



Family Law

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Roxanne Shank
LAWYER

Q

My husband controls all our finances, including my paycheck. He does all our shopping including the grocery shopping, saying I don't know what to buy. My co-worker says he is abusive, he says he is caring. What is domestic abuse?

A

Domestic abuse takes many forms, and your statements give me pause. Financial control is a form of domestic abuse. Being unable to make decisions about simple family-related needs such as what groceries to buy or being unable to have any money of your own to purchase items that are a personal choice, is abusive, it is not caring.

This is different from a couple jointly deciding to stick to a budget; while money may be tight, when a couple jointly agrees on what to purchase and what to hold off on, there is freedom within this deal and both parties are able to purchase the agreed-upon items at will.

Not all domestic abuse takes the more familiar forms of physical abuse, or verbal abuse such as calling the other person vulgar or hurtful names. Domestic abuse can be coercive control and isolation, such as refusing to permit the other party to have friends or maintain family relationships. I noticed that you mentioned that you talked to

a co-worker, not family or friends; work is often the only environment an abusing spouse cannot control.

Another example of domestic abuse is gaslighting, which can for example look like hiding the other person's car keys and then when they are frantic with searching, producing them and telling them "You are so disorganized, crazy and forgetful, see they were right there."

These are only some forms of domestic abuse. I suggest you talk to your local women's shelter or go online from work after hours or at the library and investigate resources such as CLEO, or make an appointment with a family lawyer.

Your friends at Shank Law.



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