

My Life

by: Wayne and Tamara Direct Answers - Column for the week of October 11, 2004 My sister is 45 and having an affair with an old boyfriend from her youth. She says she loves him, he loves her, and they wish to pursue a life together. They are both married, though he is separated. My sister has a wonderful husband who is devoted to her even after discovering the affair. Our families are close, and we are in shock at this heartbreaking news. I believe my sister is going through a midlife crisis. Her husband is still willing to save the marriage, but he is tired of her obsession with this other man. My sister has three children, the youngest in his late teens. She quit college when she discovered she was pregnant and got married at age 20. Her husband finished his education, while my sister worked to support them. They were on the verge of financial security when she met up with her old boyfriend. One thing led to another. Now she and her husband will probably divorce. When all this started, she saw a counselor. She said the counselor commented her affair sounded like "a love story." I'm sure my sister told this professional only what she wanted and left out how she and her husband raised three wonderful children. Our whole family is distraught. We cannot figure out what went wrong. I am angry. We love our brother-in-law so much and are concerned about him and the children. She says they are doing fine and will get over it in a few years. My sister mentioned recently she "had to get married." I believe she is using that as a tool to rationalize what she has done. I feel I am standing back and watching her make the worst mistake of her life. How do I persuade my sister to seek professional help to guide her through this life-changing decision? Jocelyn Jocelyn, why can't you accept that your sister got married because she was pregnant? Why is that not the truth of how she ended up married? How many women have slept with a man they didn't love and wound up pregnant? Your sister is finally owning up to the truth. She got married because of a child. Now that the children are grown, she feels free to leave the marriage. In her mind, having a child trapped her, and the age of the children is now setting her free. You love your brother-in-law. But the reality in your mind is not the reality in your sister's mind. And counseling? Bah! Your sister went to a counselor to get the answer she wanted to hear, and now you want her to go to a counselor to get the answer you want to hear. People make up their mind to divorce or not to divorce from within their own breast. Perhaps it was your parents' choice that she married. You wish it to be your choice she doesn't divorce. Perhaps she is finally making her own choice. Will you still love your sister even though she makes decisions you don't approve of? At what point in life do we get to make our own decisions? Wayne & Tamara Personal Finance I'm usually good at deciding things, but this one's got me. I recently landed a good job that pays even more than my mother makes. My mom advised that I open a bank account jointly with her. Is this necessary? I mean, I'm 24. I live at home, but I contribute substantially. Sophia Sophia, in some circumstances it might be advantageous to share an account with your mother. For example, if she was elderly or infirm, adding your name to her account would allow you to bank for her. But there is no such reason here. Whoever controls your purse controls your life. You are an adult woman fully capable of managing your own affairs. That is what you should do. Wayne

About the Author

Authors and columnists Wayne and Tamara Mitchell can be reached at www.WayneAndTamara.com. Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO Box 964, Springfield, MO 65801 or email: DirectAnswers@WayneAndTamara.com.

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