

## **Fiancé's Rare Drunken Bouts Could Become More Frequent**

Oct 26, 2012 - Section 1 of 2

DEAR ABBY: I have been dating the greatest man I've ever met in my life for three years. "Jared" has wonderful kids and a successful career. He's handsome and is kind to me, my kids and my family. We enjoy each other immensely, and we are now engaged. We are social drinkers, but about once a year Jared gets incredibly intoxicated and changes into the most horrible person I have ever seen. It's all verbal yelling -- nothing physical -- but it's still inexcusable. After an "episode" he is guilt-ridden and apologetic for weeks. I believe he's sincere, but it has made me rethink our engagement. He had an episode a week ago -- the third during the time we've been together.

Our kids are close and care about each other. I love Jared, but if I have to endure another instance of this I don't think I can go through with the marriage. I'm still angry about the last bout, and he's still guilt-ridden. How do I approach this? -- CONFLICTED IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR CONFLICTED: The first thing to do is make it your business to attend some Al-Anon meetings. When you do, you'll soon realize that the behavior Jared is exhibiting can escalate.

While Jared may be able to handle his liquor 364 days a year (now), what happens on that 365th is a deal-breaker. Unless you want to spend your life worrying every time Jared picks up a glass who he will be when he puts the glass down, draw the line now. Tell him the person he becomes during these "episodes" is a stranger you have no desire to have anything to do with -- ever -- and if he can't guarantee that you will never see that person again, the marriage is off. Of course, this will mean the end of his social drinking and probably yours. If what you have together is as special as you say, it is only a small sacrifice.

Be prepared, because he will probably deny he has a problem. Unless you want to become a miserable nervous wreck, you must not relent. The explosion, the guilt, the "honeymoon" period afterward are similar to the cycle of domestic violence, so be aware of that.