

Toby's Tips

Question:

I feel really guilty that I became the wife that keeps nagging and finding fault in everything my husband does. I am no perfectionist, nor do I think myself as a negative minded person. I just always have something to fix or criticise about my husband.

I never wanted to be that nagging wife, and here I am doing just that.

How can you help me get out of this negative cycle? How can I focus on what is going right in my life, rather than wrong?

Answer:

Well, I suggest this is possible with the right plan, and much determination plus the will to work on change.

As the good saying goes, "If you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep getting what you got"!

Here is my suggestion.

Select a night of the week, together with your husband. We shall call it a business meeting night.

For example, Wednesday evenings, 8:00.

All week long, when something frustrates you, and you feel the need to 'fix' it, write it down in a certain place that is easily accessible (like in 'notes' in the iPhone, or at your computer, or in a simple notebook).

Keep writing each time you feel the urge to say something that may sound critical or negative in any way.

At least you now got it out of the system, marked it down someplace, and have the knowledge that it will be taken care of, at the right time and place.

When you meet Wednesday evening at 8:00, you both read your lists of concern to the other, and watch as the problems resolve, and dissolve in the most peaceful and relaxed manner possible.

You see, when you are both 'unemotionally' attached to the actual criticism/problem and have a chance to actually have a decent conversation about what is bothering you, in a respectable manner, such as a planned business meeting, knowing that this meeting is to resolve anything that is bothering either of you.

Since we ultimately both really want peace in the home, and have a "criticism free home", filled with just love and acceptance.

It may be possible to go away from this meeting having your husband say, "I can do that and be more mindful in the future of coming home on time, I didn't know it means so much to you!" (even though you've been nagging him for 16 years to do so, but he never 'heard' you....)

Something magical happens when you are both fully focused on it being a problem-solving business meeting.

You are both really listening without interruption to each other, in the right time and place.

Imagine, all week long you cannot say one word of criticism but only nice words.

You will be surprised how many things drop off the list by the time you have your meeting.

(You realise that some things resolve itself with time.)

Let's invest one hour a week for peace at home!

Question:

How do I bring back some romance into my marriage that has gone stale? We no longer go out to eat or have fun. Everything is same old routine and quite boring. Please advise me to bring sparks back to what once was.

Answer:

Together with your husband, set aside one day a week called a 'date night'. Make this date night untouchable. Lock it in once a week and keep it holy. Meaning, nothing is more important than this date once a week. You dress in your finest clothes as if your off to an important event. There are rules: no conversations permitted about, the kids, money, work, gossip, or criticisms. What's left you ask?

Like before you got married you spoke about everything else, that's what you talk about. You can talk about your dreams, your goals, your feelings, your emotions, your experiences and what foods you enjoy eating. But not the above topics: kids' money etc. (That can be covered on Wednesday evening business meetings)

You will be surprised how this can bring back some romance into your marriage and you will thus have positive feelings once again for each other!