

**Family Life... Husband's comment:
"You ought to be ashamed of yourself."**

Situation:

Last night as we were getting ready for bed at about 10:30, and I mumbled something about forgetting to go down to the basement to take some damp clothes out of the washer and hang them up to finish drying. It had been a long day, and I was really tired. My husband of 25 years then said to me: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for being so lazy." Needless to say I got furious, but chose not to reply.

I'm really tired of his crude remarks after all these years. He doesn't spout off too often, but when he does it hurts. What can I do?

Answer:

Good for you for not adding to the tension of the moment. It shows that you value your emotional health! Letting someone "have it with both barrels" is not conducive to restful sleep – for either of you.

I know, that you know, that you can't control anything outside of you. If your husband has a habit of occasionally making berating comments – like it or not – that's his average. If you've talked to him before about it, and he hasn't changed, you could choose to discuss it with him again. Then again, there is another tactic that you may want to consider.

Like it or not, sometimes we invite those less-than-polite comments. We're better off keeping our self-berating comments to ourselves.

If your husband specifically asked if the clothes were dry and you answered him honestly, that's one thing. But if out of the blue, you announced it, just because the thought was in your mind, well, that's another matter.

So often when we think we're "wrong" for doing or not doing something – we look to our outer environment for approval. It could be that you just didn't get the answer you were consciously or sub-consciously expecting.

Perhaps a part of you really hoped to hear something like: "That's OK sweetheart, you can take care of those clothes tomorrow. I know it's been a long day and you're tired. Your rest is more important than the clothes." When we look for validation outside ourselves, very often we're disappointed. In fact I'd say that most of the time we are.

Sounds as though your focus was on what you didn't get done. Instead you could have been giving yourself a good dose of self-applause for all the efforts that you did put in that day.

The next time you think you're wrong about something, even as little as not finishing a non-critical task, remind yourself that you're not wrong, you're average. Once you erase the guilt or inner-directed anger, there's no need to talk about it. You've absolved it. And by absolving it – there's nothing left there to escape your lips.

In relationships it's natural to want validation. It's also crucial to want peace. We can't have outer peace unless we have inner peace first.

You did very well controlling your speech muscles when you were angry at your husband. Now you know that you can control those same muscles and not say anything out loud when you're mad at yourself.



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