

Shared finances are the ties that bind man and his mom

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 22-year-old college student. My boyfriend of seven years and I are engaged. Because we were high school sweethearts, we have watched each other grow into the people we are today.

For the most part, I'm very proud of the person he has become. When I quit my full-time job to continue my education, he stepped up to support me. I never asked for it, nor did I expect it from him.

"Liam" is very frugal. ("Cheap" might be a better word.) I never understood it because he makes enough money to support us both and put plenty into savings. However, I recently learned that every payday, his mother calls, and he goes to her house and gives her money. It wouldn't bother me if she was ill, unemployed, etc., but she's well-off and earns a good living.

Abby, what concerns me is that while Liam is 24 years old, he has a shared bank account with his mother. She seems to call him only on payday, EVERY payday, without fail. She also seems to have more control of his spending than he does. He won't pay his bills without first consulting her. She was very clear when she told him he had spent too much on my engagement ring.

I don't want to come between Liam and his mother, but I'm not sure I can marry them both. It's not that I want his money, but after we're married, I feel the husband and wife should share bank accounts and bills, not my husband and



DEAR ABBY

his mother.

Do I have a right to be concerned with this matter? — **FRUGAL FIANCEE IN FLORIDA**

DEAR FIANCEE: You and Liam need to have a frank talk about money. There may be a reasonable explanation why he gives his mother money every payday. (She may invest it for him.) But you'll never know if you don't ask. While "Mama" may not have been overjoyed at the amount her son spent on your engagement ring, it appears she did approve his chipping in for your education, so she's not what I'd call a miser.

That said, I cannot stress enough how important it is for you and Liam to be on the same page when it comes to finances and how decisions will be made after your marriage. Premarital counseling covers subjects like this because marriages have been known to fail when couples disagree about money.

DEAR ABBY: I am a contractor. My job requires me to stay at a job site from three days to six months. I am happily married with

one child who is grown, gone and has a child of his own.

My son and I are estranged, and have had no contact in 10 years. When making small talk on the job site, inevitably the question comes up, "Do you have children?" I don't want to get into that part of my life, but I also don't want to alienate people who are trying to be friendly.

If I say "yes," I am lying. If I say "yes," it opens up a can of worms, like "Where does he live?" "Do you see him often?" etc. If I reveal that I am a grandparent, it can get especially uncomfortable. Do you have any advice on how to handle this situation gracefully? — **NO EASY ANSWERS IN THE MIDWEST**

DEAR NO EASY ANSWERS: Yes, I do. Be honest and say, "I have a son and we are estranged." You don't have to give more details than that, and you may be surprised when the person you're talking to says, "Me, too!" The situation is not as uncommon as you may think — as I discovered not long ago when I attended a luncheon and realized the common denominator among the guests was they were all estranged from their children or stepchildren.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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			9	4		2
	3					
9	7	4		5	1	6
8	4			2	7	
	5				1	
		9	7		2	8
		3	1	6	2	9
					5	
4			8	7		

Instructions for play: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

That's all there is to it. There's no math involved. The grid has numbers, but nothing has to add up to anything else. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic. It's fun. It's challenging. It's addictive!

Solving time is typically from 10 to 30 minutes, depending on your skill and experience.

The solution for today's puzzle will be published in Saturday's paper. Or you can go to www.sudoku.com to find the solution.

3	4	9	5	1	8	6	7	2
7	6	8	2	9	4	5	3	1
2	5	1	7	3	6	9	8	4
5	9	4	1	2	7	3	6	8
8	1	7	3	6	9	4	2	5
6	3	2	4	8	5	7	1	9
1	8	6	9	4	3	2	5	7
9	7	3	8	5	2	1	4	6
4	2	5	6	7	1	8	9	3

HOROSCOPES

ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, take the high road when you find yourself in the midst of a disagreement with a friend. It may be tempting to stick to your guns, but the disagreement is nothing too significant.

TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

Much is going on, Taurus, and you have trouble zeroing in on a focal point. Unless you make a list of all you want to accomplish, you may get lost in the shuffle.

GEMINI - May 22/Jun 21

You sometimes change your moods on a whim, Gemini. But lately you have been more steadfast in your convictions. This behavior will continue for some time.

CANCER - Jun 22/Jul 22

Don't make any rash moves in the next few days, Cancer. For whatever reason your common sense meter is a little off. You may want to run ideas past a trusted friend for a while.

LEO - Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, unless you try you will never be able to tell if something is within your capabilities. Do not be afraid to fail. It's better than putting in no effort at all.

VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you're wearing your heart on your sleeve this week. Don't worry, as your willingness to share your emotions will endear you to others.

LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

There are only so many hours in the day, Libra. You need to pick and choose your activities accordingly. You likely will not be able to squeeze everything in.

SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, if you want to get involved in something, then by all means give it your best shot. If it's something foreign to you, let others take the reigns until you're more comfortable.

SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

A new perspective is all you need to feel better this week, Sagittarius. A change of scenery or even looking to an old friend for advice can make a real difference.

CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

The friends you thought you could count on turn out to be the real deal, Capricorn. Just see what they have in store for you this week. You will be so surprised.

AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

It is okay to have strong opinions, Aquarius. But respect the opinions of others who may disagree with your point of view. Learn how to walk away from pointless situations.

PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

There's more to the story than meets the eye, Pisces. Quick judgement may land you in hot water. Wait for the dust to settle.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST 31
Richard Gere, Actor (65)

SEPTEMBER 1
Barry Gibb, Singer (68)

SEPTEMBER 2
Keanu Reeves, Actor (50)

SEPTEMBER 3
James Neal, Athlete (27)

SEPTEMBER 4
Wes Bentley, Actor (36)

SEPTEMBER 5
Arnel Pineda, Singer (47)

SEPTEMBER 6
Jane Curtin, Actress (66)

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Skill
6 Korean or Thai

DOWN

1 Unsettling
2 Strict boss

3 Hand-some youth
4 Going rate?

5 Wood-working aid
6 Cash dispenser

7 Mermaid's home
8 White Rabbit's plaint

9 Summits
10 Nudged, like a horse

16 Some escape routes
20 Cry of anticipation

21 Wing
24 New reporter

25 Entice

41 Start after

42 Looks like

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