

# Ruining Your Marriage with Advice?

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So, just how much does your spouse like receiving unsolicited advice from you?

Here's a secret: They don't.

According to studies conducted by the University of Iowa and published in the Journal of Family Psychology in 2009, unsolicited advice lowers marital satisfaction for both the giver and receiver.

Their conclusion? Just because your spouse chooses to discuss something with you, doesn't mean they want your advice.

They probably want you to:

- Listen without judgment
- Help them sort out their thoughts
- Show compassion
- Agree with them!

So, does this mean you should never give your spouse advice? No.

It means that when you do, do it tactfully.

## **How to give your spouse advice**

### *Listen first...*

When your spouse is distressed and needs someone to talk to, your primary role is to *listen*. Giving them a chance to get something off their chest is more important than any advice you can give.

### *Ask questions...*

Asking questions helps you to understand the situation better, AND it helps your spouse see things more clearly.

Remember, it's best to ask open-ended questions instead of yes-no questions.

### *Show compassion...*

You can do this through kind words, holding your spouse's hand, or a hug.

For instance, you can say, "That sounds frustrating."

Compassion makes your spouse feel understood.

### *Listen to your spouse's ideas...*

Listen for potential solutions before offering your own.

Encourage your spouse to share possible solutions by asking questions like, "What do you think is the best way to handle this situation?" or "What solutions have you tried so far?"

Refrain from criticizing their ideas, *please*.

### *Give suggestions...*

AFTER you've listened to all of your spouse's ideas, you may offer some of your own.

However, keep the suggestions as hypothetical as possible.

Instead of saying "You should \_\_\_\_\_" say "I wonder if \_\_\_\_\_ would work?"

Your spouse is likelier to consider your ideas if you don't sound like you're telling them what to do.

Offering advice to a spouse is tricky because no one likes being told what to do.

The trick to doing it without causing marital problems or ruining a perfectly happy marriage is to listen, show compassion, and then carefully, *very carefully*, offer suggestions.

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