

# Husband threatens to rape wife

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am in an awful position, and I don't understand what I am supposed to do. Does my husband really "own" me? This is what he keeps telling me, and I know it isn't true, but he insists that he can have sex with me whenever he wants to, and that it is my "wifely duty" to give in, even if I don't feel like it. Last night I really didn't want to, and he came close to forcing me before I relented and let him have his way. He has a strong sex drive, and I just am not interested. In other areas, he treats me pretty well. We have been married two years. Am I really being a bad wife to reject him, or is it OK?



**Dr. Joyce Brothers**

• Ask Dr. Brothers

marriage. Wives traditionally had been considered a sort of property of the husband — "wifely duty" and all. But today, forcing sex upon a spouse is a serious crime, and your husband should be aware of this. In the meantime, you need to figure out why you are so averse to sex that your husband feels he must demand it. You should be able to come to some sort of compromise so that neither of you feels frustrated or abused. A marriage counselor might be able to help you discuss your issues.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I'm a widow with two teenage boys. Yesterday, while the kids were at school, I was doing some work on our family computer and I stumbled on a link to a porn site. I figure it must have gotten there from my older son, who is 17.

I hope it was from him, and not my 13-year-old! Anyway, I was curious and followed the link, and found some pretty disgusting stuff. This wasn't just pictures of nude girls (which I could understand), but real X-rated pornography. What should I do? Should I confront my older son? If so, what do I say to him? I'm confused and a little pan-

icked.

—L.R.

Dear L.R.: It is a horrible feeling when you have to confront some of the ugly realities of kids growing up, especially when it involves exposure to ideas and images that are as disrespectful to women as most porn is. But don't panic; you can deal with this issue just as you have with the issues that have cropped up in all the years of your son's development. You don't say how long you have been widowed, but this is an area where you probably feel particularly helpless without your husband. But even though you might feel ill-equipped or embarrassed, it's not a bad idea to have a conversation with your sons.

Most teenage boys will look at porn on the Internet — out of curiosity about sex, because it's fun and stimulating, and because their friends are doing the same thing. (If the 13-year-old hasn't done it yet, he probably soon will.) I think it is a little late to use blocking software; the kids need to be approached in a way that gives them specific information about what you expect from them.

There should be no money spent on pornography, and they should realize that these sites are not representative of how they should treat young women. Your sons will probably be mortified to be discussing this with you, so be satisfied with "a word to the wise."

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# Thank you, Sparky!



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Sparky the Fire Prevention Dog spoke to Oakley Grade School students recently as part of fire prevention week. Cody Finlay, pictured here as Sparky, is wearing the new educational suit the Oakley Fire Department purchased with fire prevention grant money.

# In the land of 'do no wrong,' older sister is always right

Dear Harlan,  
Help me understand my sister. She's two and a half years older and always thinks she knows it all — the type of person who takes a job and after only one week is the best employee the place ever had, according to her. Yet she has not managed to hold a job for more than a year or two. She was constantly tapping our parents for money, even though she was very capable of earning her own. Now that our parents have passed on, she's still got this Everybody Owes Her attitude and blows through money like it is water. I have tried to understand her, but I am more confused now than ever before. Does she have a possible mental short circuit or something?

wrong and her right. Instead of trying to prove her wrong (impossible in her eyes), focus on the people who are doing her wrong. Encourage her to get professional help for herself, NOT to help herself, but to "understand those around her who continue to wrong her." If you tell her that she's wrong, she'll never go. If this approach doesn't work, ask her to help you. Tell her that you're struggling with issues and need her help. Invite her to counseling, NOT to help herself, but to help you. If the counselor is any good, your sister will see that she's not always right and you're not always wrong. Should none of this work, compassion for a sister in obvious pain coupled with short visits might be the best and only way to manage this relationship.

freshman wrote to you about getting arrested for consumption of alcohol and asked how it would change his life. Your response wasn't to make him responsible for his actions, but to encourage him to ask his parents to pay for an attorney. You also encouraged him to take an alcohol-awareness class to help get the charges expunged from the record, not to help him see the bigger problem. Our entire society is all about blaming someone else or allowing a person in an expensive suit to take care of all of our problems. Not encouraging this person to take a good look at himself and his actions is as good as saying, "pay someone to fix it for you." We, as parents, educators, family members and members

of society in general need to not make excuses for others' actions but instead to focus on taking responsibility so that the mistakes are not repeated. My concern is that the opportunity of holding this person accountable was missed. Your column implied that honesty is not the best policy. Instead, if we can afford to "cover" our mistakes, then we don't have to be accountable.

— A Concerned Reader, Shelly  
**Dear Concerned Reader, I agree; he needs to be held accountable. Too many teenagers make one bad choice, then follow**

it up with another bad choice, and another. I was trying to stop it at one bad choice. I figured between an honest talk with his parents and attending an alcohol-awareness class, the larger issue would be discovered. That said, I should have said it. Thank you.

Editor's note: Write Harlan at [harlan\(at\)helpmeharlan.com](mailto:harlan(at)helpmeharlan.com) or online: [www.helpmeharlan.com](http://www.helpmeharlan.com). All letters submitted become property of the author. Send paper to Help Me, Harlan! 2506 N. Clark St., Ste. 223, Chicago, Ill. 60614.

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Dear Younger Sister,  
Your sister lives in the land of the DO NO WRONGS — meaning, if you tell her she's done something wrong, she will play the role of the victim, making you

Dear Harlan,  
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