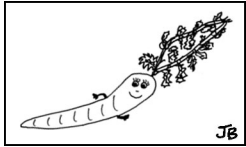


**Note to Reader:**

I have made these worksheets available for download because this (unbound) 8.5" x 11" size is more practical to use than the smaller (bound) pages in my book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents. These worksheets are meant to be used in conjunction with my book, so please don't use them until you have read it.

Thank you!

Jenna D. Barry



## Problem Issue # 1: PHONE CALLS

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about phone calls:
  - We wouldn't answer calls from anyone before 8AM or after 9PM unless it was an emergency.
  - We would get Caller ID and screen calls that came at inconvenient times such as when we were eating dinner, giving the kids a bath, etc.
  - We wouldn't call his parents back immediately when they left a message.
  - My husband would call his parents every now and then whenever he wanted to talk to them instead of calling them every day out of obligation.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises with my husband:
  - "I'm willing to stop complaining that your parents call too often if you're willing to stop yelling at me for screening their calls."
  - "I'm willing to stop being hateful to your parents on the phone if you're willing to get Caller ID so I can screen their calls when I'm not in the mood to talk to them."
  - "If you want to answer the phone when your parents call after 10PM, that's your decision, but I'm not willing to talk to them after that time."
  - "I'll stop complaining that your parents call at inconvenient times if you are willing to let the answering machine get it when they call while we're eating dinner, giving the kids a bath, sleeping, etc."
  - "I'd like for your parents to keep their calls before 9PM and you don't mind if they call until 11pm. Let's compromise and answer their calls until 10PM."
  - "I'm willing to \_\_\_\_\_ if you're willing to \_\_\_\_\_." (For example: I'm willing to do your Saturday chores so you'll have free time to go fishing with the guys if you're willing to stop answering the phone when your parents call after 9pm.)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband's parents<sup>1</sup>?
  - We'll start turning the ringer off at 10PM.
  - My husband will tell my parents we need for them to call after 9AM.
  - We will use caller ID and/or an answering machine to screen calls at inconvenient times.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "Don't Stand So Close To Me" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.

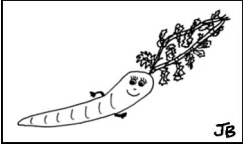
Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's mom might say, "Are you trying to tell me when I can and can't talk to my own son?")

4. Here's what we will do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>2</sup>:

- ❑ We will stand firm and respectfully repeat our needs to them without backing down even if they are disappointed, hurt, or angry.
- ❑ We will set boundaries even if they try to make us feel guilty, inconsiderate, selfish or unloving for having needs that conflict with theirs.
- ❑ We will chicken out and let them call the shots about phone calls.
- ❑ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>2</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.



## Problem Issue #2: VISITS AT OUR HOUSE

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about visits:
  - My in-laws would visit [once a month / twice a year].
  - My in-laws wouldn't stay for longer than [one day / one weekend / one week].
  - My in-laws would wait for an invitation instead of inviting themselves over or dropping by unexpectedly.
  - My in-laws would sleep [at a hotel / in the guest room].
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises<sup>3</sup> with my husband:
  - "You want your parents to come visit [once a week] and I'd rather have them visit [every other month]. How about if we compromise and invite them over [once a month]?"
  - "If you're willing to agree that your parents don't come visit next month, then I'm willing to be the one to tell them that another time would be more convenient."
  - "You want your parents to come over Saturday but I don't. How about if you stay here with them and I'll spend the day shopping?"
  - "I'm willing to invite your parents over this weekend if you're willing to take me on a date next weekend."
  - "It's not convenient for me to have your parents visit in October. How about if we invite them to come in March instead?"
  - "You want your parents to visit us for the whole weekend, but I'd prefer if they don't come at all. How about if we compromise and ask them to come spend Sunday with us."
  - "I'm willing to \_\_\_\_\_ if you're willing to \_\_\_\_\_." (For example: I'm willing to make love to you when your parents come to visit<sup>4</sup> if you're willing to tell them they must stay at a hotel.)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband's parents?

<sup>3</sup> These compromises will vary depending on several factors such as how far away your husband's parents live, whether or not you have kids, your work schedule, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Just to clarify, it's okay to negotiate a win-win compromise with sex as the reward, but it's not okay to withhold sex as punishment.

