

WOMEN & MONEY

Refusal to control your money is a sign of powerlessness

BY SUZE ORMAN
Special To Florida Weekly



Q: My sister is married and has a job that pays very well. I have strong suspicions that her husband is being unfaithful. I know she has her suspicions, too, but she wants to stay with him no matter what. He has taken charge of investing a large part of her income. I worry that if he should decide to leave her, he would walk away with not only an expensive degree (earned while she was supporting him), but also a big chunk of her earnings.

What investment moves can I can gently encourage her to make so if it does come to divorce, she won't be fleeced by her poorer but more financially savvy spouse?

Suze: The issue we're dealing with here is at least as much about your sister gaining self-worth as it is about protecting her endangered net worth -- although, believe me, protecting her money is important. When a person in a situation like hers refuses to take control of her money, it's a sure sign that she feels powerless over her personal life. And that's a very dangerous position to be in.

Why does your sister allow her possibly unfaithful husband to take charge of her income? Most likely she is subconsciously saying to him, "Hey, I trust you with my money, I trust you with my life -- you wouldn't misuse my emotional and financial trust, would you?"

This is not only a form of denial, as you point out, but it's also a laying-on of guilt. If your sister makes her husband feel guilty enough, her thinking may be that he won't leave her -- but this isn't a tactic that's likely

to work. Powerlessness repels money and it repels people.

How bad is your sister's situation? Are the investments her husband has been making in both of their names? Does she see the monthly statements? Or is she so self-destructive that she's not even looking at what he does with her money? Either way, is she willing to change? What amazes me is that your sister, like so many women I know, has the ability to earn serious money -- perhaps even manage her company's finances -- and yet when it comes to her own money, she turns her back on it. She's letting buried emotions -- most likely fear, shame and anger -- render her powerless, and the end result is a diminishment of who she is and what she has.

On a practical level, your sister first needs to take back her power by assuming control of the money she's earning now. Then she should sit down with her husband and have him show her every move he's making with her money. Most important, she must tell him that from this point on she wants to be involved in all financial decisions. If he refuses, she's in big trouble and needs to consult an attorney.

As her sister and friend, you must help her do this. If I were you, I would stop hiding how I feel. Encourage her to be courageous and honest, and lead by example. But be careful: If you take the position that she is merely a victim of her circumstances, you're stripping her of the power that lies within her. That power is the only thing that can see her through with her net worth -- and self-worth -- intact. ■

— Suze Orman is a best-selling author and Emmy award-winning TV host whose new book, "Women and Money," was published in March 2007. For details, please visit www.suzeorman.com.

International airport wins national award

Southwest Florida International Airport received a top industry award from Airports Council International - North America in the 2007 Excellence in Marketing and Communications Contest. The airport received first place in the category Best Special Events for its first anniversary event held in September 2006 that celebrated the first full year of operations in the airport's new terminal facility.

The competition, which is held annually, received almost 300 entries from over 70 airports of all sizes throughout the U.S. and Canada. The total number of entries encompasses categories that recognize work in marketing and public relations and provides airports the opportunity to be honored for the quality of their work. The 2007 contest judges included 37 communications and marketing professionals in the Washington, D.C.-area.

The entry, titled "Time Flies...Celebrating our First Year at Southwest Florida International Airport," chronicled the event held on Sept. 8, 2006. Lee County Port Authority staff decided to commemorate this milestone with a full-blown 1st birthday party that included finding area 1-year-olds that were

born on the same day the airport opened. Five "birthday babies" from various areas in Southwest Florida responded and attended with their families. A commemorative logo was created and used in all promotional materials to ensure a consistent message as well as signage, balloons and promotional items such as chocolate airplane lollipops and anniversary buttons given out in the terminal during the event.

ACI-NA represents local, regional and state governing bodies that own and operate commercial airports in the United States and Canada. ACI-NA member airports enplane more than 95 percent of the domestic and virtually all international airline passenger and cargo traffic in North America. Over 300 aviation-related businesses are also members of the association, which is the largest of the six worldwide regions of Airports Council International. ■

Southwest Florida International Airport served more than 7.6 million passengers in 2006 and is one of the top 50 busiest U.S. airports. For more information, log onto www.flylcpa.com

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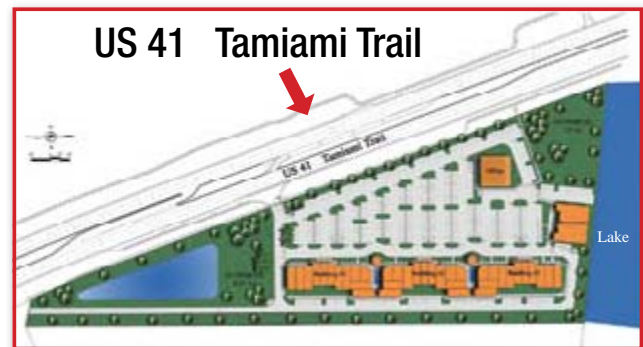
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