

The Two Ways that Marriages Commonly Trip Up... And How you Can Avoid Them

Dear Friend,

There's an old saying that says there's a ditch on both sides of the road, and we need to be careful not to fall into either one of them.

This definitely applies when it comes to marriage...

... Because there are two pitfalls couples commonly fall into when they deal with issues in their relationship.

And this isn't just my opinion...

Most marriage and family therapists agree that there are two ongoing, primary ways that a couple in a bad spot will deal with one another when facing a marital difficulty or conflict.

... And these two ways of coping always create division and make things worse.

Since these two traps are so common – and so destructive – I'd like to take just a few minutes to point them out for you... and give you some tips on how to avoid them.

By applying this knowledge to your own situation, you'll be able to avoid a lot of contention and heartache in your marriage... and experience growth instead.

Pitfall #1: Some Form of Fighting

The first trap or tactic to avoid is when one spouse tries to “make the other” comply with their wishes... using a variety of fighting tactics.

These tactics might include arguing, bullying, emotional bartering, manipulating, and more.

The driving motive behind any of these forms of fighting is when one spouse believes the goal is to get the other to “be” the way they “want” him or her to be.

The trap or wrong conclusion in this line of thinking is that “winning” or “getting one’s way” is a worthwhile end to pursue.

Of course, when the other spouse detects the selfishness behind this approach, it only leads to more contention.

And if this approach becomes a pattern for either partner, it can be extremely detrimental to the health and well-being of the marriage over time.

Pitfall #2: "Giving Up" or "Detaching"

The second approach swings the pendulum to the opposite extreme...

Instead of fighting, there is – or at least there appears to be – a spouse that “gives up” and “detaches.”

In this case, one or both spouses erroneously conclude that “it is no longer worth it.” And instead of fighting for desired outcomes, a decision is made that the outcome “cannot be had.”

Such a step is usually filled with extreme despair, and a sense of contempt from one spouse directed towards the other.

We have coined this as “the spirit of divorce” ...

... And this detached, disappointed despair – with an added edge of contempt – can last for years in “spirit” before finally becoming a real divorce.

But even if an actual divorce never occurs, the bitterness that results can effectively ruin the marriage.

How to Avoid the Two Pitfalls

Here are a few tips to help you escape either one of these traps...

First off, be mindful of the two extremes. And be self-aware of the ditch you're most inclined to fall into yourself.

If you find yourself “dug-in” and repeating old, stuck, fighting patterns in an attempt to “win a battle,” stop and ask for a break.

Here is a suggestion of what to say:

"Hey, I just realized we have been here before and this feels old. Would you give me some time to rethink how I want to try and settle our disagreement?"

Of course, carrying this out in the heat of the moment is easier said than done. It's challenging... but it's worth it.

Likewise, when you find yourself shut down, detached, or worse... using “silent vulgarities” to vent your contempt towards your spouse... take urgent note that you are fostering a “spirit of divorce” in your heart!

The deeper truth to try and grab onto is that unity, for the married person, is always – and that means every time – better than disunity.

Dare to ask yourself, “What would be an honest, but caring, way to express what is disappointing me?”

Further... ask the question, “What ‘would I like’ or ‘what do I need’ right now to feel better about my

spouse?"

I know... this is easier said than done...

And you may have questions, like:

“How does this work?”

Or... “Is this even possible?”

These are good questions.

But I want to assure you that, yes, this – with God's help – is definitely possible.

Keep in mind though... we are here to help you in these areas so your marriage can thrive.

So if you have questions about applying this material – or if you have other areas that you'd like our help with – please contact us.

You can get in touch either through our website or emailing me directly.

For Your Best Marriage,



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