

Marriage Recovery:

“I don’t love him/her anymore.”

Whenever you are inconsiderate of each other's feelings you destroy the love that you have for each other. The most common ways that you are likely to hurt each other with your thoughtlessness fall into six categories:

1. Selfish Demands,
2. Disrespectful Judgments,
3. Angry Outbursts,
4. Annoying Habits
5. Dishonesty
6. Independent Behavior

The first three of these problems are instinctive, yet thoughtless, ways to try to get what you want from each other. When a request doesn't work, a partner will often revert to a **demand** ("I don't care how you feel -- do it or else!"). If that doesn't get the job done, a partner will try **disrespectful judgments** ("If you had any sense, and were not so lazy and selfish, you would do it"). And then, when all of that fails, an angry outburst often represents the last ditch effort ("I'll see to it that you regret not having done it").

These three thoughtless acts fail to get what you need in your marriage -- and when you use them, you destroy the love your partner has for you. All of these instincts, and the habits they help create, cause your partner to be unhappy, and that causes massive withdrawals of gifts of love to your partner.

Demands and Control

Partners who use demands and control to try to get their way not only fail, but also create defenses that make further negotiations almost impossible. They also cause partners to “fall out of love” with each other. We will need to work on a solution of this pattern.

Resentment over Issues of Control, Dependency and Identity, also stresses the importance of avoiding demands as a way to solve problems.

Disrespect

Disrespect is another way we damage our love for each other and it also prevents successful negotiation. For instance, if your partner believes something different than you, can you, or should you, try to change those beliefs?

Abuse, Anger and Domestic Violence

Can you negotiate with an angry or violent partner? Impossible! Anger prevents any hope for negotiated agreements -- it prevents a husband and wife from loving each other. Abusive behavior usually begins when a couple tries to resolve a conflict the wrong way. Instead of finding a solution that meets the conditions of a negotiated joint agreement (never do anything without an enthusiastic agreement between you and your partner), an effort is made by one partner to force a solution on the other. Resistance to the proposal is matched by increasing force until the partner browbeats the other into submission.

Every fight is an example of abuse because it uses the tactic of **emotional or physical force** to resolve a conflict instead of **respect and thoughtfulness**.

- One example is an abused wife who has not yet decided to separate from her husband to protect herself from his abuse.
- Another example is a husband whose wife has escaped to a shelter to avoid his abuse. He wants to know how to win her back.
- A third example is a wife who has run her husband out of the house with her abusive behavior. She wants to know how to get him to return to her.

- Still a fourth example is a man who thinks my definition of abuse is too broad. There is a no difference between abuse as an act of violence and abuse as a process.
- A fifth example is about abuse and alcohol -- a dangerous and sometimes deadly mixture.
- One more example is represented by the common questions, "Why do people who love each other fight so much

Of course, demands, disrespect and anger don't really get the job done. You generally don't do things for your partner because of any of these examples of abuse are used -- in fact, you probably do the opposite of what your partner wants if he or she is demanding, disrespectful, or angry. When you do what your partner **needs** and **wants**, you do it out of care and consideration. But if your partner is demanding, disrespectful and angry, you tend to be less caring and considerate, leading you to do less for your partner. I want you to have what you need in your marriage, but demands, disrespect and anger will not get it for you. They will prevent you from having what you want if you revert to these destructive instincts.

Annoying Behavior

Annoying behaviors are habits and activities that may make **you** happy, but drive **your partner** nuts. Marriage is a partnership of incredibly close quarters, where just about anything you or your partner does is almost certain to affect the other. If you want to stay in love with each other, your habits and activities should make deposits of love, not love withdrawals.

Annoying behavior may not seem like much when annoying is in its early stages, but there are many examples of it growing into ugly monsters. They are among the most serious of

problem and learning how to come to joint agreement that both are enthusiastic about is the solution.

Dishonesty

Dishonesty causes massive love withdrawals whenever it's discovered. And partners usually discover each other's dishonesty because of their emotional closeness to each other. If you or your partner has a tendency to lie or distort the truth, you have little hope of maintaining your love for each other. But dishonesty does more than ruin your love for each other -- it also prevents you from finding solutions to your problems. After all, how can you and your partner solve a problem if your cards are not on the table. I insist that partners be completely honest with each other,

Honesty and Openness

Honesty is essential in solving marital problems and meets a very important emotional need, and helps avoid one of the most destructive things we can do to each other.

Independent Behavior

One of the secret things that creep up on partners is that they "get busy" with their own career or other aspects of their lives and get into the "habit" of doing things on their own. Their partner is kept out of their behaviors because "they know" their partner will not want to do what they want to do. Therefore they develop a pattern of doing their own "thing" on their own and stop inviting the partner.

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