

FAQ's Relating To Relationships

How did we go from the honeymoon to here?

Many couples find that marriage is not as they thought it would be. We generally go through a "honeymoon stage" and then the reality of marriage sets in. If this is the case in your relationship, realize that it is very normal and an expected part of the marital experience.

When we first fall in love, it is what would be considered "infatuated love." It is a strong attraction towards our spouse in terms of their looks, personality characteristics, and interests. This "infatuated love" often is not truly tested until after a significant amount of time in a relationship or marriage. It is only through these challenges and struggles that a more sincere and deep love can develop with a couple. Although this road can be discouraging at times, particularly if we are not expecting it, the relationship can become even happier and more satisfying over time.

Craig W. Berthold indicated that "Marriage is the vehicle for the refinement of our soul." In other words, in marriage, we are able to work through things and grow in ways that are impossible through any other means. Some couples get stuck in destructive ruts when the challenges set in rather than working them through and building a stronger relationship. If this is your situation, meeting with a quality counselor could help you get out of the ruts and move towards a more healthy way of functioning within the relationship.

A therapist can help couples to see and experience things in a different way, bringing them to new insights and understanding. These insights can move them forward and create the passion, respect, and appreciation for their partners that they once had, but on a much deeper level than ever before. If you are finding yourself in this destructive rut, please call and schedule an appointment and begin turning your marriage around.

Is it better to stay married or get a divorce?

Many couples find themselves stuck in this dilemma when faced with challenges in their relationship. Couples may have experienced abuse, infidelity, addiction, or a number of other factors stressing the relationship. The decision whether to stay married or get divorced is not one to be made lightly. There are a lot of things to consider including your personal feelings, children, finances, potential for change, and your feelings about your spouse, just to name a few.

Some couples become frustrated and react quickly without considering the many implications that come with divorce. Many couples who are quick to divorce find themselves caught in a similar situation in their next relationship due to unresolved issues in their own life. These personal issues need to be

addressed either in your current marriage or the in the next in order for a successful relationship to ensue.

Although a professional cannot generally tell you whether to stay married or get a divorce, they can help you to identify the various factors to consider and to process through these in a way that assists you in making the decision that is best for your circumstance and situation. Individuals and couples who have skipped this step often make decisions that can lead to regret and hurt down the road.

Some couples divorce only to realize later that it wasn't that bad and wished then that they had tried to work it out by going to counseling. One study showed that over 80% of couples who got divorced expressed regret over this decision when asked a few years later.

Other couples, who believe that divorce is not an option, stay in an unhealthy relationship in which they are left unfulfilled, frustrated, or abused. If the relationship patterns are to the point where you are experiencing these things, it is important to seek outside help rather than just endure or suffer through it. Marriage is designed to be one of the most rewarding and fulfilling relationships of our life. A qualified professional can assist you in taking the time and appropriately evaluating this crucial question in your life. Call to schedule an appointment today and start working towards a healthy solution.

Is rebuilding a quality marriage really possible?

When a marriage has lost its intimacy or been torn apart by destructive behaviors such as addiction or abuse, it is easy to question if rebuilding the marriage is possible. A number of factors are essential in considering the answer to this question.

John Gottman, author of "Why Marriages Succeed or Fail" discussed three factors as to why relationships fail. These are that couples either, 1) lack the skills, 2) lack the knowledge, or 3) lack the willingness needed to create a successful relationship. If there is a lack of willingness to create a successful relationship on one or both sides of the relationship, it will be difficult to develop the skills and knowledge to succeed. The first step is to evaluate a couple's willingness to rebuild the relationship. I have found that if there is willingness on both sides of the relationship, skills and knowledge can be developed which can create an intimate and healthy relationship.

If only one partner is willing, don't think all is lost. Often, as one partner begins to make changes and improvement towards rebuilding the relationship, the other partner develops an interest in time. One partner's change can create a "ripple effect" in the relationship, as the other partner begins to see the positive improvements, lowers their defenses, and wants to begin contributing as well.

A licensed marriage and family therapist can assist either individuals or couples with creating an action plan towards rebuilding a healthy and positive marriage. They can help guide you through the steps and challenges that you might face and help ensure successful outcomes.

How can Marriage Counseling help me with my problem?

I want to make clear up front that marriage counseling is not a “fix it all” approach that resolves issues in your marriage just by coming in. In order for marriage counseling to work, you have to invest yourself in it the same as you would invest yourself in any endeavor you wanted to be successful at.

A couple years ago I made a goal to run a marathon in a time which would qualify me to run the Boston Marathon. In order to do this, I had to take over 22 minutes off my previous marathon time. I developed a determination and focus towards this goal, requiring me to train like I had never trained before, waking up early in the morning, going on long Saturday runs, and sacrificing a lot of free time I could have spent watching TV or relaxing. I also had to sacrifice by limiting the amount of pop, ice-cream, donuts, or other tempting treats. This was not always easy, but with my mind focused on my goal, it made getting up at 4:00am on a Saturday morning or refusing that bowl of ice-cream possible. In the end, I was able to meet my goal.

Marriage counseling is similar to this in that you have to want something different, be willing to work hard for it, and not give up when it gets tough or uncomfortable. The rewards of accomplishing my goal were great. How much more satisfying would be the rewards of creating a successful and intimate marriage that is filled with love and purpose.

Marriage counseling can help in that it provides an outside resource for couples to work through their issues, discuss problems, and establish relationship goals. Couples can get stuck in ruts in which they are only able to see things from their own limited perspective. They often have lost confidence in their spouse, resulting in not being open to their thoughts or feelings. A marriage counselor can bring a balance and provide a unique perspective that the individuals and couples are more open to.

If a couple has gotten caught in unhealthy patterns, but still love each other deep down inside, a visit to a marriage counselor could be just the extra step needed to get the relationship back on track. If this is your situation, call today and set up an appointment to meet. Marriage counseling can really get your marriage back on track and bring increased peace and joy into your life. Call 435-688-2123 for an appointment.