Wife is movie star struck [1]

Alice,

My wife of several years is stuck on a movie star. This really bothers me. All her friends are aware of her man (it ain't me). She keeps pictures of him at work to "get her through a bad day." Is this silly of me to be bothered by this? I have explained my concern but I do not think she can give him up. I feel like I am not the one she really loves.

Answer

Dear Reader,

In a world where images of picture-perfect celebrities are plastered everywhere, it can be alarmingly easy to fall into a movie star crush. But it sounds like you’re worried that your wife’s crush may be getting out of hand? or, at the very least, is seriously straining your marriage. It’s not unusual to feel hurt, jealous, or confused if your partner is pining over some hot-shot with (movie) stars in her eyes. Though it can be hard to understand, there could be a number of reasons for this behavior (more on those in a bit). Whatever the reason(s) your partner has for liking this leading man, it might be time to ramp up the communication about it.

One possible explanation for this crush is that she may feel unfulfilled by real-life relationships. Before you blame yourself, it’s good to know that there are countless possible reasons for relationship dissatisfaction, many of which could have nothing to do with you. But, it could be worth asking yourself or your wife if your marriage could use a relationship rev up [2]. You may also want to consider that maybe it’s not even about your marriage. Could she be feeling lonely at work and see her pin-up man as just a friendly face at her desk rather than a fantasy lover?

What else might be behind your wife being hung up on a movie hunk? Some research has investigated ?celebrity worship? when people develop obsessions over celebrities that go beyond regular fandom. Although it isn’t something that can be diagnosed (think of it more as a trait), research has shown that these emotional relationships people form in regard to a celebrity are quite real and serious for them, no matter how fantastical they seem to others. Studies also show that all types of people, including those who are single, attached, or anywhere in-between, can be equally as intense with their celebrity crushes. Celebrity worshippers also often exhibit symptoms associated with depression, addictive tendencies, or anxiety. One option you might pursue as you try to understand your wife’s crush could be exploring whether she’s struggling with any psychological strain. She says the pictures help
her to get through a bad day, right? Talking with her or encouraging her to consider exploring this preoccupation further, perhaps with a professional, might help her to determine if it’s a sign of something more serious.

And, though you may feel discouraged about the prospect of bringing up your concerns with your wife again, you might consider giving it one more shot. Here are some ideas to try based on some tried and true communication techniques:

- **Help her see what it’s like in your shoes.** She may see her own celebrity crushing as no big deal, but you could try asking her (nicely) how she would feel if you posted some sexy shots of (fill in the blank) all around your desk. Allowing her to see things from your side might make her more willing to talk.

- **Avoid judging or drawing premature conclusions.** Although you might be baffled by her celeb infatuation, she could feel that her reasons are very valid. Or, she may be struggling with other emotions or stressors that are leading to her star struck behavior. Coming into the conversation with an open mind can help both of you!

- **Organize your own thoughts and feelings about her celebrity preoccupation.** Doing this can help you present your side clearly and calmly, giving you the best shot at a productive chat.

- **Come prepared with some ideas for compromise.** You can start brainstorming about what resolution you’d like to come to and where you might be willing to compromise. For instance, maybe sexy bedroom role play where you can play the part of handsome Mr. Hollywood would be an option that you’d both find satisfying! Additionally, are there things that you need out of the relationship that you’re not getting? Make note of those as well. If you and your wife want to bring in an outside perspective, you might also consider couples counseling.

Ultimately, only you will be able to decide which direction to go, keeping in mind what’s best for you and for her. Whether that’s talking with her again, making changes to your relationship, or just letting it go for now, don’t give up hope! It’s still possible for her to stay your leading lady. Aaaand? action!

Alice!

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- Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) [11]
- Mental Health Service (CUMC) [12]

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