

Has Your Spouse Changed?

Knowing your spouse so well that you can predict their behavior makes you feel secure in your relationship. But...people change.

Some changes are small, like taking up a new hobby. Others are big - like your partner changing their faith, standards, or beliefs.

How you *choose* to deal with any perceived changes in your spouse's behavior either makes your marriage happier or worse.

So... ask these simple questions when you notice changes in your spouse's behavior.

Has my spouse really changed?

Just because your spouse seems like a different person doesn't mean they've changed.

Maybe they've always been messy but you're only noticing now.

Maybe they've always wanted to take up golf but didn't have time until now.

However, if something concerns you, share your feelings in a calm, respectful manner because the last thing you want to do is make something out of nothing.

Is my spouse stressed?

Stress can change people, making them irritable, cold, withdrawn, or less affectionate. Stress triggers a chemical reaction in the brain that impairs the social skills and cognitive ability of the affected person.

If you're noticing changes in your spouse, have they been going through anything stressful?

One thing you can do to make stress-induced personality changes a thing of the past is to find ways to help your partner manage stress.

Is my spouse bored?

Face it, it's so easy for relationships to get into a rut.

Is your spouse bored? Are you?

Make a list of some fun things/adventures you could enjoy together.

Have I told my spouse how I feel?

Communicate. Don't be a mind reader.

Let them know it's probably nothing but something's on your mind.

Start your sentences with "I feel" and not "you." Keep it positive and non-accusatory.

Am I the spouse I desire?

Be the kind of spouse you want your partner to be.

Treat them how you want to be treated - not how you think they're treating you.

If you don't like that they spend so much time on their new hobby and want them to pay you more attention, don't sulk or withdraw; GIVE them more attention.

It's a counter-intuitive approach but it usually works.

Similarly, if you want your spouse to learn how to manage stress better, begin working on *your* stress management skills. Better yet, work on it together!

Being the change you want to see in your spouse is one of the best strategies for maintaining a happy relationship that reduces unexpected behavioral changes in your spouse.

Until next time, this is Mike Tucker and I want YOU to be mad about marriage!