the Gallup Poll) asked wives to name

the worst faults of husbands, nagging made the list of the top 10.

In Kingston, N. Y., a long-suffering wife finally acted. Her husband had kept up such a barrage of criticism that one day she walked out, leaving a note on the breakfast table: "Complaint bureau closed until further notice."

A word to the wise: nagging is irritating, no matter who does it.

The nagging male is likely to be one who wants to be boss of the house but doesn't know how. His determination to be the "Big Man" of the family can cost him his wife's respect, even her love.

A Baltimore, Md., mother of three growing children tearfully told a marriage counselor: "He tries to run the place as though he were a Prussian top sergeant, barking orders and expecting everyone to hop to." Prof. Margaret Benz of New York University points out that few women, despite current opinion to the contrary, really want to be the dominant voice in a family—they want to be protected, they want men to make the important decisions.

But—an important but—they don't want to be bullied or intimidated, either.

"He insists on handling the money—and he hasn't 'money sense.'"

A Roanoke, Va., housewife told a family counselor: "Our trouble is money—not the lack of it but the handling. Bill was brought up to feel that the man should take charge, but it happens that he's just not money-wise. I know I'm a better manager, but Bill won't give up his 'male prerogative.'"

Dr. Judson T. Landis of the University of California sums up the experts' views: "The fundamental thing (in money handling) is agreement. If a couple finds that one system does not work satisfactorily, it is well to try another. Success is more probable if people can throw aside preconceived ideas and be adjustable."

"He thinks I can read his mind."

A Florida couple went before a marriage counselor recently and cited this example of their troubles. The husband was due at an important func-



tion at eight o'clock one evening. When he began dressing, he found to his horror that his blue suit, the one he intended to wear, was crumpled. He stormed into the kitchen and demanded of his wife: "Why didn't you take my suit to the tailor?"

"Why didn't you ask me?" she blazed back. "Am I supposed to read your mind?"

Dr. Harold Kenneth Fink, a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., psychotherapist and marriage counselor, explains that women can't be expected to anticipate their husbands' every need. "Most women would happily attend to their husbands' things, but be fair—tell them what's wanted," Fink suggests.



"He's a penny pincher—I have to live on a dole."

Thrift is a virtue if not carried to the point of making a wife miserable. Male stinginess ranks sixth in the Gallup list of husbandly faults and high in the casebooks of the marriage menders.

An Idaho mother of five, for instance, told a case-worker: "He has no idea what it takes to run a house. He keeps asking where the money goes, but rarely gives me enough to let it go anywhere."

Most generous men probably never give it a thought, but many wives also resent having to ask for money every time they need something. A Long Island, N. Y., woman watched her two daughters get together nickels and dimes to buy Dad a birthday present. "They could do better than I," the woman said. "I could either buy my husband a gift from my house money and then run short, or else ask him for the money for his own present!"

A spokesman for the Family Service Association of America points out that having some money of her own is important to a wife, providing a needed feeling of independence. The solution frequently lies in a joint account to which both have access.

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