

Family Life... The dog came before me

S i t u a t i o n :

When I went to visit my sister, she showed me the get-well card that my wife sent from us. Sally thought it was really cute that my wife signed it from Mary, April and Doug. Mary is my wife, April is our dog and I'm Doug. Actually I didn't think it was funny at all. Not one bit. How cruel! The dog takes second place and I'm last?

I mentioned it to Mary when I got home and she just said I'm hypersensitive? Am I?

A n s w e r :

Ouch! Your self-importance got stepped on. Often people do things that upset us, but not necessarily to upset us. Do you think that as your wife was signing the get-well card she consciously thought to herself, "Now how can I do this in a way that will get Doug all riled up?" Probably not! This is one of those IFD's, an Irritation, Frustration and certainly a Disappointment for you.

Lots of people are more sensitive than others. One way to be less sensitive when things happen is to change your attitude – by changing your thoughts about who you think is right and who's wrong.

Mary's not wrong, she's average. Really, she is average. I'll bet you she's not the first wife in the world who signed a pet's name before a husband's name. And, you're not wrong you're average for not liking it. We're always going to have those first responses to circumstances. What you can't afford is the lingering anger. It's tearing you up inside. Isn't it? If it wasn't you wouldn't have written to me about it.

You can't change the situation. It's done! Mary can't go into rewind and undo it. Can she? At this point, it's up to you. The bottom line, now and always is that your emotional health is your responsibility. Tell yourself that this one little incident, is in fact a little incident – it's an NBD – it's No Big Deal when you compare it to your sense of inner peace. If you don't believe it, keep repeating it to yourself until you do believe it. Ask yourself if you'd trade your sense of well-being for where a five letter word, A p r I I was written on a piece of paper.