

Dr. Joyce Brothers Custody often helps children

DEAR DR. BROTHERS: I recently got a divorce and was shocked and depressed at how the judge divided custody of my children. I was granted custody of my daughter. However, even though my two boys and I have been unusually close, my former husband was awarded custody of them.

It's no comfort to know that I can see them during the summer and on weekends. This is hardly the point for I'm aware that one can't keep a family together by these sort of off-again, on-again visits. My parents tell me to keep fighting this very unfair decision. In the meantime, how can I best keep my family together? — T.G.

DEAR T.G.: This may seem harsh advice but one of the best ways to make your children secure is to try to be supportive of

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your former husband and to remember that he is still their father.

If you carry your resentment of this custody decision to your youngsters, they're bound to feel even more displaced and anxious than they might be normally.

I'm sure you don't want to hear this, but studies indicate that there's much to be said for granting fathers custody of boys and mothers custody of girls if both

are capable of being adequate parents.

Research done at the University of Texas showed that when children live with same-sex parents after divorce they tend to be warmer, less demanding, more mature, more sociable, more independent and to have higher self-esteem than children living with a parent of the opposite sex.

One reason may be that it's easier to avoid the emotional tangles that arise when a child becomes an emotional substitute for a spouse. Youngsters with same-sex parents also have strong adult role models.

Before you appeal this case, you might at least try to see how things work out under the present custody ruling.

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DEAR DR. BROTHERS: I'm

only 30 years old and already I'm having trouble making love to my wife. I'm very worried. For two nights in a row, I've been impotent. Naturally, I went to my doctor, but he found nothing physically wrong.

He suggested maybe it was because I'm having an especially difficult time at work, but this is nothing new. I'm afraid my wife will find somebody else if something doesn't happen to end this nightmare. What can I do? — J.C.

DEAR J.C.: Stop pushing the panic button, relax and accept that this happens every once in a while to the most virile of men. The more you worry, the more anxious you become, the less apt you'll be to be able to perform. Impotence can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If your wife loves you, she'll un-

derstand. If you have a marriage that is good, there are many reasons she loves and respects you that have nothing to do with bed.

She's not any more apt to run off with the first good-looking male than you are to leave her for a pretty face the first time she has a headache or comes down with the flu.

Get a good night's sleep, watch your drinking because alcohol can affect your ability as a lover, and relax. This will soon be a part of your past. It will probably happen again at different times throughout your life because you're tired, worried about something, because you're irritated with your wife and haven't been able to discuss it, or for any number of reasons.

The point is, it's usually no more important than you and your partner make it.