

## **12 Steps May Be Necessary to Move Relationship to Next Level**

Jan 26, 2014 - Section 1 of 3

DEAR ABBY: "Bill" and I have gone together for three years. He's a wonderful, sweet man who has never raised his voice to me. We have talked about taking our relationship to the next level. I'm hesitant because I suspect he's a high-functioning alcoholic.

Bill doesn't seem to crave a drink when he's with me, but he does crave being in bars in the company of men who sit for hours over drinks and then get out on the Interstate. I don't want to be his mother or his hall monitor, but I have begun to suspect I shadow his denial. I'm afraid I have become his enabler.

We are in our early retirement years and the thought that his drinking will get worse has made me afraid. I love Bill. I can't seem to move forward, yet I resist walking away.

We have discussed my feelings many times, and he says he has cut down the amount he drinks and there's nothing to worry about. Yet, I have this sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. -- SICK FEELING IN TEXAS

DEAR SICK FEELING: Listen to your intuition. I don't know how often Bill "craves" the company of men who sit for hours in bars becoming increasingly inebriated, but if it is more than "occasionally," then I agree you may have cause for concern.

Because of the language in your letter, it appears you are already familiar with alcoholism and how it affects relationships. It would be a good idea for you to attend some Al-Anon meetings before your relationship with Bill goes further because he may be in denial about the importance of alcohol in his life. The meetings are easy to find; Al-Anon is listed in your phone directory and can be found at [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org).