

♥ 3 Ways to Connect ♥ With Your Spouse

Prepared by Grace Baxter for
Mind Your Marriage

Saving your marriage or keeping one healthy takes effort. After analysing the various ways trouble can creep into a relationship, I have grouped those ways into THREE main categories:

1. Spiritual
 2. Physical, and
 3. Emotional
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Remember When...

When two people fall in love, they automatically want to do everything they can to nurture the relationship. So much so, in fact, that they can't help doing it constantly!

As the relationship grows however, they fall into the typical comfort zone. In this zone, couples don't have to try so hard. They understand where each other is coming from and there isn't the same need to try to impress their partner or win them over.

From THEN to NOW

So here you are, happily married, engaged or otherwise committed to the love of your life. You're in it for the long haul. Great!

NOW however, you are feeling less thrilled with your choice for a spouse. And if the truth were known, in your heart you would even admit that you're having second and third thoughts about it. TROUBLE has set in.

What Went Wrong?

In a nutshell – you've CHANGED. Both of you have. Through the years, however many or few you've been together, you each have continued to grow and develop interests. Your ideas and insights have matured. You view the world and everything in it – differently.



You may be asking, "So, isn't that a GOOD thing?" It's neither good nor bad. It is a natural progression in life. But what is bad about this scenario is that you may be pulling apart, instead of enjoying one another's expansion into new areas -- you see it as something separate from you! It is your own perception that has made a shift, causing a gap to form between you and your spouse. You may not be growing at the same

rate, so misunderstanding, even envy can creep in. Oh yes, you still love each other. And you don't even want to think about separation or divorce (can you even say that "D" word?).

Don't Self Destruct!

It is at this point that some couples begin having destructive thoughts like: "We've grown apart, therefore we have irreconcilable differences." Nonsense! You have grown, period! You are maturing in every other area of life, so isn't it natural that your love life would feel the change? Your love relationship needs to mature also and maybe it has some catching up to do.

The point to remember is... you are in this together. Keep that in mind as you notice your spouse showing signs of growth in various areas. Do not view change as a threat to your relationship. Change, i.e., growth is a powerful tool towards improving your love relationship. Recognize it for what it is... maturation.

Examine the 3 Key Areas

These three categories encompass how each person is created. You have three distinct parts that make up who you are:

1. Spiritual – because you ARE a spirit
2. Physical – because you HAVE a body
3. Emotional – because you have a soul that encompasses emotions, personality and your will

It is important to think about your own 3 Key Areas. For the purpose of this exercise, let's call the whole group, your **SELF**... the combination of all the key parts that make you, YOU!

Prioritizing Your Connection

When spouses disconnect emotionally, physically and/or spiritually, walls are built that cause more pain and more disconnection. Life gets in the way and sometimes we are oblivious to the toll that it can take on a marriage. It's a matter of prioritizing the relationship.

Steps to Improving the Relationship

#1 Connect With Your Spouse

Let's start with the understanding that there is a DISCONNECT in one or more of the key areas. Perhaps you are feeling the disconnect more than your spouse. Or maybe your spouse is only mildly affected and wonders why you seem so distant. The reason for the difference of "who is disconnected more" is that each partner perceives the relationship from their own perspective

TIP ON CONNECTING

Be careful not to PUSH too hard. This is especially important if your spouse is showing signs of pulling back or demonstrates a lack of interest.

If certain areas are sensitive to your spouse, be kind and careful in your remarks.

Remember, the idea is to draw the other person close, not push them away.

and hasn't thought about seeing it through the other person's eyes. Some individuals are naturally more introspective than their partners, so thoughts of doubt arise during their moments of analysing the relationship.

Work on Rebuilding the Connection

Between the two of you, work on rebuilding the connection. Think back to ways you connected when things were better between you.

- a) If Physical – focus on smaller steps, NOT sex, for now. Think about how your spouse connects; not how YOU connect, or at least how your spouse used to connect.
- b) Your spouse's love language will tell you the most effective way to connect. We will discuss **Love Languages** as a separate Topic, in another PDF.

Hint: We connect with others in ways that make US feel most connected.