- I will call his parents and respectfully tell them that it's not convenient for us to have them come visit [this weekend / next month / in July] but that they are invited to come [next weekend / next month / in December] instead.
- My husband will call his parents and tell them they are welcome to come visit in March, but we need for them to stay for just the weekend instead of the whole week.
- I will e-mail his parents and tell them that they are invited to come visit us next month but that we need for them to stay at a hotel.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

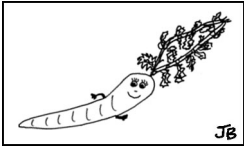
Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's dad might say, "Who do you think you are, telling us that we can only stay for two days?")

4. Here's what we will do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>5</sup>:

- We will stand firm and respectfully repeat our needs to them without backing down even if they are disappointed, hurt, or angry.
- We will set boundaries even if his parents try to make us feel guilty, inconsiderate, selfish, or unloving for having needs that conflict with theirs.
- If my husband's parents insist on being in charge of deciding how long they will stay or where they will sleep, then we will tell them they either need to comply with our requests or they are not welcome to come at all.
- We will chicken out and let them dictate when they will come to our house, how long they will stay, and where they will sleep.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>5</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, [A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents](#) by Jenna D. Barry.



### Problem Issue #3: MOVING

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about moving:
  - We would live in [Idaho / New York / Colorado].
  - We would move at least [200 / 400 / 600] miles away from his parents.
  - We would go visit them [once / twice / three times] per year.
  - We would invite them to come visit us once per [month / year].
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises with my husband:
  - “I want to move to the opposite side of the country and you want to stay in the same city as your parents. How about if we compromise and move two hours away from them?”
  - “We’ve lived where you have wanted to live for the past [10 years]. Let’s live where I want to live for the next [10 years].”
  - “I’m willing to visit your parents [a couple of times a year/once a month] if you’re willing to move farther away from them.”
  - “I’m willing to drop the subject of moving for 3 months if, during that time, you will (1) stop expecting us to visit your parents so often, (2) let them know it’s not okay for them to drop by without an invitation, and (3) start making my needs a priority over theirs. After the trial run, we can evaluate whether or not we should move in order to strengthen our marriage.”
  - “I’m willing to \_\_\_\_\_ if you’re willing to \_\_\_\_\_.” (For example: I’m willing to buy you tickets to the Super Bowl if you’re willing to move to Idaho.”
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

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Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband’s parents<sup>6</sup>?
  - My husband will call his parents and respectfully tell them that from now on we need for them to wait for an invitation instead of inviting themselves over.
  - We will stop visiting them [every week].
  - My husband will tell his parents we will consider moving farther away if they continue to insist on visiting us constantly and dropping by unexpectedly.
  - We will tell his parents we have decided to move.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>6</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled “Don’t Stand So Close To Me” from the book, A Wife’s Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband’s Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.

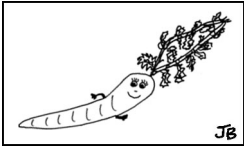
Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's parents might say, "We would be terribly lonely if you moved away. How can you even consider doing that to us?")

4. Here's what we will do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>7</sup>:

- We will stand firm and respectfully repeat our needs to them without backing down even if they are disappointed, hurt, or angry.
- We will set boundaries even if they try to make us feel guilty, selfish, or unloving for having needs that conflict with theirs.
- We will chicken out and let them dictate when they can visit us and where we should live.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>7</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, [A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents](#) by Jenna D. Barry.



#### Problem Issue # 4: VISITS AT THEIR HOUSE

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about visiting my husband's parents:
  - We would visit them [once per month / twice per year].
  - My in-laws would visit us, instead of expecting us to go visit them.
  - We would stay at a hotel (or with friends) instead of staying at his parents' house throughout the entire visit.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises<sup>8</sup> with my husband:
  - "If you're willing to call off the trip, then I'm willing to be the one to tell your parents we can't visit them this month."
  - "I'll promise not to complain about having to visit your parents if you stop pressuring me to visit them more than once a [week / month / year]."
  - "You want to go visit your parents and I want to visit friends instead. How about if we stay at our friends' house and then stop in and visit your parents some of the time we're there?"
  - "You want to go visit your parents and I don't. How about if you go and I just stay here?"
  - "I get along better with your parents when I don't have to spend a long time with them. I'm willing to visit them if we go out and see a movie or hang out with friends some of the time we're there."
  - "I'm willing to \_\_\_\_\_ if you're willing to \_\_\_\_\_." (For example: I'm willing to go visit your parents next weekend if you're willing to watch the kids this Saturday while I go to the spa.)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

