

Woman is reluctant to let long time friendship slip away

DEAR ABBY: Every time I ask my friend, "Sally," if she wants to hang out, she says she has something else to do.

A few weeks ago, she said she had to go out. About an hour later, while walking around the block, I noticed her car was there. I knocked on the door. Sally said she was getting ready to leave and besides she was on the phone. Does it take an hour to get ready to go out? I don't think so.

Sally and I have been friends since we were 4. I don't want to lose an old friend, but I'm not sure she really is a friend anymore. If she is, why does she keep ditching me? Should I consider her a friend?

— DITCHED IN NEW YORK
DEAR DITCHED: Consider her a friend, but a distant one. Not all friendships last forever. People change as they grow. Take the hint. Don't be a pest. Let her call you.

DEAR ABBY: I'm 14 years old. A lot of times when I am feeling really happy and I'm talking to friends on the Internet, all of a sudden I feel a wave of sadness. And I remember bad things, like when my best friend died when I was little. But then I'll feel happy again. I don't know why this happens all the time. What do you think?

— BUMMED OR NOT IN ILLINOIS

DEAR BUMMED OR NOT: Mood swings can be hormonal, especially at your age. However, since you were concerned enough to write to me, your next step should be to discuss the mood swings with your parents so they can schedule an appointment for a medical evaluation. There is probably nothing to worry about, but you should hear it from your doctor.

DEAR ABBY: My husband, "Lyle," and I have a 14-month-old

Bill allowing private prisons is approved

TOPEKA (AP) — Senators approved a bill Thursday to permit construction of private prisons, a move Attorney General Phill Kline said would keep Kansas safe.

The 26-13 vote sent the measure to the House.

A task force appointed by Kline to study crime and sentencing laws had endorsed private prisons.

"This is an important acknowledgment by the Senate that we need additional prison space to keep violent criminals off of our streets," Kline said in a statement.

Under the bill, private prisons would be regulated and licensed by the Department of Corrections. The state would contract to place inmates in such private prisons for no more than 90 percent of the cost to house inmates in state operated facilities.

Kansas' prisons were at 99.3 percent of capacity at the end of February, with 9,182 inmates held in space designed for 9,244, according to the Department of Corrections. Kansas has also contracted with Texas to house 96 prisoners.

In November, the Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice endorsed a proposal to add space for up to 256 inmates at the El Dorado Correctional Facility, an expansion that would cost more than \$7 million.

The Senate's bill would require voters in a county where a private prison is proposed to approve its construction. Currently, residents in Yates Center have expressed interest in attracting a prison as economic development.

The bill requires the secretary of corrections to first seek space in county jails before contracting with the private prisons.



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

child together.

My two children from an earlier relationship and Lyle's son make up our family of six. Lyle and I make good money and we both collect child support from previous partners.

What bothers me is Lyle won't let me see his paychecks or combine our joint incomes in any way. I've asked if we could pool our money. On a monthly basis, I earn more than he does, so I don't understand his reluctance.

I'm not a compulsive shopper. I've never told him to give me the money.

We even set up a joint checking account for tax purposes, but he refuses to put money into it.

Abby, I feel like I'm just a room-

mate who shares expenses. We split the bills down to the last penny, and he shops for "his" children separately. He won't even agree to put our insurance policies together, and we're with the same company! His answer is, "I've always done it this way."

Am I wrong? I always thought married couples shared things. I'm at my breaking point. Please help.

— FEELING LIKE A ROOMMATE, NOT A WIFE

DEAR FEELING LIKE A ROOMMATE: Nothing can be resolved until you and Lyle are able to communicate honestly. Marriage counseling could help to bring out the issues that need to be addressed. You feel "like a roommate" because you are being treated like one. Having been through one divorce, your husband may be afraid to commingle his assets with yours. (In other words, he may feel insecure about the durability of your marriage.) Since law is not my area of expertise, you would be wise to consult

an attorney about how your husband's behavior could affect your future.

DEAR ABBY: My husband, "Todd," and I have been happily married for four years and together for six.

We have a daughter (mine from a former marriage) and a beautiful little boy together. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Todd loves both children equally. Despite some tough financial times over the past two years, we are a happy family.

Our problem? Todd's mother. She's a negative, bitter woman who insists she "can't possibly" show our daughter the same love she shows our son. She sends affectionate notes to our son, none to our daughter. She shops at discount stores for our daughter and only the best shops for our son. She sent our son a beautiful handmade toy and our daughter a pencil — yes, a pencil!

Please understand this isn't about gifts or the amount she spends. It's about the obvious disparity. Even

worse, she's always saying that Todd couldn't possibly love our daughter the way he does our son. Need I tell you the damage this has already done to our daughter?

We are at our wit's end. Todd is ready to just walk away from his mother. I know we can't change the way she feels, but are we wrong to insist that she not show it so openly to our daughter? Help. Please.

