

Marriage Recovery

LACK OF CONVERSATION SYMPTOM OF SEPARATE LIVES

The inability to carry on an interesting conversation in marriage is usually a symptom of a husband and wife living separate lives. When dating, and even in the first few months of marriage, conversation is usually interesting enough to create the feeling of love. But then, instead of a deliberate effort to create an integrated lifestyle, the husband and wife go down completely separate paths, where neither of them care too much about what the other is doing.

I recommend a policy of joint agreement that insists that a couple can negotiate and both be enthusiastic about the conclusion. Negotiated agreement goes a long way toward helping a couple to become integrated -- walking down the same path in life.

The first thing you need to have in following this policy is agreement on each other's **schedules**. I suggest that you make up a weekly schedule on Sunday afternoon (for instance) and avoid any activities that do not have each other's enthusiastic agreement. Everything you do all week must be negotiated to a decision that meets, with enthusiasm, the needs of both partners. When you have arrived at that outcome, you will both have plenty to talk about because you will be much more interested in what the other person is doing with his or her time.

You are probably spending quite a bit of your time either doing what the other person doesn't even know about, or doing what the other person isn't interested in. That leads to some very boring conversation about each

other's lives. So I would begin by taking a hard look at what you do with your time, and make sure that it is known to your spouse, and is also interesting.

There may be aspects of each other's lives that could be interesting if either of you would do a little investigation and study. Having information and expressing opinions about what each other is doing during the week will help you develop interest in each other's favorite topics of conversation. That means learning more about the subject and spending time thinking about it. Your problem may be that neither of you gives much thought to topics that the other person finds most interesting, and so your conversation goes over each other's head. Once you both find that there are so many topics that each of you find interesting, you can reject half of them as hopelessly boring and still have lots to talk about.

You must have great conversation with each other if your marriage will amount to much. It's almost impossible to deposit enough love units to sustain romantic love if your conversation is boring (that is not of any interest to your partner). So I suggest you keep working on this problem until you get it right. Spend as much time as you can implementing the process of learning about each other's activities and eliminating the old complaining and ducking each other's interests. Eventually, your conversation will not only be mutually enjoyable, but you will be starting to walk on the same path of life, instead of the separate paths you now walk.

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