

Compound Fracture

Dear Jil,

Waoh! You managed to break every rule in the book on how to have a happy marriage! The genesis was of course the pregnancy out of wedlock; but then you compounded it like a banker compounding interest. You went on to marry a man you'd only known for two months, just to rehabilitate out-of-wedlock pregnancy. That's a mistake families keep insisting on. And they think it's the way to hang responsibility for pregnancy on a guy. Matrimony can't redeem the calendar of pregnancy out of wedlock. And you don't marry a guy because you got pregnant for him, you marry him because he'll make a good husband. Now, that may not be a politically correct thing to say, but depression does not respect political correctness. Only God knows how many sorrows and divorces have been generated by forced marriages from pregnancies.

You had two options: to be a single mother, or to lunge into marriage blind as a bat, with an unknown quantity. Those were the options your amorous misadventure presented. You chose the latter. Of course the potential for unhappiness was high in both instances. Being a single mother can be tough. Methinks however that being a trapped and depressed wife is even worse. You were both barely out of school when the pregnancy occurred. You were both on National Youth Service. The reality was, none of you had income to





raise a child - you had negligible combined income. The guy had no job! A marriage comes under considerable strain when there's no income. And men don't handle lack of income well.

For lack of income you and your accidental husband moved into his family house. That only compounded your issues. So you have a marriage under compulsion, with inexperience, no work, no income, family accommodation, no marriage preparatory phase, no settling down, no economic base, family pressure... Cocktail of disaster! While the young man is still trying to make sense of his life he's already an expectant dad! The marriage was bound to fracture. Too much pressure. It collapsed under the sheer weight of compound factors. Your husband couldn't handle the pressure. He began to lash out at you, eventually becoming physical. Under no circumstance should a man beat his wife. (And vice versa!). There should be no emotional or physical abuse in a conjugal union or relationship.

In a marriage, money, sex and peace are three critical pressure points for men. You had all three pressure points in your marriage: no money, no peace, and of course no sex. Your marriage was the equivalence of a perfect storm.

Moving into the family house was a big mistake. A young marriage needs its own space. It's not for nothing God commands the man to leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife. But your husband upended God's command. He



cleaved to his father and mother instead of his wife. If God created the marital institution shouldn't we respect his instructions about his product? Unfortunately aspects of African culture routinely fly in the face of God's command on marriage. So instead of the man leaving the family abode, he takes up permanent residence and the wife suffers. A woman needs her own space. The family house is not her own space. No matter how big the groom's family house is, it is too small to be shared by a bride. A married man ought to get his own apartment, not pack his wife into an already emotionally cluttered family house. Both of you and your husband made huge mistakes. Now you are paying the price in multiples of units of pain. For a new couple, even a one-bedroom apartment is better than a shared family mansion. There are too many tales of women feeling like tenants in their own marriage just because they lack their own space.

And then there's the issue of no job. There was no economic base for the new family. There's something about waking up in the morning and going to work, having something to do. No responsible man feels okay waking up every morning with no job to do. It's a worrisome phenomenon. The Bible says work is God's gift to man. Waking up each morning to go to work is acceptance of gift. Not having a job meant your husband could not provide for his family. Had to depend on you for money. You got a job first. Men don't feel comfortable that way - collecting money from a woman. Except a certain kind of man. No self-respecting man wants to live off his wife. And being surrounded by his family



members... and everyone knowing he's dependent on his wife... That's not good! Funny thing is the family can turn against you for being the provider at home - accuse you of "stealing his destiny." That's a lot to come against as a young bride- you are enemy! I wish you had written me for advice from inception. You received bad counsel all through this ordeal.

You've got to face your realities now that the marriage is over. You have a child to cater for. You've got to care for your kid to the best of your ability. And the kid must not become an emotional crutch. Neither can the baby become the emoticon of the woes of your life. Don't turn your child into an instrument of vengeance. He's not your vindication, he has his own program. Thank God you're doing well at your job. You've got to excel at that. It's however important you don't harbor malice, that you forgive. If you don't forgive, hatred and anger will colour the rest of your life. Unforgiveness kills future relationship in advance. I do pray all things work together for your good.

Your mentor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lene Andersen'.

To view more letters kindly log on to jacknjillive.com