

A friend's miscarriage, Dad's in charge & MIL woes

By Denise Schipani



her, concentrate on her and what she needs: a cup of coffee, a walk, a movie, whatever else you normally do with her. If she wants to talk about her loss, encourage her by just listening. Only talk about your impending motherhood if *she* brings it up. Think of it this way: your pregnancy is just one part of who you are, and you were friends before this and before, tragically, she lost her child. She needs those other parts of you now.

Q I'm getting ready for my first business trip since my second baby was born six months ago. The kids are in day care, but I've arranged for some extra help in the evenings. My husband is annoyed—he says I don't have any faith in him. Help! Well, *do* you have faith in him? I'm sorry if that seems blunt, but I'm being serious. There are no one-way streets in the husband-wife relationship, or by extension, in the mother-father relationship. That's a way of saying that it may not be that your husband is untrustworthy; you may be projecting your fears onto him. Could it be that you suspect he can't handle having the kids in the evenings, and your doubt is undermining his confidence?

The fact that he grumped about your lack of faith in him suggests that he lacks confidence in his parenting abilities. Try to look beyond his annoyance to understand his feelings.

Q I'm pregnant, due with my first child in a couple of months. A close friend recently had a miscarriage, and now I feel as if she's avoiding seeing me and talking about my pregnancy. I'm sensitive to her loss, but I'm excited to have a baby and can't help but talk about it sometimes. How can we work through this?

Your poor friend. Although I've never gone through it, I've been close to friends and family members who've lost babies through miscarriage, and it's heartbreaking. Your friend may not be able to be happy for you, at least not right now, but you *have* to be there for

her. If that means keeping your mouth shut about your baby's kicks or your latest ultrasound, so be it. You don't need to apologize for being pregnant, however. Just don't talk about it. You say you can't help it, but I bet you really can. If you're with

Right now, your grieving friend needs you. Go to the movies or for coffee—save pregnancy talk for later.

Ask him point-blank: “Would you like me to un-hire the help? I thought maybe you’d feel overwhelmed picking them up from day care and doing dinner, baths, and bed on your own.” See what he says. Maybe you can strike a compromise; instead of extra babysitting help, he might like some company, such as getting together for dinner with family or close friends on one of the nights you’re away. I know that when my husband used to take short business

trips, it wasn’t so much that I couldn’t *handle* my kids on my own, but that I’d feel lonely doing so.

A couple of things to sum up: don’t hire extra sitters out of guilt (yours) for leaving; you should never feel guilty for having to travel for work (or pleasure). And don’t sell your hubby short. He’s their dad, not some second-string player. Everyone will survive. No, *thrive*. The first night or two may be tough, but he’ll soon get up to speed. Have a nice trip!

Q My mother-in-law confronted my husband about not seeing her granddaughter enough. We visit every couple of weeks, but as working parents, it’s difficult. Plus, my husband works one weekend day, so we get only one day as a family. Any suggestions?

You *can* find a middle ground, but first you need to clear up the confrontation problem. Have your husband reassure his mom that you do want your daughter to see her more often, but it’s tough with your tricky schedule, and it’s tougher still when you feel pressured by her. Next, brainstorm ways to work in more frequent visits. How about inviting your MIL over for lunch on that one weekend day your hubby works? If she’s



game, after lunch she can take your daughter to the mall or the park while you catch up on some things at home (she doesn’t have to know you’re watching a DVD or updating your Facebook page). Or see if you and your daughter can come to her place late in the day, then have your husband

join you there when he gets off work. Another option: ask if she’d enjoy picking up her granddaughter at day care and coming to your house for an early weekday supper. If you’re proactive and you plan, you’ll go a long way to making her happy—and taking the pressure off all of you.

At publication time, Denise Schipani was planning to take a four-day trip, leaving her husband to deal on the home front. She blogs at confessionsofameanmommy.com.