

How To Divorce Proof Your Marriage

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Sunday, 02 March 2008

Let's start with an underlying assumption, good relationships are not easy. When NBC did a story called Project Everlasting, they interviewed 200 couples who had been married at least 40 years and every single one of them said they had been through some rough times. So the road to love is not smooth. When these couples were interviewed every single one said that respecting each other was important and I agree. You can respect someone without loving them but you can't love someone without respecting them. When you respect someone you treat them in a different way then when you don't respect them. Respect means not belittling their ideas. It means listening to them and not cutting them off. Respect can be looking up to them or defending them because you think they are right. It can be a lot of different things to different people but the bottom line is you treat them like they matter. When you treat a spouse with respect you build them up. When you don't, you tear them down. Which manner will result in having a powerful union?

The 2nd thing that is needed to create a strong relationship is the ability for each side to compromise.

You can't always have everything you want all the time.

Resentments will build up if one person takes more than they give. But at the same time you shouldn't be playing goal keeper by making sure everything is exactly 50/50.

When both of you have an intention to be respectful of each other and to allow the other person to have their way half the time, the place you are coming from should just naturally create many satisfying results for each of you.

This was another element our 200 couples mentioned and as a divorce lawyer I KNOW compromise is the life blood of creating win/win deals with people.

The 3rd thing you must have is open and honest communication. Most people are not mind readers and shouldn't be made to feel like they don't really know or love you unless they automatically understand what is going on with you. Give an emotional weather report. Directly say what you need and want. Don't wait for that one last straw that breaks the camel's back to blow up. Things don't need to get to that point if you are regularly communicating what is going on with you. When you are talking don't blame the other person for making you feel a certain way. No one makes you feel anything. That is YOUR choice. There are no victims when people take responsibility for their choices.

It is perfectly valid to say, "when you do that I feel this." You are not blaming them for anything. You are just letting them know how you feel. Take responsibility for making sure the other person hears what you are saying.

There are 2 parts of a conversation. You are responsible for making sure the message you are saying is getting through and you are responsible for hearing what they are saying too.

Peter Drucker, renowned management specialist, says that 60 percent of management problems result from faulty communication. According to criminologists, up to 90 percent of all criminals have problems with interpersonal communication. And according to a leading marriage counselor, at least half of all marriage breakdowns are caused by faulty communication.

Effective communication is based on knowing our thoughts, desires, motives and feelings - being honest with them and expressing them creatively. People who deny or suppress their inner feelings and true desires fail to communicate effectively and can never discover true intimacy.

The 4th thing to keep in mind is to pick your battles. I have seen this over and over again in court as people dig in their heels on issues that are meaningless. Never fight and bicker over meaningless things like the best way to clean the sink or if the toilet paper rolls over or under.

You better save your energy for things that really matter.

When you don't sweat the small stuff life is a lot easier and you are a more pleasant person to be around. I am NOT saying to stuff what really bothers you but if leaving the toothpaste cap off bothers you that much, you need to toughen up. An easy going person is a lot easier to live with forever than someone who has a chip on their shoulder.

The 5th thing to remember is you have needs too. It is natural to want to make your mate happy and support them in any way you can but when you give up your own life to accommodate their needs without a reciprocal concession on the other person's part, you cease to exist. It is very rare that a couple has the same needs at the same time.

Expect to be traveling different paths at certain points.

This is when compromise is really important. If you end up moving to support their career on the promise that after a certain period of time they will do the same for you (or whatever your deal is going to be), get it in writing and have a penalty if they don't follow through. Throughout history martyrs are often killed. Why should you be any different?

The last thing you need to maintain a long term relationship is honesty and trust. These really are the back bones that everything else is built on. If you don't have an underlying sense that your mate has your back and can be counted on to

tell you the truth, you are just fooling around. I have seen all trust crumble away as a spouse gets caught in little lies over and over again. Not knowing when your spouse is being 100% truthful really erodes the respect and remember you can respect someone without loving them but you can't love someone without respecting them. Don't make excuses for telling white lies.

OK, if she says, "Does this make me look fat?" and you feel like she won't change her clothes if you say yes, then you can lie but if you continually underestimate what you are spending on purchases or overestimate how much time you actually need to travel from work to home, after a while your spouse just isn't going to trust you.

Think of the two of you as Bonnie and Clyde. You want a stand up cohort who has your back no matter what. You have to KNOW they are going to split the loot with you even steven and that you don't have to keep that gun under your pillow just in case they sneak up on you. You want a partner you can count on. Some one who will fight against the world with you not against you. You want someone you can trust to drive the getaway car and not rat you out to the cops if they are caught. If honesty is important between thieves, it should be to you too. Or maybe this is just my vision. See, everyone needs to have a vision of the kind of life and relationship they want. They need to enroll the other person into their vision or create a joint vision and then keep creating that vision together. When you aim for a target there is a LOT more chance of hitting it then just randomly shooting at nothing in particular.

You create your life through intention and action. So given all I have just said, do you see areas of your relationship that you can shift or expand in such a way to create the marriage you now envision? What can you do today to take a step in that direction? I wish you good speed on your journey and know that you can create the relationship you intend.

Belinda Rachman, Esq. has been a divorce attorney since

1996 and married to the same man since 1987. For those who need a divorce, please encourage them to have a peaceful one so they can save money, protect the children from a nasty fight and reduce the stress. Bookmark this address so you can share it later and be a force for good.

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