My husband goes to strip joints [1]

Dear Alice,

How do you tell your husband that talking about going to topless bars bothers you and that it hurts you? My husband of 6 yrs. keeps talking lately about going to these places and it hurts my feelings very much that I cry. I know it is man's nature to admire women but I feel these places are for guys that have no respect for themselves or their mates. We have a good sex life and get along great. He thinks he's teasing me but it really hurts to hear him talk this way. I would never do it to him, to go to a male strip bar. What can you tell me to say to turn him away from these thoughts?

Signed, Loving Wife

Answer

Dear Loving wife,

The line between good hearted teasing and hurting the feelings of a partner can be difficult to negotiate. Communicating with your partner in an open and honest way may assist you in resolving this dilemma. It may be best to pick a time when you are both relaxed and not distracted, and to start out on a positive note, rather than with what bothers you. Try to remain calm and allow for a conversation to take place.

It is unclear from your question whether your partner is actually going to topless bars or if he is only talking to you about wanting to go. By answering the following questions, perhaps you will have a better idea of how to communicate and address your concerns with your partner regarding topless bars:

- When did he start talking about going to topless bars?
- Did something happen to trigger the topic of this discussion?
- Why does it bother and hurt you?
- Would you mind if your partner went to topless bars but didn't tease or tell you about going?
- Why do you think he teases you about going?
- You mention you would never go to a male strip bar. Why would you never go to a male strip bar?
- Have you discussed this issue with someone you trust; such as a friend, family member, faith leader, or a counselor?
Some women do not want their partners to go to topless bars or strip joints, while others don’t mind it if they’ve set ground rules together beforehand, such as “no lap dances” or “spend no more than $50.” Some couples even go to strip clubs together. Since you are currently pleased with your sex life and relationship, would you ever consider incorporating his interest in topless bars into your mutual sex life? Perhaps explore mutual fantasies if your husband wants to continue talking about topless bars or visiting one together?

Being honest is important. Your husband should know how upset his teasing is making you, but he should also know why. It sounds like you’ve already come up with some things to communicate and this is a good place to start. To summarize your thoughts and feelings above, you can start by saying something along the lines of “It bothers me when you talk about going to topless bars…?it hurts my feelings so much, that I sometimes cry when you talk about it…?I know you admire women, but I feel these places are for guys who have no respect for themselves or their mates?? While it may be bothersome and hurtful to find yourself in conflict with your husband regarding topless bars, being open and honest with your thoughts and feelings may help in resolving the dilemma.

It might also be helpful to speak with someone about your concerns. Couples counseling is one option, but you could also try individual counseling. A professional counselor or therapist can help you explore why this topic is so upsetting and how you can focus on communicating your feelings with your partner. Talking through things may help you plan out your next move.

Hats off to you for thinking about starting the conversation and all the best as you expand the communication with your partner.

Alice!

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