— READY TO WALK AWAY

DEAR READY: You are not wrong. What you have described is emotional abuse on the part of your mother-in-law. Her blatant favoritism is heartless, deliberate and harmful to your children's relationship with each other — not to mention damaging your daughter's self-esteem. If she fails to comply, you are also justified in limiting or restricting her contact with them.

DEAR ABBY: My mother passed away two years ago and I still have many of her things. I'm afraid that she'll think I don't love

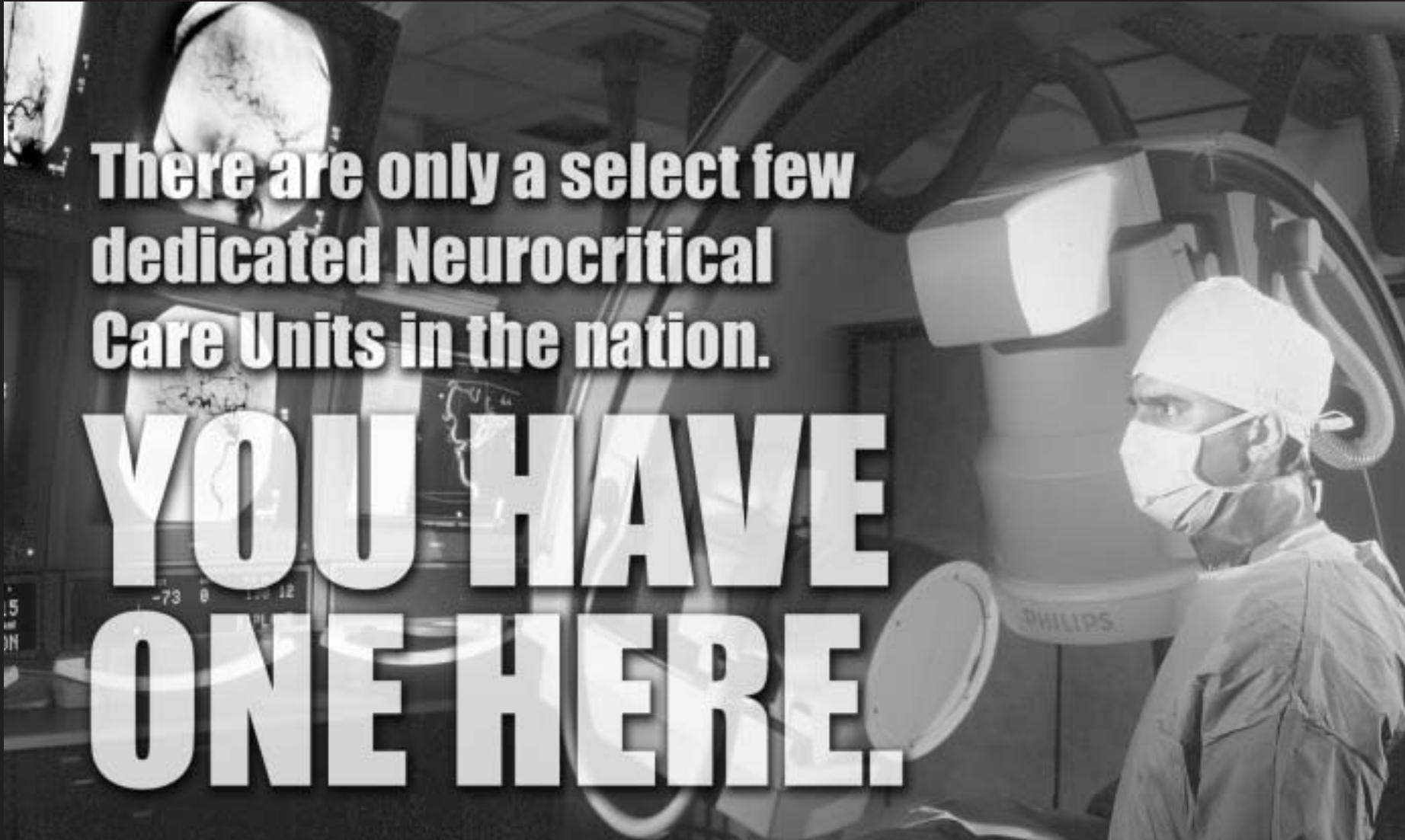
her or respect her belongings if I don't keep everything.

My question is, do you think she'll understand that I don't have a lot of space in my house? Do you have any ideas about where I could put her things? Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions.

— WITHOUT MOM IN WASHINGTON

DEAR WITHOUT: Your mother left her things to you because she wanted you to enjoy them. Of course she would understand if you cannot use them all. She didn't intend for them to be a burden but a blessing.

Since there are more things than you need or want, please consider sharing the rest with other relatives who can appreciate their sentimental value. If that's not possible, donate them to a charity — possibly one that raises money to fight the disease that took her. I can't think of a more worthwhile use for them than that.



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John Gorecki, M.D., Neurosurgeon
Mitchell Woltersdorf, Ph.D., Neuropsychologist
Kore Liow, M.D., Epileptologist
Nazih Moufarrij, M.D., Neurosurgeon

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