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Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband's parents<sup>9</sup>?
  - I will call his parents and tell them we will come visit them for the weekend, not for the whole week.
  - My husband will call his parents and tell them that we won't be able to visit them this time, but that they are welcome to come visit us instead.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>8</sup> These compromises will vary depending on several factors such as how far away your husband's parents live, whether or not you have kids, your work schedule, etc.

<sup>9</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "Don't Stand So Close To Me" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.

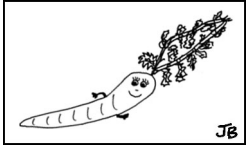
Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's parents might say, "Why don't you want to come visit us?")

4. Here's what we will do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>10</sup>:

- We will stand firm and respectfully repeat our needs to them without backing down even if they are disappointed, hurt, or angry.
- We will set boundaries even if they try to make us feel guilty, inconsiderate, selfish, or unloving for having needs that conflict with theirs.
- We will chicken out and let them dictate how often we should visit them and how long we should stay.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>10</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.



## Problem Issue # 5: HOLIDAYS

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about holidays:
  - My husband and I would decide as a couple where and with whom to spend holidays without worrying whether or not his parents approved.
  - My husband and I would try something new and creative for holidays instead of doing the same thing every year.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises<sup>11</sup> with my husband:
  - “How about if we compromise and spend Christmas Eve at your parents’ house, and Christmas day here with just the kids?”
  - “If you’re willing to spend Thanksgiving with my parents, then I’m willing to be the one to tell your parents we won’t be spending it with them this year.”
  - “I’m not willing to spend Christmas with your parents, but I am willing to invite them here for Easter.”
  - “You want to go visit your parents for Mother’s Day, and I want them to come here instead. How about if we compromise and meet them somewhere in between?”
  - “I’m willing to spend the holidays with your parents, but only if we stay at a hotel or with friends.”
  - “Let’s make a list of all of the holidays during the year, and then barter and negotiate with each other until we decide where and with whom to spend them.”
  - “I’m willing to \_\_\_\_\_ if you’re willing to \_\_\_\_\_.” (For example: I’m willing to spend Christmas with your parents if you’re willing to read two chapters in this book: “Naked Women” and “Illegal Crack.”)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

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Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband’s parents<sup>12</sup>?
  - I will call his parents and respectfully tell them what we’ve decided to do for the holidays.
  - My husband will e-mail his parents and tell them what we’ve decided to do for the holidays.
  - We will tell his parents in person what we’ve decided to do for the holidays.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>11</sup> These compromises will vary depending on several factors such as how far away your husband’s parents live, whether or not you have kids, your work schedule, etc.

<sup>12</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled “Don’t Stand So Close To Me” from the book, A Wife’s Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband’s Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.

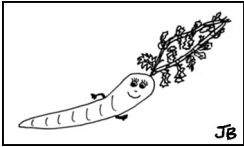
Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's dad might say, "Son, it will devastate your mother if you don't come here for Christmas.")

4. Here's what we will do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>13</sup>:

- We will stand firm and respectfully repeat our needs to them without backing down even if they are disappointed, hurt, or angry.
- We will set boundaries even if they try to make us feel guilty, inconsiderate, selfish, or unloving for having needs that conflict with theirs.
- We will chicken out and let them dictate how we should spend every holiday.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>13</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, [A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents](#) by Jenna D. Barry.



