

Marriage is a Business Contract,

Part II

What Happens When the Honeymoon is Over?

They were so much in love, ... It was love at first sight, ... It was a match made in heaven, ... They married and they lived happily ever after... Love and marriage are wonderful themes that warms our hearts. We can't seem to get enough of love. We love [no pun intended] to immerse ourselves into popular romance novels, movies, plays and love songs.

But what happens when the honeymoon is over? What happens when the music stops and we are left facing the stark realities of *having to live with that other person for the rest of our life?* We tend to overlook what we perceived to be the other person's faults and shortcomings during the courting phase of the relationship. These are the things that they do or don't do (i.e., idiosyncracies) that irritate or annoy us to no end for one reason or another. It could be as simple as the spouse snoring like a claxon, hogging the blanket, leaving the toilet seat up, leaving their clothing scattered all over the place, not putting the used dishes in the sink or washing them, ... the list can go on and on, and it often does. Preconceived expectations also affect the relationship - my spouse looks different in the morning that when we were first dating. He/she has some annoying personal hygiene habits, like brushing their teeth or taking a bath on a regular basis. Or even worst, my _____ (fill in the blank) is trying to change who I am, what I wear, what I eat, how I entertain my friends, etc.

The complaints start to surface shortly after the honeymoon is over. We complain about this and we complaint about that. It's human behavior and natural to complain. But before getting married, did we require our spouse to stipulate or make a promise enforceable under the law that after marriage, he/she would stop all his/her annoying habits, like stop snoring,

leaving the toilet seat up, not embarrassing us in front of our family and friends? I think not. Did we get married thinking that we could change them of their annoying habits after we got married? If they had these “annoying” habits before meeting you, what makes you think that you can change a lifetime of habits? Did we try to make our expectations known in a written contract?

When people enter into a business arrangement or contract, they spell out the duties, responsibilities and expectations of all the parties. Why don't we do this in a marriage? Why don't we say what we really want up front, such as keeping the toilet down, helping with the cooking, smiling and being nice when entertaining my parents and friends, or being presentable like someone out of the glamor magazines when I wake up in the morning.

Are these expectations reasonable and were they ever conveyed to your spouse? What would have been his/her response if you did? When we don't communicate in an open and honest manner with our spouse, we suffer pain from the consequences. The pain can be as simple as sleeping on the couch at night, eating cold leftovers, or when things get really bad, separation and divorce.

To get the most out of your marriage, you have to truly see who is the person that you married and what is possible in the relationship. What were your real intentions for marrying him or her? What were his/her intentions for marrying you? Were your intentions based on reality or fantasy? Were you trying to make your marriage into your dream of what an ideal marriage should be? If you are, the marriage will fail because the ideal marriage to you is a fantasy and is not based in reality.

Are you really seeing who your spouse is and whether he/she is capable of giving you the experiences that you want from the marriage? What are you prepared to put into the marriage? What are you doing to make this marriage work? Marriage is a business and an intimate relationship. To have the marriage experience that you desire, you first have to see who is the

person that you married, what is possible in the relationship, and whether it is acceptable to you. It's your marriage and you are in control. So what kind of an experience do you want?

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