

**"13 Ways You're Sabotaging Your Marriage (*Without Even Realizing It*)
...and What You Need to Do Instead!"**



Experience**Hope**
COUNSELING

TIMOTHY SHETTER, M.S.

www.ExperienceHopeCounseling.com

(970) 599-1409

Copyright © 2017 by Timothy C. Shetter, M.S. | All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without written permission of the author except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

13 Ways You Might Be Sabotaging Your Marriage

A Note from the Author	3
13 Pitfalls to Avoid	6
1. Think "Texting" = Communicating with your spouse	6
2. Spend all of your free time on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Xbox, Playstation, Wii, Golf... (you get the point)	8
3. Spend money without asking your partner's opinion.	9
4. Discount (or ignore) your partner's opinion	11
5. "Pick on" your partner: A stroll through a mine field.....	12
6. Disrespect your partner in public or behind their back.....	16
7. Say "Always" or "Never" when bringing up complaints.....	17
8. Defend your intentions (assume the worst of your partner's mistakes).....	18
9. "Nit-Pick" your partner (especially focus on their faults and differences).....	19
10. Emotionally (or physically) connect to someone other than your spouse.....	22
11. Parent your partner/ Expect your partner to parent you.....	26
12. Place the responsibility for your happiness on your spouse	28
13. Sweep "issues" under the rug (avoid conflict at all costs).....	30
Parting Thoughts.....	34
About the Author.....	35

www.ExperienceHopeCounseling.com
www.MarryOnce.com

A Note from the Author



"Plan to marry once, and only once!"

"...My hope for you is that this will be a helpful resource to 'Bulletproof' your marriage!"

There are many reasons that lead a man and a woman to gaze at one another and say, "I Do."

Grand visions of happily ever after! A life devoid of loneliness and purpose... I hear all sorts of reasons from couples who answer my question: "So, why did you guys get married?"

Some of their reasons are noble and well intentioned. Others are impulsive, lacking substance, almost guaranteeing to lead to pain and

frustration. Marriage research has produced a wide body of knowledge that is approaching the ability to predict divorce, even early in the marriage or before a couple ties the knot.

It's an important topic, but we'll discuss that another time...

The fact is, you and your spouse said "I Will and I Do."

Now What?

Regardless of the path to gathering hoards of friends and family to witness the most important and exciting day of their lives, the vast majority of couples enter into marriage with sincere commitments and a tank full of love.

They plan to marry once, and only once.

I'm sure you are among them!

I've worked with hundreds of couples, both before and after their wedding day. In all of that time I have never heard a couple tell me of their grand plans of catastrophic relationship failure and divorce. Yet we've all seen it happen.

So what is going on?

Why do so many couples walk down the aisle full of joy and anticipation only to find themselves in my office a few years later struggling to keep love alive? How can these well meaning people, who loved one another with such passion and abandon, succumb to the familiar story of failure?

"I am unable to recall even a single couple telling me of their grand plan of catastrophic relationship failure and divorce. Yet that's exactly what can happen..."

The following pages are intended for those of you who have set the intention of experiencing a thriving relationship through the first few years of marriage, and well beyond. Though certainly not exhaustive, this list represents a few of the common pitfalls couples trip on—much to the detriment of their “happy marriage.”

You may be doing well now. I’m sure some of these issues you’ll never struggle with. You might even laugh and wonder to yourself, “Who does that kind of stuff?!?” If that’s the case...Awesome!

I’d encourage you, however, to recognize and admit to yourself that you, like the rest of us, may have “blind spots.” We are all striving to do the best we can. It’s a strong person who admits that he or she doesn’t necessarily have perfect vision. There are things we just can’t see. And we all have aspects of ourselves that we need to reflect upon and commit to growth. Our best intentions alone aren’t strong enough to protect us from stray bullets that may fly our way. But with careful attention and growth we can build a solid shield.

My hope for you is that this will be a helpful resource as you begin to ‘Bulletproof’ your marriage!

Warmly,

Timothy Shetter, M.S.

