**Putting Your Husband First**

**Most experts say you should prioritize your partner over your kids**

*By Amber Doty for* [*YourTango*](http://www.yourtango.com/)

Less than one month after my husband and I were married—before I even had a chance to mail thank-you notes for our wedding gifts—I found myself holding what appeared to be, to my surprise, a positive prgnancy test. Weeks later, in a room lit only by the glow of an ultrasound screen, we learned that our baby's due date was exactly nine months from our wedding. As it turned out, our new life together wasn't the only one that began on that spring day.

Eight and a half months into our marriage, while we were still getting comfortable in our roles as husband and wife, we became Mom and Dad. We were newlyweds and parents. I won't say that our son was poorly planned—we were both anxious to start our family—but I will say that in hindsight becoming a mother in the same year that you become a wife is not for the weak. The first year of our son's life was the most difficult of our marriage to date and it is also the year I learned a very important lesson: My husband must always come before our children and, according to a survey of counseling professionals from YourTango, the lesson is a good one. Half of the experts polled believe that wives should prioritize their husband over their kids.

It is an admission often met with outrage when shared with my mom friends, and as novelist Ayelet Waldman knows all too well, with the general public. The wife of Pulitzer Prize–winning author Michael Chabon published a 2005 *New York Times* essay avowing her love for her husband first before her children, making clear the distinction that while she loves her kids she is not in love with them as she is with her husband. A media firestorm followed, with condemnations from mommy bloggers across the country and an invitation to *The Oprah Winfrey Show* to "explain herself."

After all, this goes against the golden rule of motherhood, the one that tells us being a good parent means sacrificing all for the happiness and well-being of our children. Putting aside our own needs for theirs is practically a requirement, but I'm sorry, I'm just not buying it.

Neither are many of the husbands who have commented on the article. One wrote that his wife's decision to prioritize their children over him has affected his emotional and physical health

"Any of her time, any effort, any attention, any affection, any money, any ANYTHING was totally devoted to the kids! If I got any attention from her, it was to berate me over one more of my apparently endless shortcomings as a father," he wrote, adding that he considered, but ultimately decided against, divorce because he "couldn't get past the idea that a good man just doesn't DO that to his wife and kids."

Another commenter, Scott, wrote, "As someone that is [in] a marriage in which the wife chose to prioritize the children over the relationship, I can say that it really sucks. Now we are at the point the kids will all be out of the house and we have nothing upon which to base our marriage. And I was told point blank that I was not as important as the kids."

But, to some, the concept that kids would ever come second seems ludicrous."Your child should come first until they're an adult. I mean come on!" YourTango member Jordan wrote. "Are you really going to put your grown spouse before your baby?"

Commenter Patricia Mitchell agreed. "The husband and you can divorce and then there are your children that are left with you. Children did not ask to come into this world. Children definitely take priority," she wrote.

While I understand Patricia's point on the possible impermanence of marriage versus the indissoluble bond between a mother and child, I view my investment in my relationship with my spouse as one that is beneficial to our family as a whole. Prioritizing my husband's needs decreases the likelihood of divorce and increases the probability that our children will remain in a two-parent home.

Another commenter points out the positive impact that comes from raising children in a home with parents who choose to put their marriage first. "Think of how many marriages fall apart because spouses stop making each other a priority and instead focus the majority of their time and attention on the children... Having a stable, happy household allows kids to simply be kids and not worry about why Mommy and Daddy are constantly fighting," wrote user Kate Richlin-Zack

I strongly believe that modeling a healthy relationship for our children is the foundation on which the rest of their lives are built. My husband and I are the first example of what a marriage should be like, our interactions with one another teach our children how they should treat their future significant others and what they should expect in return. Raising them in a home with parents who clearly value one another is key to their growth into adults, who in turn form healthy bonds with their partners.

For me this means putting my husband first. With very few exceptions, you will not find children in our bed at night. If we can only afford to take one vacation a year, we take it alone, and I feel no guilt about soliciting the help of family so that we can have a date night where we talk about anything but our children.

In a few years, our son and daughter will leave our home, and when they do, I want to celebrate a job well done with my lover, not sit in a quiet house with a person who has become a stranger as a result of years of quietly drifting apart