

WHY GO TO MARRIAGE COUNSELING?

Too often people wait until their marriage is on the rocks before making an all-out-effort to make things right. “If it ain’t broken, don’t fix it.” Right? Wrong! When it comes to marriage, if a couple waits until it is “broken” they could be in for some really hard work to repair the damage. When should a couple go to marriage counseling? The first time they think to themselves, “Something isn’t right.” Other times might be just for the sake of improving one’s relationship or helping them through a difficulty not related to the marriage, but so stressful that could affect their relationship. Sometimes just going to a marriage retreat once-a-year works best for a couple. The idea is not that everyone needs to be in a counselor’s office; it is that every couple should be actively working on their relationship prior to fearing an imminent collapse.

When marriage counseling is called for, it works best when both people in the marriage are actively engaged. Well, that seems obvious most would respond. In reality one might be surprised at how many times only one of the two people in the relationship remains in counseling beyond the second or third session. Sometimes the counselor isn’t giving much guidance to a person who really needs a roadmap of sorts, the person is impatient and will set out on his or her own in search of something that works for them. More often, those who drop out often want a quick fix to their problem or for the counselor to just “fix” the other person. Some cannot tolerate looking at themselves in a mirror of sorts. Some aren’t really interested in repairing the relationship; they only came because the other person has insisted for so long.

Key areas anyone can address in a marriage are: better communication, maintaining an emotional connection, keeping the romance alive, partnering in sharing the workload around the house and many more. With all the books, video series, seminars and so forth, one can find an endless supply of resources to help. If you are still unsure of the right book or resource, email me or someone in the counseling field and ask for a suggestion on a great resource to meet your needs.

In reality, one of the best ways of helping one’s spouse to feel special and loved is to devote time to building and nurturing the relationship. Getting *everything* right in the relationship is not the goal, or even possible, however *working on every part* of the relationship is the goal and is possible. Don’t become one who devotes more time to hobbies or friends or outside interests than one does to one’s marriage. That will almost certainly lead one to the office of a marriage counselor.