Marriage Expert and Relationship Coach

www.ExperienceHopeCounseling.com

www.MarryOnce.com

13 Pitfalls to Avoid

1. Thinking that “Texting” = Communicating with your spouse

Now, I’m not saying don’t ever use texts...

At least once a week however, I sit with a couple in my office and listen to them describe stories of having their feelings hurt by a short curt email or text. Their partner is being “efficient” and generally unaware that they are hurting the other’s feelings.

“Try picking up the phone once in a while and saying what you need to say. ”

Be aware that both your words and your lack of words are being perceived by your partner through their own lens. Their perception may not always be aligned with your intentions.

Try picking up the phone once in a while and saying what you need to say. Be assertive. Check in with one another, remembering to give the other the benefit of

the doubt. If you feel “hurt” by a particular text, communicate your perception with your partner. Give them a chance to clarify their intentions.

As a general rule (especially if texting leads to conflict for either of you) try using texts for quick grocery shopping lists and logistical needs. If the relationship is in a good space then try sending the occasional, “I’m thinking about you and I can’t wait to see you” message.

Avoid attempting to deal with deeper issues or trying to resolve conflict over text messages (unless you’re apologizing).

Also, don’t text mad! (or drunk either!)



2. Spend all of your free time on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Xbox, Playstation, Wii, Golf... (you get the point)

Another complaint that couples often report revolves around their partner's use of Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Xbox, Playstation, or some other addicting hobby.

Now, we all need some time to download, relax or just veg out...Take care however to occasionally check-in with your partner. Make sure that, "in their eyes" you're not overdoing it with your hobbies and interests.

Did you notice I said, "In **their** eyes?"

Sometimes we need to step outside of ourselves for a few moments to understand our partner's view. You love your partner! So remember to consider their perspective.

If you need to set time limits on yourself do it. Turn off your phone and talk with one another. Read a book together or you might even try getting off the couch and going for a walk.



3. Spend money without asking your partner's opinion.

We all have values, beliefs and habits around the use of money.

Surprise! Like most couples you and your partner probably have at least a few differences. It's not the differences that create the problems. But how you deal with those differences will have a profound impact on the longevity and the quality of your life together.

"Many couples set a dollar amount where they agree to pick up the phone and consult their partner prior to making a purchase."

When you're single, you're free to spend to your heart's content (assuming creditors aren't knocking down your door... and you actually have cash to spend). When you get married, however, it becomes a different issue.

You're in this together now! Each of your decisions impacts the other, both in the short term and the long term. Do yourself, and your partner, a huge favor and talk with one another before making spending decisions.

Questions to Ask each other?

- 1.) *Is money for spending? Or saving?*
- 2.) *What do you think of the phrase, "You can have it all"*
- 3.) *Whose money is it anyway? (Who controls the books?)*
- 4.) *Shared accounts or separate?*

The point is to communicate about finances with your partner. They will feel appreciated and respected by your taking the time to consider them.

You might even want to try sitting down together and establishing some limits on spending. Many couples set a dollar amount where they agree to pick up the phone and consult their partner prior to making a purchase. For some couples that limit might be \$20 while for others it might \$200 or \$2K.

Happy Marriage \$ Checklist!

- 1.) *Discuss your values around spending*
- 2.) *Establish limits*
- 3.) *Develop and stick to a budget*

4. Discount (or ignore) your partner's opinion

Another strategy for damaging the long term health of your marriage is to develop the bad habit of **disregarding** or **ignoring** your spouse's view on things.

Every couple will occasionally bump up against an issue where they hold a different view. It's not only normal but it can become a moment of opportunity for the development of a healthy relationship! Those moments actually help us grow as people if we handle them well.



Now imagine for a moment that you have a particular way of doing some task, or you hold an opposing opinion on some topic (even something as minor as which way the toilet paper should come off the roll).

Do you have that time in mind?

Now imagine your partner politely informing you that ***"Your way is wrong!"***

Tell me...How do you feel? How might you respond in that moment? Do you feel important? Or disregarded?

The next time you find yourself at odds with your partner...Stop.

Practice **listening attentively** to their opinion and go out of your way to make sure they “feel” that you get them. Even if you don’t arrive at the same conclusion, you’ll both feel important and cared for by the other.

