

Coaching: Marriage Matters



Week 32

Making Things Worse

When you or your partner over-react to a problem in a marriage, you can potentially do more damage to the relationship than the problem itself. Whenever there is a difficulty in a marriage, a door must be left open for the entry of remorse and reform. Retaliation does not create a path towards reconciliation, unless the objective is punishment rather than recovery.

Confronting an offense by your partner or letting your partner suffer the consequences of his or her actions are appropriate. However, what is counter-productive is when you continue to accuse, berate, demean, humiliate, set an unreasonably high bar for forgiveness, or remain punitive in every interaction.

These types of reactions to a conflict do not leave room for a change of heart. Because whenever there is judgment there is also a sentence, and where there is a sentence there will be punishment. An atmosphere of hostility in a marriage is toxic to any attempt for honest resolution, for reconciliation, for the maintenance of a viable relationship.

While forgiving does not always equate to forgetting, transparency and accountability are always considered good medicines to treat the damage done to a marriage when trust and security have been violated. Continuing to rub a spouse's nose in a transgression where there has been a genuine expression of sorrow may end up the biggest transgression of all!

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