Wife: Your 8-year-old child died of leukemia 2 years ago. You are adjusting to the loss but fear that over time you might forget some of the important details of your child’s life and your time together. In order to keep this from happening, you have kept your child’s room intact, just as it was when he died. Your husband is upset about this. He feels that after 2 years the room should be dismantled, a few things kept, and the room put to other uses. Every time you and he discuss this, you end up in a fight and feel estranged from him.

Husband: After your 8-year-old child died of leukemia 2 years ago, nothing was changed in his room. This presented no problems for you then, but now, since 2 years have passed, you are pushing your wife to dismantle the room, save a few important memorabilia, and rearrange the room to serve another purpose. To you, keeping the room as it is just adds to your painful memories. Your wife will not listen to reason and will not change the room.

Counselor: A couple has approached you to help them arbitrate a dispute they are having regarding their dead child’s room and possessions. The husband wants to dismantle the room and the wife doesn’t. Help them to resolve this problem and to get in touch with their underlying fears and feelings engendered by this situation.