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WALL STREET WIVES' CLUB

One isolated new mother struggles to communicate with her distracted, overworked hedge-fund husband while reconnecting with her girlfriends outside the suburbs.



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Dear Dr. Cass:

I am a 34-year-old mother of two and have been married for 5 years. My marriage started off great as my husband and I were able to travel and maintain social lives. As the years passed, we had our first child and relocated to Greenwich, Connecticut, where we bought our first home together. My husband was progressively moving up the ranks as a portfolio manager in a NY hedge fund, with his annual income growing steadily. We could finally afford nice things and I truly believed that our lives were going to keep getting better.

Our lifestyle changed drastically with the move to Greenwich and my husband's newfound success on Wall Street. He was working longer hours and commuting almost two hours per day to and from work. I had decided to take a leave of absence from my job to spend time with our newborn. I missed my "girls' nights outs" in the city and started to feel trapped at home. My husband paid for a live-in nanny, but that was no solace for me socially. We stopped traveling and definitely talked less when he finally made it home from work every evening. Thinking that two children would keep me occupied, I decided to take an indefinite leave of absence from my teaching position for our second child.

My husband became more stressed out at work because he had two new mouths to feed. He stopped communicating. He basically stopped trying to be a good husband. I also made the mistake of focusing on being more of a mother than a wife, but I guess that's normal. I feel fortunate to have two beautiful children now, but sometimes I feel like my marriage is not what I predicted it to be. In many ways I feel like it's just me and my kids and I'm starting to resent my husband's job for what it has done to our time together. So to get to the point, is this normal and how do I save my marriage before it's too late?

Sincerely,
Suburbs Wife

Dear Suburbs Wife: Thank you for reaching out and asking for guidance about your situation. The initial stages of marriage and parenthood are tumultuous for most couples. In your case, it seems you lost a great deal of your identity in the process of becoming a mother. You have taken on a great deal of responsibility and have lost all outlets for being "just you." Spending time with your kids is rewarding, but can also become very disorienting when you are away from other adults for long periods of time. The key is to use your resources like the live-in nanny, to allow yourself some freedoms like getting out of the home, and to stay in touch with friends. Even quick phone calls or club/charity meetings are important ways to stay connected.

As for your husband, I guarantee that he is experiencing a similar transition into fatherhood. Many fathers start off enjoying their children but also can feel slighted when their wives pour all of their attention on the child. He is likely burned out from a long commute and can't do some of the activities that he once enjoyed. Remember, your husband probably hasn't explored why he feels frustrated or overwhelmed and thus, doesn't know what to talk about with you. In many cases, men want recognition and affirmation for their work, just as you do.

Therefore, improving the communication is of paramount importance. Tell him your needs and ask him what he would like to smooth out this transition. One child is tough enough, but two can really make you forget that you have a marriage to keep strong. Allow your husband some "decompression time" when he comes home and then let him know that you want time with him just to talk as a dyad. Make this a daily routine and try to remember that both of you have to keep a marriage fresh and interesting. Drop the kids off with grandparents for an evening and go on a date with each other. Check out our [Wall Street Wives' Club](#) if you would like to mingle with other women going through similar issues. I hope this helps.

-Dr. Cass

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Wall Street Wives' Club

This group was formed to empower and serve the needs of wives and girlfriends whose husbands or significant others work in the stressful and volatile brokerage community. The pressure-filled aspects of financial-sector jobs often lead men to feel depressed, weak, incompetent, isolated, anxious and emotionally exhausted.

Long work hours often impair the communication between partners in a relationship. Often it is as if the couple has become "two ships passing in the night." Men are often uncomfortable expressing their feelings. Therefore, their partners need to understand how to reach them to bolster their relationship and feel more in control of their own lives.

Women suffer along with their significant others and can feel equally as isolated if their partners refuse to seek help or discuss their feelings. Women may begin abusing alcohol or illegal drugs as a means of coping. Unfortunately, this leads to the destruction of lives, families, and marriages.

Dr. Alden Cass and his co-leader, Susan Pasini, are experienced professionals who have worked collectively for the financial services industry for 30 years. Dr. Cass understands the psyche of the male executive on Wall Street and how they think and deal with their stresses. Within this process/skill-building group, the two group leaders plan to teach women better ways to approach their significant others without making them feel inferior or defensive. Women will have the chance to vent their frustrations and get feedback and validation from the group and staff.

The group comprises women from all walks of life who are in need of a forum in which they can confidentially discuss their concerns, frustrations and successes with other women who have faced or are currently dealing with the same situations. These individuals learn how to approach their significant others in the hopes of encouraging them to get help and can learn how to identify risk factors in their significant others before they negatively impact the marriage, relationship, or one of the partners individually. To make attendance at our meetings possible, we encourage our group members to bring their children to our offices. Your children will be watched by one of our counselors (i.e., music therapist, play therapist) while you have the chance to decompress and become part of our group.

The Wall Street Wives Club will benefit your life in many ways. Here are some of the benefits:

1. A chance to be social and see that you are not the only one in a difficult relationship.
2. The value of a supportive process group comprising women just like you.
3. The chance to learn about the real stressors faced by your significant other.
4. The chance to learn skills that foster communication with your partner
5. The convenience of bringing your children to this meeting and to give your child a chance to make potential friends while you attend group.
6. To understand your feelings and how to better understand your partners'.

For more information, visit <http://www.catsg.com/>.

Keep the letters coming!

Dr. Alden M. Cass, President of Catalyst Strategies Group, is a licensed clinical psychologist who works with traders and risk managers to help them achieve financial, corporate, and personal goals. See his [full profile](#), or visit his [website](#). Send questions to Dr. Cass at acass@catsg.com and he will answer you in later columns.

alden cass

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