5. “Pick on” your partner: A stroll through a mine field

Now I like to have a good time as much as the next guy!

Who hasn’t chided a buddy or poked fun with a good friend? Most of us have probably witnessed or even participated in a little “trash talking” on the athletic field or maybe around a board game.

Often people say something like this... “Well, I only pick on the people I love!”

And I believe them!

“Every couple will occasionally bump up against an issue where they hold a different view. It’s not only normal but it can actually become a moment of opportunity for the development of a healthy relationship!”

“Picking-on” your partner, however, or hurling **sarcastic** and **funny comments** in their direction, can prove to be caustic to your relationship if great care is not taken. Most people have unintentionally stepped on this land mine at least once...And that’s both the irony and the issue here...Who intentionally steps on land mines? (Not me! And I’m sure not you either.)

Now you might be saying, “What’s the big deal? They just need to lighten up!”

And I hear you.

The biggest problem here is this: Your intention and the actual impact of your words on your partner may or may not actually align.

Your partner might even laugh...but they could be experiencing hurt feelings as well—and you may not even have a clue!

**“Show love and respect
to your partner and
your marriage will be a
place of warmth and
joy for a long long
time.”**

Some people respond to that experience by bottling the hurt up inside. They'll tell themselves, "It's no big deal...he didn't really mean it...he was just joking around."

The occasional assertive soul might even jump in and take the risk of saying something. . . . only to be met with, "Don't be so sensitive. It was only a joke! I was just kidding around."

You might be thinking, "Wow! So how do we ever have fun? Where's the line?"

I'm not saying don't have fun with one another. But there are a few lessons to learn if you don't want to find yourself a victim of hidden land mines.

First Lesson: Be careful and be kind. Remember that your job is to build up your partner. Humor is a fantastic asset to growing a vibrant long-lasting relationship. Playfulness is good!

- *Be CAREFUL and KIND*
- *Be OPEN with your feelings and thoughts*
- *Be HONEST*
- *Be ASSERTIVE with your needs and wants.*
- *Check your defensiveness*
- *Avoid sarcasm*
- *Learn your partner's LOVE LANGUAGE and show it to them regularly*

I spoke with a woman who described her thoughts on “teasing” and “sarcasm.” She stated, “I hate sarcasm and would agree that it destroys a feeling of respect ...but my husband teases me all the time. It’s just his sense of humor. He’s never unkind in his teasing and I can tell him if I’m feeling sensitive and **he stops**. I think you can tell when there is meanness behind the teasing.” **Don’t be mean.**

Second Lesson: Be open, assertive and honest with one another about your feelings.

By doing this you’ll actually help teach your partner how to show you tenderness. You’ll help them to hear your heart and learn how to more effectively meet your needs.

Third Lesson: Be defensive of your partner, not yourself:

If your partner ever tells you that your words offended them or hurt their feelings... **don’t get defensive...own it** (even if it wasn’t your intention) and tell them you are sorry for hurting them.

Recognize that it takes time to learn the ways of navigating a field of land mines. Walk intentionally. Go slow and take great care. Show love and respect to your partner and your marriage will be a place of warmth and joy for a long long time. You’ll soon be a master! (And you’ll learn to laugh a lot too!)

6. Disrespect your partner in public or behind their back

Now this one might seem like a no-brainer, but unfortunately it happens.

How often have you overheard someone gossiping about their partner? How many of your friends have trashed their partner to you in the spirit of “venting?” Maybe you’ve shuddered as they picked-on their loved-one in front of friends or family (you know... they called it “just joking around”).

As we discussed in the previous point you take risk enough when you pick on or tease your partner in private. When you venture out into public, however, you’d better be hyper vigilant if you’d like to avoid the land mines we spoke of previously.

Speaking poorly of your partner in public and behind their back will quickly destroy trust and respect. Take great care in how you both speak to and about your partner in public.



7. Say "Always" or "Never" when bringing up complaints

Let me begin by saying you should almost **never** say “always” or “never” when talking to your other half.

Think about it for a minute. If your spouse comes to you and says, “*You NEVER take out the trash,*” or “*You’re ALWAYS late,*” what’s the first thing you’re going to think about?

