

The mistress



*Jo Ann
Volk Lederman*

FAMILY MATTERS

Dear Jo Ann:

My husband died six years ago leaving me with two small children. Three years ago, I was hired by a married physician to be his office manager. Robert and I fell in love and began what has been a powerful, but at times turbulent, love affair. He paid me a generous salary and made these three promises: To buy me a home, to support me comfortably and to leave his wife and marry me. Robert had conventional excuses for not filing for divorce or vacating the marital home. Last year, his wife pressured Robert to fire me. We remained lovers. Robert lived with me on weekdays, but went home for weekends and holidays. I believed it was because he didn't want to upset his teenage children. Now that I don't work for him, I'm short of money and have spent most of my savings. The money he gives me isn't enough and I've been too proud to ask. He still hasn't filed for divorce and I am devastated. I feel so vulnerable and exploited.

Miranda P.

Jo Ann says:

Love triangles do not end well. By their very nature, there's always one loser, sometimes many. Inherent within them is always hurt. You've sacrificed time, money and stability

seeking what you can't get. Has it been worthwhile? Did you know that only 15 percent of people who leave their mates for their lovers wind up with them? Deep yearnings, unmet in marriage, are painful and common. A mistress frequently serves as a form of medication to soothe hurts within the marriage. It's often a part-time job with no guarantee of anything but disaster. It's really hard to create a healthy relationship even under optimal conditions, but to love a married person creates almost insurmountable hurdles. If your lover finally divorced his wife and married you, would you ever trust him? Seek out a reputable marriage and family therapist to assist you through this loss and the recovery of yourself. As you begin to heal, develop tools to enhance your judgment. You will prevent future devastation when you can recognize discrepancies between what people promise and what they do. Be sure to discover what would motivate you to enter an intimate relationship with a married man and subject your children to the drama guaranteed to accompany this type of relationship. You are valuable, so are your children. Treat them and you preciousely.

Jo Ann Volk Lederman has a private clinical practice for 25 years, she specializes in marriage and family therapy, couples therapy, infertility issues, behavioral medicine and business consulting.

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