

Top 3 Marriage Busters

Although there are many reasons why marriages fail, these three issues are likeliest to ruin your relationship and cause divorce.

Negative Conflict

Look, differences in opinion, needs and beliefs stress every marriage. It's normal! But, conflict is dangerous when it becomes hostile. Spouses start saying mean things and pointing fingers. They dredge up the past to attack each other. Negative conflict breeds tension, anger and frustration. Intimacy is shattered; walls are put up; spouses shut each other out.

Instead, we must practice positive conflict resolution where we clarify the problem patiently, identify win-win compromises, and are always courteous and respectful.

Invalidation

In a healthy marriage, spouses share their thoughts and feelings without any fear of being judged or criticized.

In unhealthy marriages, spouses degrade each other. Thoughts and feelings are discounted or diminished. This is called invalidation, and it's a leading cause of divorce. Invalidation takes on many forms, from overt dismissal to subtle negation of feelings. Saying things like "I didn't ask you because I knew it would take you too long to decide" or "You're too emotional", or "There's no reason to react that way" are all forms of invalidation. Invalidation destroys any shot you have at emotional intimacy. And it makes people defensive, and/or causes them to close off.

Instead, we must acknowledge our partner's thoughts and feelings, and *why* they think or feel that way.

Just because you acknowledge your partner's thoughts and feelings doesn't mean you share their perspective. It means you understand where they're coming from.

Assuming the Worst of Each Other

Marriage becomes miserable and leads to despair when you're always assuming the worst of each other.

Spouses reach the point where they're exhausted emotionally from constantly proving that their intentions were harmless and well-meaning.

Instead, we must assume the best of our partner. And if something they did hurt you, it was a mistake - they didn't mean it. Tell them, "I know you'd never do anything to intentionally hurt me, but I felt a little hurt. Can we talk about it?"

Research shows that negative conflict, invalidation and assuming the worst of each other are the three relationship issues likeliest to cause divorce.

But that doesn't have to be the case for you. Take charge of your marriage today and protect it from these three relationship-ending issues.

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