Exactly. You’ll think about the last time (6 1/2 months ago) when you were on time, or took out the trash. What are you NOT doing in that particular moment? **Listening!**

Communication 101 would coach us to avoid putting our partner on the defense, right? At least if you really want them to both hear and understand you. Try thinking about “Never and Always” as hanging out on opposite ends of a scale of 1 to 100. Now I know that in most cases when you say, “*you never take out the trash*” what you really mean is, “*Honey, you only take out the trash 10% of the time, and I’d really appreciate it if you could help me out in that way a little more.*” Right? Well, then try saying that instead. Be honest with them. **It’s good for your relationship!**

“You should almost **never** say “always” or “never.”

8. Defend your intentions (assume the worst of your partner's mistakes)

How often have you said, *"I didn't mean to hurt your feelings,"* or *"That wasn't my intention?"*

Face it, we all on occasion accidentally and inadvertently say something, or do something, which hurts our partner's feelings.

Let me tell you a story...

A couple years back I was engaged in a "wrestling match" with the kids. They love wrestling with Daddy on the bed! One particular day things got out of hand a little when my 5 year old daughter's foot made contact with the head of her 3 year old sister. Tears followed for sure!

I quickly checked on my daughter and asked my 5 year old to tell her little sister she was sorry for kicking her—to which she replied, "But daddy, **I didn't mean it.**" (Aha... I've heard that response from many couples!)

I knew she didn't mean it. It was in no way her intention to kick her sister in the head. Couples often "kick" each other by accident. You may not even realize you did it... Your partner might be hurting and they might even lash out at you (they might even assume you did it on purpose)... You might be tempted to become defensive. Don't.

Give your partner some grace. Recognize that they are hurting. Sure, I know you didn't mean it. And once the pain subsides, they'll probably understand that as well. But in that moment check on your partner. Even if you didn't mean it... accept the fact that your "foot" still came in contact with their "head..."

9. "Nit-Pick" your partner (especially focus on their faults and differences)

A couple sat on my couch and described how they had been struggling to connect lately. They had been married for less than a year! I asked them what they felt the problem was...

"She nit-picks everything I do!" he quickly and loudly replied.

"Nothing I do is good enough for her! I don't load the dishwasher the correct way (even though I've found success in cleaning my dishes for years...); I don't know how to fold clothes the right way... I don't know how to file the bills the right way, and I sure as hell don't know how to drive either!" She pulled back in the corner of the couch as he unleashed a bottle full of pent up steam.

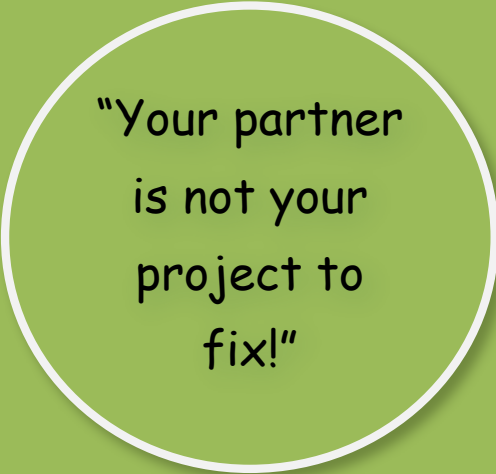


Nit-picking is the process of eyeing your partner's actions with a meticulous eye and then criticizing them for not doing something in the way you would. It's difficult to deal with because the one doing the nit-picking really has a desire to do things well... they have high expectations for themselves and others. That's a great trait that actually helps a lot of people find success in life!

When you start applying your eye for detail to your partner's imperfections, however, problems are bound to arise!

Your partner is not your project to fix.

When you focus your attention on their imperfections you become attuned to the things you don't like about them. You now have less time and energy to focus on those areas that you really appreciate about them. Your attitude starts to shift from one of gratitude to one of contempt... and that's not good.



**"Your partner
is not your
project to
fix!"**

HOMWORK! - Start an
"Appreciation Journal"

- 1.) ***Observe** and **write** down at least 1 thing that you **appreciate** about your spouse each day!*
- 2.) ***Share** your observations with your spouse before you go to bed. Do this at least 3 times/week for 3 weeks.*

their efforts to please you....Now,
good for your marriage!

