

Any Luck Changing Your Spouse?

You've nagged, badgered, and threatened. You've used your best stuff, and your spouse still won't change! They don't even seem to care. You've tried everything. You've given the silent treatment, pouted, yelled, argued, presented your case, and bribed them. But nothing. Nada. You can't coerce your spouse to change. Even if you could, you shouldn't. God can, but He doesn't.

Marriage Tips: How to Stop Driving Yourself Crazy with the Idea that You Can Change Your Spouse (and "no" you can't train them either...{besides, do you want a partner or a pet? Okay, I shouldn't have asked that last question})

Police Your Thoughts

Try to become aware of what you're thinking. When you're thinking, "I can't believe he/she did, said, thinks, or believes that," take note.

Usually, what comes next is an attempt to change/train your spouse. So, you share your thoughts/concerns/peeves/desires.

(Would you believe some spouses even say things that are coercive, manipulative, condescending, confrontational, guilt-inducing, or shaming?)

It just goes in one ear and out the other, like always because the only person you can change is yourself (and how easy is that by the way?).

Real, lasting change comes from within.

Zip It!

If you're in the middle of laying down the law with your spouse, as soon as you realize what you're doing, stop. Your spouse has heard it many times before. Hearing it once more won't magically change their behavior.

Is your way better?

Weigh the pros and cons of both ways. Maybe you want your spouse to change because you're used to something a certain way, or you prefer certain behaviors in social settings. If your way is just your personal preference, discuss compromises.

Change your thoughts

Although your partner might not change, you can change how you respond to their habits, quirks, and behaviors.

What would happen if the next time your spouse drives you nuts, you whispered, "fascinating." You'd probably chuckle and smile. Could their behavior be cute, interesting, eccentric, or silly, instead of "They're ruining my life!"?

Don't you find it interesting that even though God could force compliance, He doesn't? He uses unconditional love and has very few rules - which are pretty basic, by the way, that allow us a LOT of freedom to be ourselves and enjoy the life He gave us.

Relationships aren't easy; they take work. Secretly hoping your spouse will see the light and suddenly change will probably only make you feel frustrated and unhappy. Despite how much you love them, you can't live their life for them.

The only person you can change is you. And as you change, your marriage changes, too.

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