## Problem Issue # 6: VACATIONS

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about vacations:
  - My husband and I would decide as a couple where to spend our vacation without worrying whether or not his parents approve.
  - We would have the courage to be honest with his parents about where and with whom we want to spend our vacation.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises with my husband:
  - “I want to spend our vacation with friends and you want to spend it with your parents. How about if we compromise and spend this year’s vacation with friends, and next year’s vacation with your parents?”
  - “If you’re willing to take me to Hawaii, then I’m willing to be the one to tell your parents we won’t be spending our vacation with them this year.”
  - “I want to spend our vacation in Las Vegas and you want to spend it at your parents’ house. How about if we invite your parents to Las Vegas?”
  - “I want to spend my vacation at my parents’ house and you want to spend it at your parents’ house. How about if we spend our vacation separately...you go to your parents’ house and I’ll go to my parents’ house?”
  - “I’m willing to \_\_\_\_\_ if you’re willing to \_\_\_\_\_.” (For example: I’m willing to buy that big screen TV you’ve been wanting if you’re willing to let me decide how to spend our vacation this year.”
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband’s parents<sup>14</sup>?
  - I will call his parents and respectfully tell them we’ve decided not to spend our vacation with them this year.
  - My husband and I will tell his parents in person that we plan to spend our vacation in Colorado with friends.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>14</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled “Don’t Stand So Close To Me” from the book, A Wife’s Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband’s Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.

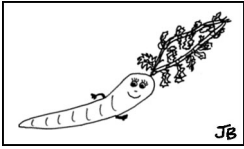
Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's mother might say, "It's awfully selfish of you to spend your vacation in Hawaii when you know we don't get to see you very often.")

4. Here's what we will do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>15</sup>:

- ❑ We will stand firm and respectfully repeat our decision to them without backing down even if they are disappointed, hurt, or angry.
- ❑ We will set boundaries even if they try to make us feel guilty, inconsiderate, selfish, or unloving for having needs that conflict with theirs.
- ❑ We will chicken out and let them dictate where and with whom we should spend our vacations.
- ❑ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>15</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.



## Problem Issue # 7: TRADITIONS

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about traditions:
  - We would get together with his parents when we wanted to, instead of feeling obligated to stick to a rigid routine.
  - If his parents invited us to do something we didn't want to do, then we would say, "Sorry but we can't make it this time."
  - We would allow his parents to dictate our schedule instead of being honest about our needs.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises with my husband<sup>16</sup>:
  - "You want to go to your parents' house every [Sunday] to [eat lunch] and I would rather get together with them once in awhile, and vary the activity and place each time. How about if we compromise and get together with them once a month (not on a specific day), and sometimes do things like bowling or watching a movie at our house?"
  - "How about if you promise not to pressure me to get together with your parents every week, and I'll promise not to complain about it when we get together with them once a month?"
  - "I'll agree to get together with your parents sometimes if you start checking with me before you commit me to doing things with them I don't want to do."
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

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Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband's parents<sup>17</sup>?
  - I will call my husband's parents and respectfully tell them we won't be coming to their house on [Saturday] for [dinner] this week because we have other plans."
  - My husband will e-mail his folks and tell them we won't be able to play chess with them this Friday, and then invite them to a movie next Saturday.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>16</sup> These compromises will vary depending on several factors such as how far away your husband's parents live, whether or not you have kids, your work schedule, etc.

<sup>17</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "Don't Stand So Close To Me" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.

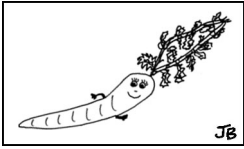
Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's mom might say, "I don't see why you can't spare Sunday afternoons to have lunch with us anymore.")

4. Here's what we'll do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>18</sup>:

- We will stand firm and respectfully repeat our needs to them without backing down even if they are disappointed, hurt, or angry.
- We will set boundaries even if they try to make us feel guilty, inconsiderate, selfish, or unloving for having needs that conflict with theirs.
- We will chicken out and let them dictate when and where we should get together and what activity we should do during that time.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>18</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, [A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents](#) by Jenna D. Barry.



