Can a marriage survive emotional distance and financial strain?

My husband and I have been married for more than 10 years and have stayed together through many challenges. However, I now feel emotionally detached from him, a feeling that has grown over time due to unresolved resentment, especially around his lack of financial contribution. We both want to remain in the marriage, but the strain has made coexistence difficult. I am struggling to understand how we can rebuild a sense of partnership, discuss finances honestly without blame or hostility, and create peace in our home. Is it possible to reconnect emotionally from this place, or should our focus be on learning how to live together respectfully despite the distance? **Ima**

Dear Ima,

I want to commend you for your fair assessment of the situation you are dealing with and for realising some of the dots that help explain what is happening. The central factor in your situation appears to be the relationship around finances. You are right that his unavailability in terms of financial support in your home, which you say has become a burden to you, can create resentment and emotional distance.

I can say that resentment is a normal reaction to possible financial irresponsibility, but I cannot say that you have painted the whole picture of the situation. It is not clear whether his lack of financial support is deliberate and stems from negligence, or whether it is, in fact, the result of a long period of unemployment. That notwithstanding, you wonder if there is a way to reconnect emotionally.

From the outset, before we explore possible solutions, I strongly recommend that you speak to a professional counsellor because, from just reading your submission, there is more to it than meets the eye. If you do not know where to find a counsellor, get in touch with us through our email address.

Let us, however, try to explore the matter using the information you have supplied. Notably, you are asking about emotional connection, which, to me, shows that you are not yet giving up. What are the real reasons your husband is not contributing financially? Is it a form of control, or does he genuinely not have the money? Let us only deal with these two possibilities, since you have not been specific.

Let us first address the possibility of control. It is apparent to me that you are gainfully employed. Could this be a source of unfortunate competition between you two? Did this situation arise from a change of fortunes where he once earned more, and this was later reversed? Such a scenario alters the "balance of power" in a home and, if not handled well, causes resentment on both sides.

Depending on how you handle it, for example, out of frustration, using words or language that make him feel disrespected, the situation could worsen. All this would need to be unpacked through seeking external help.

In the second scenario, where he may genuinely not have the money, perhaps due to a job loss, getting used to carrying the financial burden as a wife is still difficult and can cause resentment, nonetheless. In this case, however, appreciating that reality might help you manage the resentment and enable you work together to improve the situation, assuming there is no other complexity involved.

On the other hand, there are times when people get married with foundational problems already present. From the start, it may be evident that a man is generally not responsible enough, and the woman shoulders the responsibility for a while in the hope that he will change.

Perhaps his job was not earning him enough then, but the passing of time does not bring the desired change. This becomes a problem waiting to explode.

It is hard to find a culture in which an improvident man, outside circumstances beyond his control is [illegible] acceptable [illegible]

57%

Estrangement. Financial strain and emotional distance are major threats to marital stability. Around 57 percent of couples say money worries strain their relationship, with financial conflicts linked to 37 percent of divorces.

Together, money problems and emotional withdrawal erode communication, trust, and intimacy, creating a cycle of tension that weakens bonds and increases the risk of separation.



Seek professional counselling support to break down the situation you are in so that you can make an informed decision with clari-



Samuel Ssettumba
Counsellor

READER ADVICE

Talk to your husband
Sarah Nabaggala. I suggest you start small conversations with your husband about money and feelings without blaming him. Acknowledge each other's efforts, no matter how little. Over time, respect and understanding can grow, and that emotional distance might slowly start to close.

Split responsibilities
David Okello. You could try dividing financial responsibilities based on what each of you can handle. Even if he cannot contribute equally, his efforts in other areas matter. Sharing responsibility fairly can reduce resentment and make it easier to rebuild emotional connection.

Share errands
Beatrice Atuhaire. Focus on small gestures of togetherness. Cooking together, sharing errands, or even checking in daily can slowly restore closeness. Emotional detachment fades when both partners feel seen and appreciated for even minor contributions.

Set clear rules
Joseph Kato. Sometimes it helps to concentrate on peaceful coexistence first. Set clear rules for respect and fairness in daily life. Once tension reduces, emotional intimacy can return naturally. Do not rush feelings; let trust and safe-ty come before closeness.

Consider counselling
Ruth Namirembe. Consider therapy or couples' counselling to help you dis-cuss finances and feelings calmly. Also, try expressing appreciation for small efforts your husband makes. This creates a safe space and slowly rebuilds emotional con-nection without blame.

Write your feelings
Grace Kyomuhendo. You could try writing down your feelings before talking. This helps avoid hurtful arguments and allows you both to speak honestly. Also, be transparent about finances and listen without judgment; it creates trust and makes reconnection easier.

Mutual respect is key
Faith Achieng. Prioritise mutual respect over trying to force closeness. Make small agreements on money, chores, and daily kindness. Creating a peaceful, cooperative environment is often the first step toward rebuilding emotional connection.

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