

Dealing with Those People

What people in your life have affected your marriage for better or worst? Who are they & what did you do about it? Since we become like the people we hang around most of the time this is something to take seriously.

Common Ways People Elbow Their Way Into Your Marriage

It could be a family member who sticks their nose in your business or who wants to be included/informed about everything. It could be a close friend who feels entitled to know EVERYTHING about your relationship because sharing is “*healthy*” when the truth is they're only being nosy. Or it could be that you and your spouse are friends with a LOT of people – people you enjoy doing stuff with; the more the merrier.

Another common source is the workplace. Since we spend most of our time with co-workers it's not unusual for business stuff to overlap marriage. But here's the deal, all of these people, everyone we allow into our lives, influence our life and marriage.

Where The Problem Comes In

The problem is when certain influences create divided loyalties.

Here's the rule: You and your spouse deserve the majority of each others' time, energy and attention. No one else does.

There are certain topics, information and time that are strictly off limits to anyone and everyone except for your spouse. **You and your spouse must be very clear on boundaries and set them with regards to the people in your life.** This should be discussed and agreed upon. Stay true to whatever you decide because this is your life and marriage.

Guidelines For Dealing Graciously With Social Intruders

In many cases, a spouse will be really close to a friend, or very, very close to their family. As you can imagine, this can create its own set of challenges, which is why it's important to know where to draw the line.

Here is the primary guideline to follow: Your spouse gets the majority of your time and attention and **100% of your loyalty.**

Sure it's important to have a life and friends outside of the marriage circle, BUT your spouse is your number one priority and loyalty. Your home is YOUR home. This doesn't mean you're not warm and hospitable. Of course you welcome family, friends and guests into your home. But it is your home and you make the rules. It can be pretty challenging when it's a family member

who feels that your home is their home and they can come and go as they please (you know the type). (The occasional drop-in is fine, but if certain family members have a habit of presuming upon your kindness then it can create a problem).

Even worse is a spouse with a boss who believes it's either work or family - despite saying "family comes first." It's one thing to say it but another thing to mean it. So the boss treats the spouse like their home is an extension of the workplace and overloads them with work, or, in some cases, feels at liberty to host certain events there. Your home is your home – not a workplace or secondary home for certain friends or family members.

Boundaries are a must. So talk with your spouse about any concerns that he or she might have. **I'd suggest giving careful consideration to any relationship or situation that makes your spouse uncomfortable.** Please, please remember, your first priority and loyalty is always to your spouse – your best friend and soul mate, the person YOU chose to marry and spend the rest of your life with.

Until next time, this is Mike & the Crew and we want you to be *mad about marriage!*