

Life is Really All About Relationships

By Laura Roman, LCSW, BCD, WBN Cranberry Member

Life is all about our relationships. A poster once stated that 85% of our happiness was determined by our choice of a spouse. That's a high percentage, but I believe, one that has validity. We carry our home relationships with us to work (how many times in the day do you day dream about last night's fight?). The entire Employee Assistance Program (EAP) movement is based upon the fact that our personal life does impact our work life. Although work relationships are important, they don't impact us like our personal relationships do. So, if you are in a struggling marriage, the best advice I can give is to work on the marriage first, and then work on the business. If you try to work on the business without working on the relationship, it will feel as though you have an anvil around your neck and you may fail at both.

Work on your marriage as if you are not working on your marriage.

Too often, people feel sad and lonely in their marriages. They just go through the motions, not experiencing the spark they think a marriage should have. If this sounds like you, I may have your answer.

People will live in unhappy, unfulfilling marriages for years. They don't know what to do and marriage counseling is out of the question. I believe that marriage counseling does not work for two reasons, 1. The couple comes too late, when too much damage is done, and counseling is the last resort. 2. Many counselors who see couples have had no formal training in marriage counseling.

There is an alternative answer, one that I have used in my clinical practice for some time; it is about learning how to correct problems in the marriage through education. Often, I find that couples want to do better but don't know where to start. Marriage education is a tool that people can use to make improvements in their relationship. It requires minimal effort and sometimes, just knowing how to make the critical adjustments is all the couple needs. Awareness is the first step in making permanent change. The beauty of marriage education is that both partners don't need to participate. Either one or both can learn how to make the necessary changes for a more fulfilling relationship.

The question you must ask yourself is, "how am I contributing to the problem?" "What changes can I make?" Do you find yourself blaming your spouse for all the marital ills? The first place we need to begin is with ourselves. We can only change ourselves and in so doing, change our relationships. Some would say that it is impossible. Well, let me ask you, do you know what you can say to your partner that will tick him off? Can that change the whole mood of the day or evening? The same works in reverse. We, all by ourselves, can have positive, as well as negative impact on our relationships. It may mean learning how to communicate better, or appreciating our spouse, or ourselves or maybe as simple as being true to what we really think and feel.

Marriage is a complex relationship. It impacts all aspects of our lives. Clear up the things at home and I can assure you that things will get better in your business. A successful business comes with focus and you can't have focus if you aren't feeling happy at home.



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