

Angie's Marriage Column ~ June 23, 2010

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.
Proverbs 27:17

We Can't Change Our Spouse, only Ourselves!

Ask Angie: My husband was raised without anyone showing affection and love. I on the other hand, need it. How do I teach him?

Marriage Guidance: I hope that you did not marry your husband in the hopes that you could change him. [We can't change others](#) to meet our needs—it will not work, especially if that is the way they were raised. This is not to say that people cannot change for the better but this kind of change happens through Christ. When one spouse demands and controls a behavior of the other all it creates is resentment and animosity between them.

Please be sure to **click on the links within the article** for more detail and encouragement on that particular issue. **By reading the articles within the links you will understand your situation that much better, so please make good use of this valuable, Godly information.** It is important that couples work together and on a Godly foundation to repair the weaknesses in the relationship.

This reminds me once again that we have to be careful when choosing a lifetime spouse because marriage is serious business and God intends marriage to be a permanent union. The better solution to NOT having such marital difficulties as this is marrying someone we are compatible with by being patient and waiting for God to send us that special someone. This is what [marriage preparation](#) and Godly courtship is all about.

An overly affectionate person will have a difficult time being married to someone who often seems cold and withdrawn—it's called incompatibility. But you're married now and your spouse's weaknesses are a part of the marriage just as your faults are a part of the marriage. Couples can bear with each other in love and encourage each other or they can control, nag, and complain about each other's [faults](#).

Sometimes marriage involves long-suffering. Suffering produces perseverance and perseverance character, which helps us grow spiritually and be more supportive to our spouse.

We should be loving examples of what we would like to see in others. If we want our teenage daughters to dress modestly then it starts with how mom dresses. If we want to see our sons treat young women with respect then it starts with how dad treats their own mother and other women. If we want to have a more loving spouse then we ourselves should be more loving. Change starts with ourselves not with demands and control!

An iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17)

Be more affectionate yourself. Hug your husband when he comes home from work. Give him a back or foot rub. Hold his hand or put your arm around him when in the car together. Sit on his lap. Give him a kiss when he is least expecting it. What kind of a man would reject such love from his adoring wife? I believe it would have to be a man who is having conflict within his spirit and needs inner healing.

Don't ever be afraid to be affectionate with your spouse just because they are not; if they reject your show of affection do not take it personally—understand that they for their own reasons are uncomfortable with showing affection. Sadly if a person was raised in a home where affection was not shown much they will tend to be the same. But that doesn't mean it has to always be this way, or it doesn't mean they don't like affection themselves—it just means that if they want to change and be more affectionate for themselves and for their spouse they can change. But it is something they must do for themselves through Christ.

[Communicate your feelings in a nice way to your husband](#). Let him know that you realize that you cannot make him be more affectionate, but that if he would try to show more affection it may come naturally and he may like how it feels, plus you would appreciate it very much. Then give him a hug. Self-expression goes a long way in marriage. Too many times couples are afraid to express themselves in fear of being rejected or invalidated, but so what. Learn to be more assertive with your feelings and get them out in a loving way so they don't mount over into resentment.

Couples should NEVER discount or reject how the other feels. Work through these problems by utilizing the principles of Christ. There are two major reasons why couples stop being affectionate with each other, and firstly it is because they have gone their own separate ways in the marriage, the wife has her friends, he his friends, she has her job, he has is, she has her hobbies, he has is, she's busy with the kids, he is busy with sports. What do couples do together? Are couples making time for just themselves?

The truth is couples do NOT spend enough quality time with each other, and that's the problem! Husband and wife should spend at least one hour everyday in full attention of each other's feelings and needs. Marriage takes a daily feeding and watering—couples are to water each other, not take away and dry each other out. Marriage needs to continue growing throughout the marriage.

When couples don't spend the time for each other, do you know what happens? Intimacy, affection, and acts of love diminish. What couples do in the marriage, whether it is positive or negative will always affect the other in some way. Just as your husbands non- affectionate behavior is hurting you emotionally and spiritually. Keep your daily focus on Jesus and seek comfort and peace through prayer and the reading of the Word. Christ wants us to give our burdens to Him and He will make sure we are comforted.

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20)

Once you affectively communicate "how you feel" to your husband and if he wants to please his wife and become more affectionate then he needs to pray about it and ask God to help him to be the loving, affectionate man that his wife needs him to be. Just as your husband may need something extra from you to fulfill his needs—this is what self-sacrifice is in marriage. *Husbands Love Your Wives as Christ Does the Church*. Unconditional love is forgoing something of and for ourselves to meet the needs of those we love.

Love one another deeply, from the heart. (1 Peter 1:22)

Don't get me wrong here either. It does not mean you should accept sinning behavior from your spouse; that is whole different thing and a whole other article. But married couples do and should accept the faults of one another

such as these and be supportive, loving, and encouraging to them—this is what marriage is all about. Forgive because we ourselves have been forgiven.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the LORD forgave you. (Colossians 3:13)

And finally, spend more QUALITY time together once a day. Make the time! Make the time to communicate your needs and to express yourself in a loving and gentle way to your spouse. Keep a check on your emotions by using [your communication as a productive way to get your needs met.](#)

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

Your intimate conversations with your spouse will help build the foundation for a more loving and affectionate marriage. And by all means do not stop showing affection just because your husband is weak in this area; your example may build him up in this area. Continue to show and give your husband all the affection you have within you.

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

In Christ,
Angie and Frank

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