

CAN I PURSUE MY CAREER, OR SHOULD I GIVE IT UP FOR MY FAMILY? ASK ELLIE



ELLIE TESHER
Column

Q I'm happily married to my adorable wife for 11 years. We have two sons, ages six and three. I'm an engineer, and my wife's a biologist.

Unfortunately, I don't work in my field of study and it's been frustrating for me. I feel that I can do much better, but I haven't been able to land that dream job.

However, my wife works in health care and she earns well. Despite the fact that her current role isn't exactly what she expected - i.e., working in genetics - it pays the bills so we're able to have a middle-class lifestyle.

Recently, I received an exciting job offer in the United Kingdom. I'd like to accept. My wife could easily find a job in London, but she's not keen about moving there.

Yet she'd give me her blessing and let me embark on this adventure by myself for the time being, if this is what I need to feel more appreciated.

I don't want to leave my family, but feel torn. The is-

sue's causing much strain in our relationship.

I'm nearly 50. Should I pursue my dreams or just accept that it's too late and I need to concentrate on my family's needs?

My Dreams or My Family?

A You've made your case for feeling that this is your one big chance to progress in your career of choice. Your wife has given you the green light to go away for the job on your own.

Yet there's "strain" on your relationship. And you say this is what you need to "feel more appreciated."

With two small children and her job on which you've both been depend-

ing for middle-class comforts, how is she going to manage if you're away?

The likely answer: More babysitting and/or housekeeper costs, and a lot of responsibilities for just one parent. To me, it sounds like a setup for more than distance coming between you.

If the job offer were for a limited period of time, the answer would be far easier, especially if you could use the experience to attract a similarly good position in your field back home.

But that's not something that you can count on.

Unfortunately, it's more likely that you settle in overseas, and your wife has to give up her job and travel

to join you with the children, if you wish to keep your family intact.

For that reason, I suggest a maximum of a six-month trial on your part. Take the job, rent enough space for the family to visit, and encourage your wife to take a one-month vacation to visit you with the children and see whether and how your family adapts.

Q: My partner and I are breaking up with shared custody of our five-year-old. But how do we handle the first Christmas?

I don't want to attend her family's annual Christmas party because she hasn't told her parents we're splitting up, but her

drama-queen sister's sure to announce it and cause a huge reaction. Will our child feel that Christmas is a bust if we don't do what we've always done before?

A Different Christmas

A: Create new Christmas routines both apart and together. Example: Plan a small get-together for yourselves and child, and another family with similar-age children.

Then get outside, to a Christmas venue or a park, so that the holiday has varied events. Once you've both settled separately and stay agreeable, your child will adapt.

ELLIE'S TIP

Moving far from a loving wife and small children for a "dream job," has marital risks. Set a six-month "trial" period.

Ellie Teshler is an advice columnist based in Toronto. Send your relationship questions via email: ellie@thestar.ca.

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