

STUDENT DISCOVERY SHEET

"I'VE GOT A PROBLEM!"

Cut apart, make as many copies as necessary

Dear _____,

I have three children: Katie (age 13), Brett (age 15) and Suzanne (age 17). My husband died several years ago and the children and I have worked hard to rebuild our lives. I had never considered remarrying until I met Joe. He is a widower who also has three children, all daughters, ages 12, 14, and 16. Joe and I are very much in love. He is a hard worker, a dedicated family man who will make a wonderful husband to me and be a father for my kids. My kids like Joe, Joe's kids like me. I truly want to mother Joe's girls. We would like to buy a larger house and build a stable, happy home for our children. The problem? Our kids hate each other. Every attempt we make to get them together ends in fights, screaming, tears. Nothing has worked. We have tried family dinners, picnics, taking the kids out in small groups so they can get to know each other. We have even tried counseling. Time has not improved their relationship. The kids have threatened to run away from home, never speak to us, and generally hate us if we disrupt their lives by marrying. What should we do? Wait six years for Joe's youngest to graduate from high school and marry and hope for the best?

Lonely in Texas

Dear _____,

I am fifteen and my parents divorced last summer. I live with my Mom and I'm supposed to see my Dad every other weekend and visit him one month during the summer. The problem? My Dad has a new apartment, a new car, a new girlfriend, and no time for me. He cancels out more weekends than he spends with me. Yesterday was my birthday. Dad was supposed to take me for my permit test and shopping for some new shoes. He never showed up. He didn't call or even send me a card. I found out today that he and his girlfriend had left for a vacation and wouldn't get back for another week. I guess he forgot about me. My Mom tries to make excuses for him and never says anything bad about him. But I'm beginning to really despise the guy. He used to be a great father. He coached my ball teams and took me fishing. Now he obviously doesn't care about me. I'm thinking about just cutting him out of my life and refusing to ever see him again. What's your advise?

Neglected Son

Dear _____,

I am sixteen and my parents are driving me crazy. They have a million rules and regulations. I have an 11:00 curfew. (all my friends have a 12:00 curfew!) I can only go out one night during the weekend, and my parents have to know where I am every minute I'm out. My dad even calls or comes by to check if I'm where I said I would be. If I'm not, I get grounded and also get the car I'm paying for taken away. I make good grades, I've never been in serious trouble, and I have a part-time job. My parents treat me like a criminal! How can I get them to lighten up?

Repressed and Depressed

Dear _____,

I am a senior and will graduate from high school in a few months. I have been dating Kyle since ninth grade. We are really in love and want to get married after graduation. Kyle graduated last year and works for his father in a family owned business. My parents are really upset with me. They think I'm too young to get married and want me to go to college for at least two years and get some kind of degree. All I want to do is get married to Kyle and have my own home. Kyle's parents are supportive and have offered to pay our rent on an apartment for a year as a wedding present. I want a beautiful wedding and my parent's support. My Dad said that he would not pay for my wedding or even come to one. I think they've forgotten what it means to be young and in love. How can I change their minds?

Deanna + Kyle

Dear _____,

Brad is considered to be the best looking guy at my school. I was shocked when he asked me out—I'm not one of the popular cheerleader types. I love Brad very much—but there is a scary side to his personality. He gets very depressed and sometimes threatens to kill himself if I don't go along with what he wants to do (drugs, sex, drinking). My parents can't stand Brad and I've lost most of my friends because Brad doesn't want me to go places with them anymore. Now I'm really scared. Last week Brad hit me when I told him that my parents were making me go on vacation with them for a week. I am sick of the lies I have to tell my parents and I'm getting really scared of Brad, even though I love him. I'm afraid he will commit suicide if I break up with him. What should I do?

Terrified

Dear _____,

My sister, she's fifteen and I'm seventeen, is a really weird. She hangs out with the Gothic crowd at our school. She died her hair black and purple, pierced her nose, and wears clothes straight out of a horror movie. My parents have always encouraged us to express ourselves and they think this is just a phase. I think she's heading for trouble. She needs to see a psychiatrist or something but I can't make my family see this. What can I do to help my sister? Her grades are falling, people talk about her all the time and look at me like I'm a freak just because I'm related to her.

Worried Sibling

Dear _____,

Jimmy and I have been married for almost two years. We both work and have well paid jobs with a local company. Jimmy has always been great at handling money. I can't balance a check book so it just made sense that Jimmy handled our finances. Our marriage has become a dictatorship and I'm getting angrier by the minute. Jimmy takes my check every two weeks and gives me a small allowance. I barely have enough to buy a cup of coffee at break. He doesn't want me to spend any money on clothes or things for the house. I am wearing clothes I bought two years ago before we married. My name is not even on the check book and all our money is in Jimmy's name. He says we're saving for a house but won't tell me how much we have. I earn a little more than Jimmy—half of the money in that account is mine! But you would never know it by the way Jimmy acts. He will not discuss this problem with me and gets mad when I bring it up. I still love him. What should I do?

Jimmy's wife

Dear _____,

I just found out that my Mom has cancer. My Dad died a few years ago and I'm all the family my mother has. I'm a senior in high school, a few weeks away from graduation. I have been accepted to the University I've always wanted to attend and was fortunate enough to receive a full scholarship. This University is in another state, about 900 miles from home. I don't think I need to go with my Mom so sick. There's a junior college near my house and I could go there a couple of years and then transfer to a closer college. My Mom wants me to go—she says I should follow my dreams and not worry about her. What should I do?

J.M.C.

