



## DC505: My Wife Never Shuts Up

“My wife, Norma, never shuts up. She tells me which lane I should drive in. She tells me which shirt I should wear. She tells me when to shut the door. She tells me what I should do from morning to night. What does she think I did before I met her? Does she think I don’t know how to do anything? It’s becoming more than I can tolerate. I want to scream at her to shut up. Sometimes she even realizes that she’s being too controlling, but she says these things just pop out of her mouth before she can stop them, or she says she’s just trying to help.”

When you’re in the midst of being controlled, it’s easy to become confused and irritated, but this is still all about Real Love—for both of you. Norma feels empty and alone, so she gives you advice and tells you what to do, because for brief moments she feels like she has a PURPOSE in life. She feels WORTHWHILE. On occasion, as she controls you, she even feels POWERFUL. But it’s all an illusion, and it only lasts for a few seconds, or minutes at most. Then she has to do it again. And in the process she hurts your relationship.

This only bothers you because you’re not seeing her clearly, and you’re unable to love her unconditionally. Neither of you feels sufficiently loved. Both of you need to find more Real Love. You can’t make HER do that, but you CAN get more for yourself, and you can learn how to do that here on the website. But that’s a long-term process. What can you do in the short term to lessen the impact of her coming at you constantly with her barrage of criticism and controlling?

First, you can understand that her behavior is not about YOU. It’s all about HER lack of love. That alone should make a huge difference for you. You should be able to see her with compassion instead of irritation.

Second, you don’t have to RESPOND to each of the things she says. One of the reasons she tells you to change your shirt, for example, is that you LET her. She controls you because she gets a sense of POWER from it. If you don’t want to change your shirt, DON’T. You don’t have to change lanes. You don’t have to shut the door. You don’t have to respond to a thing she says. You just THINK you do. You need to experiment, in fact, with simply NOT responding, just to see what happens. It will be more effective if you sit down with her ahead of time and let her know that you’ll be doing this.

I suggest that you say something like this: “Norma, as you know it has really annoyed me when you tell me what to do: how to drive, what to wear, stuff like that. And I have been WRONG to get irritated about that. It has been unloving of me. It has had a negative effect on our marriage, and I don’t want that to happen anymore. I’m going to try something different. From now on, instead of getting irritated, I’m simply going to ignore you when I don’t want to do what you’re suggesting or when I think it’s none of your business. OR I may say, No thanks. But I won’t argue about it or get angry. That does no good. We’ll see how that works out.”

Notice that with this approach you’re not telling her to STOP her behavior. You’re letting her make her own choice—she can keep saying all that controlling stuff—and then you’re choosing either to respond to her or NOT. You’re staying out of a potential conflict as you learn to become more loving in your association with other loving people. You’ll discover an enormous freedom as you stay out of conflict and choose to add love to your relationship.