## Problem Issue # 8: ADVICE

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about advice from my in-laws:
  - My husband and I would make decisions as a couple without worrying whether or not his parents approve.
  - We would not discuss our finances or sex life with his parents.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises with my husband:
  - "I'll stop saying your parents are too nosey if you stop giving them details about our [finances / sex life]."
  - "I'd like for us to make decisions as a couple based on input from experts, consumer reports, etc. instead of just taking your parents' advice. If you're willing to do that, then I'm willing to stop complaining that your parents give too much advice."
  - "I'll try to stop getting so furious when your parents give advice, if you stop pressuring me to take their advice."
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband's parents<sup>19</sup>?
  - When my in-laws offer too much advice we will say, "This is our decision as a couple."
  - We won't bring up subjects that invite advice from his parents. (For example, we won't tell them how much we spent on our vacation.)
  - When his parents ask us about something we want to keep private we will say, "We'd like to keep that information between the two of us."
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

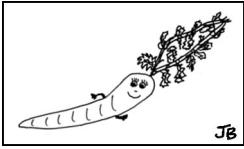
Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's dad might say, "You're a fool not to take the advice of your older and wiser parents.")

4. Here's what we will do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>20</sup>:
  - We will stand firm and follow through on decisions we make as a couple even if they don't approve.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>19</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "Don't Stand So Close To Me" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.

<sup>20</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.



## Problem Issue # 9: FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about financial independence:
  - My husband and I would support ourselves by doing whatever was necessary, such as cutting back on our expenses, looking for a better paying job, getting a second job, working overtime, not buying things on credit, or choosing a less expensive house/apartment/car.
  - We would pay his parents back what we owed them as soon as possible, and we wouldn't borrow money from them in the future.
  - We wouldn't live with my husband's parents.
  - We would respectfully decline gifts with strings attached.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises with my husband:
  - "I want to find alternate daycare, and you want your parents to watch our kids every day. How about if your parents watch them one day a week and we'll put them in daycare on the other days?"
  - "I'm willing to stop complaining about owing your parents money if you're willing to come with me to see a financial counselor."
  - "I want to politely refuse your parents' gift and you want to accept it. How about if we tell them we will accept the gift as long as there are no strings attached?"
  - "I'm willing to \_\_\_\_\_ if you're willing to \_\_\_\_\_." (For example: I'm willing to make love to you four times a week for a month<sup>21</sup> if you're willing to give your parents two weeks notice that you aren't going to work for them anymore.)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband's parents<sup>22</sup>?
  - We will respectfully tell his parents we will be moving out of their house [next month].
  - When my husband's parents give us a gift with strings attached, I will clarify their motives before accepting it.
  - We will pay his parents the money we owe them; we will use a lending institute for future loans.
  - My husband will call his parents and tell them we have decided to change our daycare arrangements.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>21</sup> Just to clarify, it's okay to negotiate a win-win compromise with sex as the reward, but it's not okay to withhold sex as punishment.

<sup>22</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "Don't Stand So Close To Me" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.

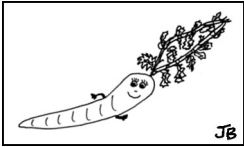
Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's parents might say, "You'll never make it on your own; just be grateful we are so generous.")

4. Here's what we will do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>23</sup>:

- We will stand firm and respectfully repeat our decisions to them without backing down even if they are disappointed, hurt, or angry.
- We will set boundaries even if they try to make us feel guilty, inconsiderate, rude, or ungrateful for wanting financial independence.
- We will chicken out and stay financially dependent on them even though we are capable adults.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>23</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.



## Problem Issue # 10: CHILDREN

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about raising our kids:
  - My husband and I would make parenting decisions as a couple without worrying whether or not his parents approved.
  - We would not discuss our parenting decisions with his parents.
  - We would not tolerate it when his parents criticize our parenting skills or refuse to follow the rules we have for our kids.
  - We would insist his folks call first or wait for an invitation instead of just dropping by to see the kids.
  - We would confront his parents about competing with the other set of grandparents for our child's love and attention.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises with my husband:
  - "I'm willing to stop saying your parents are too nose-y if you're willing to start discussing parenting decisions with me instead of them."
  - "I'd like for us to make decisions as a couple based on input from books, magazines, and friends instead of just taking your parents' advice about everything. If you're willing to do that, then I'm willing to stop complaining that your parents give too much advice."
  - "I'm willing to let our son spend more time with your folks if you're willing to back me up when I [tell them to ask for our permission before taking him somewhere] or [tell them to stop buying him such expensive gifts]."
  - "I'm not willing to let your parents invite themselves over whenever they want to just because they want to see the grandkids. However, I am willing to drop the kids off to visit them next Friday if that is convenient for your parents."
  - "I'm willing to be flexible about some rules when our kids are with your folks, but I'm not willing to be flexible about [their bedtime]."
  - "I'm willing to invite your parents for a visit if you're willing to tell them we want them to stop competing with my parents for our children's love and attention."
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

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Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband's parents<sup>24</sup>?

