

Wife suspects husband of having affair



*Jo Ann
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FAMILY MATTERS

Dear Jo Ann:

I'm scared. In the past three months, I've noticed a change in my husband's behavior — coming home at irregular times, hang up calls at the house, unprovoked irritation, unprecedented work-related weekends away to which I'm not invited. When we kiss, his moustache smells different. We've been married for 16 years and have 2 children, ages 14 and 16. My husband has worked hard to build a successful business. During our marriage, I've taken care of our children and home, and 8 years ago began a career in teaching. I'm feeling helpless. What should I do?

Barbara T.

Jo Ann says:

Don't ignore your instincts. Something may be up. How have you have approached this so far? Have you asked your husband what is happening? Has he been where he says he is? Have you checked phone records and charge cards? Could your husband's change in behavior reflect work related stress, and not another woman? This is only three months old. If he's sick he needs help. If your marriage is sick it needs help. Act now. The longer this continues, the more erosive it will be. The

facts warrant further investigation.

Affairs occur for many reasons, some as simple as opportunity. What else could account for weekends away? If you discover that your husband is having an affair, know that your marriage can survive. Many do.

Restoring trust is hard. Your husband will need to answer your questions honestly and to your satisfaction. You'll have to listen, hear how he feels, understand what went wrong. This is just the beginning of a healing dialog. Seek a good solution oriented marital therapist. Solution orientation is direct and clear. It presumes that you would like a better outcome but don't know how to get there. The therapist will work with you to identify what is happening and why, look at your marital objectives and help you create fresh solutions to timeworn problems.

Shifting perceptions and attitudes coupled with learning new skills can revive your marriage. Or, you can call it quits, hurt your children, take two years to get a divorce, spend lots of money, start dating and re-marry. What makes you think that's easier than healing what's wrong in this marriage? Or that the next will be better?

Jo Ann Volk Lederman is executive director of South Miami Psychology Associates. In private clinical practice for 25 years, she specializes in marriage and family therapy, couples therapy, infertility issues, behavioral medicine and business consulting. To contact Volk Lederman, call 305-666-8833, send mail to 7800 Red Road, Suite 205A, Miami 33143; or address email to JoAnnVolkLederman1@juno.com.