

You Chose Option B...

David shoves you into the wall and tells you not to disobey him and to stop being wasteful. He also calls you a horrible mother and tells you that you clearly don't care about the needs of your family. This is the first time he's ever been physical with you, and you're upset that this has resulted from a surprise you had planned in the hopes of bringing you closer. You're worried it will get worse, but you also feel bad and wonder if he has a point – maybe you should have spent the ticket money on a summer class for little Jessie instead.

A Follow Up from Emerge:

The impact of David's choice to use physical violence is that Lorraine is feeling regretful about the tickets and as though she caused the abuse that happened. She doesn't deserve to be abused and David should never physically harm her.



Domestic abuse typically occurs within the context of a bigger relationship issue, which is an ongoing pattern of total submission by one partner and the complete domination by the other partner who is using various tactics to gain control. In Lorraine's story, we see her making decisions that would be considered reasonable if there wasn't coercion happening in the relationship. David's response to Lorraine was rooted in his need to control her actions so that Lorraine clearly understands that it is not her place to do anything other than what David decides is okay. If this was a healthy relationship, David would have had an open discussion with

Lorraine about spending, one that she could have had a say in, too. In a relationship where both individuals' voices are valued, decisions about finances would be made jointly and with discussion. By trying to make Lorraine feel guilty about something instead of having a direct discussion with her, David is being **coercive** in trying to control her actions and punish her. This can be a form of psychological abuse.

The scary thing for many survivors is the sense that no matter what they do, their decisions are wrong, creating a constant fear of being punished by their partner. This is the essence and foundation of **coercion**. It's common to see subtle tactics escalate over time to more overt behaviors like physical abuse and more intense psychological abuse and emotional manipulation.