- When my husband's parents offer too much advice, we will say, "Thanks for your advice, but we've decided to do something else."
- I will tell them they must call first or wait for an invitation instead of dropping by to see the kids whenever they want.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's parents might say, "You would be wise to let us help you raise your kids since we have so much experience.")

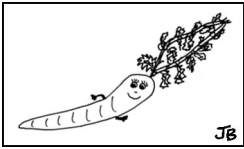
4. Here's what we will do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>25</sup>:

- We will stand firm and follow through on our parenting decisions even if they don't approve, or they try to make us feel guilty, disrespectful, or foolish for not taking their advice.
- We will restate our needs without backing down even if they get upset.
- We will let them decide how to raise our kids even though we are the parents.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>24</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "How Many Forms of Birth Control Can I Safely Use at One Time?" from the book, [A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents](#) by Jenna D. Barry.

<sup>25</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, [A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents](#) by Jenna D. Barry.



## Problem Issue # 11: ELDER CARE

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the wife.

1. If I were Boss of the Universe, these are the rules I would make about taking care of my husband's elderly parents:
  - My husband's parents would move to a [senior apartment / assisted living facility / nursing home].
  - My husband and I would seek the help of friends, relatives, and professionals in order to take care of his parents.
  - We would stop helping them with things they are capable of doing themselves.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. If I decided to be Mrs. Loving Wife (instead of Boss of the Universe), I would consider some of the following compromises with my husband:
  - "I'm willing to help your parents with transportation and meals, but I'm not willing to bathe them or help them go to the bathroom. Are you willing to do those things, or should we hire a professional?"
  - "I'm not willing to drive your father to all of his doctor appointments, but I am willing to pay a company to transport him in a van equipped for wheelchairs."
  - "I'm willing to do your dad's cooking and laundry if you're willing to pay his bills and entertain him for an hour each night."
  - "I'm not willing to be your parents' primary caregiver, but I am willing to find a reputable homecare worker who can give your parents the proper care they need."
  - "I'm willing to research how to make your parents' home safe for them if you're willing to stop insisting they move in with us."
  - "I'm not willing to let your parents come live with us, but I am willing to do some research to find an adult home or assisted living facility to help meet your parents' needs for safety, social activities, and well-balanced meals."
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Stop now and read your compromises aloud to each other. Negotiate until you agree on a fair solution. Take breaks if you need to get your emotions under control or you need to get a fresh perspective. Write the agreed upon solution(s) here. \_\_\_\_\_

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Now discuss the next two questions until you can reach an agreement.

3. How will we communicate this decision to my husband's parents<sup>26</sup>?
  - We will visit my husband's parents and ask them whether they would like to move into an assisted living facility or have a homecare worker come to their house.
  - I will call my mother-in-law and let her know I won't be available to drive her to the doctor on Friday and then ask whether she would prefer a friend, neighbor, relative, or taxi service to take her instead.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>26</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "Help I've Fallen... Could You Bring Me My Roller Blades?" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.

Stop now and anticipate as a couple how your husband's parents might react to your new behavior. (For instance, your husband's mom might say, "I'll be so lonely if you don't let me move in with you.")

4. Here's what we will do if my husband's parents have a negative reaction<sup>27</sup>:

- We will be respectful toward my husband's parents, but we will stand our ground even if they are disappointed, hurt, or angry.
- We will hold strong to what we agreed upon even if they try to make us feel guilty, inconsiderate, selfish, or unloving for having needs that conflict with theirs.
- We will cave under pressure and agree to all of their demands even if it destroys our marriage, health, and social life.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>27</sup> For ideas on specific sentences to use with his parents, see the chapter entitled "We Don't Need No Stinking Boundaries" from the book, A Wife's Guide To In-laws: How To Gain Your Husband's Loyalty Without Killing His Parents by Jenna D. Barry.