



# BE FREE WITH MIZZB

ASK A  
loveLife  
COUNSELLOR



## CONTROL YOUR OWN MONEY

As we mark the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, it's important to look at financial abuse – a form of abuse not often discussed in the media.

Financial abuse can happen in many different ways and includes your partner not giving you access to a bank account or forcing you to hand over your salary.

Other examples occur when your partner refuses to let you work or study or when he refuses to contribute to paying bills or buying essential household items like food, clothes or medicine.

Financial abuse is a common tactic used to gain control in a relationship and may be subtle or obvious. It generally includes limiting the partner's access to finances or information about the family's finances. The effects of financial abuse can be devastating.

Victims feel trapped, stressed and frustrated as they don't have the freedom to buy what

they need or to contribute to the family's financial decisions. Nobody has the right to financially abuse you in any way.

It's important to be aware so you don't become a victim of this type of abuse. If your partner encourages you to relax and stop working because he'll take care of the bills, carefully consider the suggestion before leaving your job. Without your own salary, your partner has more power to control you.

And if he becomes abusive, it'll be hard to leave the relationship as you and children, if you have them, will have become dependent. You should also think twice if your partner says you should have a joint bank account as this also takes away your personal control.

Some cultures state that the man is the head of the household and should be in charge of the family's money. However, cultural traditions like this should be expressed in a loving, caring and respectful way.

## My girlfriend's aunt doesn't like me

Dear MizzB

*I'm a 20-year-old guy and my girlfriend is 17 and in grade 11. Her aunt doesn't like me. My girlfriend wants a baby so she can run away from home. We love each other more than Romeo and Juliet.*

■ Confused

Dear Confused

Falling in love is wonderful. But families want what is best for their kids and this can mean being overprotective.

It's clear you and your girlfriend love each other. But her falling pregnant isn't a solution as it shows she's still too young to think about being a mum.

You both need to understand having a child will make matters worse with the aunt, who wants to protect her niece.

Your girlfriend must focus on her studies and future. If you both understand each other's needs and goals, nothing will stop you both from waiting for a better time to be together. Try speaking to the aunt.

## My married boyfriend's wasting my time!

Dear MizzB

*I'm 23 and the father of my baby is 40. He's married with two kids. We've been together for eight years and I've realised that he has been wasting my time. He says breaking up is not an option because our son needs both his parents. I feel useless and it's clear that we don't have a future together. When I try to move on, he sends me heartbreaking SMSes that make me change my mind.*

■ Anonymous

Dear Anonymous

Dating someone who is committed to someone else is emotionally challenging. Your happiness is your responsibility and you need to decide what your needs are and how to fulfil them. Being the best parents to your child doesn't depend on you two being in a relationship. Whether you break up or not, you can both be good parents to your son. Don't be afraid to take a stand and live your life to the full.



### NEED HELP?

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