TIP ON CHANGING

BE the change.

Don't talk ABOUT the change.

You can UP your game; press on toward the goal.

#2 Change Yourself

Remember that it is impossible to change someone else. We may influence and encourage, but that's it. We can really only change OURSELVES. Not only is it impossible to change another person, it is wrong to think that our OWN ways and methods are superior to theirs!

Here's the thing: People often stop growing and developing in life. They become less tolerant of change and in particular, they don't want to see it in their spouse. Think about these points:

- Are there places where you know you've become stagnant, stuck and inflexible?
 - Are there places that your spouse keeps pointing out where you need to change and grow?
 - It's time to lower your defenses; time to decide to make these changes.
- a) Make a Plan. Be careful how you go about changing. Create a plan on HOW and WHAT you're going to change. Be specific and be clear. Do NOT share it with your spouse or anyone else. This is about working on YOU.
 - b) By changing yourself, you will become more attractive to your spouse. Remember, this person DID fall in love with you.

Warning:

Do not make sudden and crazy gestures that are totally out of character for you. E.g., overwhelming your spouse with kindness and gifts. And do not try to make your spouse jealous. This kind of behaviour has a way of backfiring and can make things worse!

Stick with your plan to "fix YOU". Your spouse will definitely take notice of the changes in you!

c) Prioritize Your Connection.

When spouses disconnect emotionally, physically and spiritually, walls are built that cause more pain and more disconnection. Life gets in the way and sometimes we are oblivious to the toll that it can take on a marriage. It's a matter of prioritizing the relationship.

#3 Create a New Path for Your Relationship

Here's the formula to keep in mind:

YOU + ME = "US"

Here's a fun activity:

Think about joining your name with your spouses to make a brand new name for your "US".

Examples:

Janice + Tanner =	Janner
Julia + Bruce =	Juice
Vicky + Brian =	Brick ... Together we are "Brick"
Pat + Tom =	Tompat or Patto
Bev + Bill =	Bevil
Sharon + Jim =	Shim

You get the idea. Be creative and make it fun. Then, when you as a couple are invited to attend a function, you can actually use it on your friends. E.g., "Brick" will be happy to attend. (I would recommend only doing this with close friends and family who appreciate the humour in it.)

In all of your activities as husband and wife, make sure your spouse gets the sense that you are BOTH in this together. You are not pulling your way, so he/she will stop struggling to pull their own way. This is what marriage is all about; creating "US" out of the two of you. I can't help being reminded of a Bible verse that makes this point very clear:

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become ONE flesh." (Genesis 2:24)

It was God's plan in the beginning and the plan has not changed. To have peace and harmony in your marriage, you may need to update your thinking to include the fact that you ARE one with your spouse. Knowing this fact really helps when we consider that we would not do anything to hurt *ourselves*.

The New Mindset

Once you settle on this mindset of ONEness, other things will start falling into place. The ONE MIND or like-mindedness that naturally develops will soon become a way of life. You'll wonder how you ever thought differently, prior to this understanding!

Grace Baxter
3 WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR SPOUSE

It's all about bringing your best SELF to the relationship and connecting deeply with your spouse. Being the "US" happens in each of your heads and hearts. So, even if your spouse is not there yet, YOU can be!

Warning sign: If you are having power struggles in the relationship, you are nowhere near being the "US" you desire to be.

Don't tell your spouse to join the "US". Move there yourself and this will invite your spouse to join. If you are diligent in continuing the attitude and behaviour of your half of the "US", before long, your spouse will be so intrigued, he/she will be compelled to join you.

Summary

Your new path is: Becoming an "US". Miss it, and your marriage is in trouble. Master it, and your marriage will be **UNSTOPPABLE!**

Recommendation

My personal recommendation in drawing closer to your spouse is the simple act of prayer. This idea may be new to you. It just makes sense to bring all of our worries, fears and requests to the One who is waiting to help us. Talk to God about your marriage. After all, marriage was His idea in the beginning. Who better to go to for support and help? Give prayer a try. This could be part of your new plan towards building a happier, more loving marriage. It's even better if you pray together with your spouse.