- 3.) *If you must get your frustration off your chest, write it down; then evaluate it over the course of a week to see if it's worth addressing.*
- 4.) *Aim for greater than 5 positive exchanges for every 1 negative interaction you have with your spouse. (See Gottman for more)*

The other thing that begins to happen is that your partner starts to walk on egg shells. They begin to experience a heightened state of anxiety as they worry about doing everything "perfectly." This often results in their under-performing or, worse yet, their giving up and not doing anything.

Think about that.

Your partner will probably begin to resent you as they suffer under the burden of "performing" in that can't be

10. Emotionally (or physically) connect to someone other than your spouse



I have had the opportunity to work with dozens of couples who have come in heartbroken by the impact of an emotional or physical affair on their marriage. They're devastated. I listen to their stories, and as I'm sure you can imagine, hope clearly takes a beating.

So far, no one has ever told me that they planned on being unfaithful to their partner in any way prior to saying "I do." So what happened? How did this couple who was once so deeply in love arrive at such a place?

Their story usually begins innocently enough...

John and Jane work together. John is married. John has a fight with his wife Sarah and comes to work frustrated. Jane notices John is sad. Jane is a caring person and asks her co-worker (John) what's wrong and offers a listening ear. John politely accepts....and shares with her his frustrations. She listens and responds with care.

Now this all sounds harmless, doesn't it?

When a marriage is strong, such interactions with co-workers may not have all that much of an impact. When the



marriage is in a vulnerable space, however, that interaction creates a connection... (and if you don't think your marriage will ever be vulnerable you're in denial)

It makes perfect sense doesn't it?

John felt heard, understood, and

cared for...something he wasn't feeling at home that morning. Who wouldn't appreciate feeling that? After all, when John and Sarah met and dated, he probably felt the same way around the woman he now calls his wife.

Now, I'm not saying that any kind and caring interaction with someone of the opposite sex is going to lead to an affair. Be real and honest with yourself...you and your partner are human. Humans have natural desires and affinities. There's nothing wrong with that. But there is something wrong with failing to control those desires.

www.ExperienceHopeCounseling.com
www.MarryOnce.com

I worry about the people who tell me, ***“I’ll never have an affair!”***

Unfortunately, they’re usually the first ones who find themselves struggling in quicksand. Honest and self-aware people are alert people who realize the ever-present danger; they are far more likely to successfully avoid the traps.

For all of you space fans, imagine each couple as a “space ship” floating around in outer-space. Space debris and asteroids crash into and bounce off of the force field on a regular basis. The couple thinks nothing of it because they are protected.

All is good until the force field is weakened or turned off for a period. Couples who are connected in a deep way, regularly meeting one another’s needs, experience the safety of a

Create a Plan

“Strengthen the Shield”

(Before you need it)

- 1) Develop relationships with close trusted same-sex friends who you can approach (and trust) with your frustrations.
- 2) Find and develop a relationship with a trusted marriage therapist to connect with (prior to having problems).
- 3) Avoid connecting with anyone you might find tempting in some way.

strong force field which resists the temptations that are always there. The couple who lets their guard down opens themselves up to the normal attacks. Those who have no plan to protect themselves during these expected realities of life often fall to the attacks.

Create a plan.

1) Develop relationships with close trusted friends of the same sex who you can approach (and trust) with your frustrations during those difficult times of your marriage.

2) Build a connection with a marriage therapist during the good times so you have someone to help you repair the force field quickly when you encounter problems.

3) During tough times in your marriage take great care to avoid connecting with anyone by whom you might find yourself tempted. Even though it might feel good to have that person who will care for and listen to you, it isn't worth the long term pain you'll experience should things go wrong.



11. Parent your partner/ Expect your partner to parent you

Jenny sat on my couch one evening and described her incredible frustration (and disappointment) with how she had come to feel, not like her husband's lover, but his mother! She told me she was "tired" as this was not what she had signed up for. She described how her typical day went:



"I pull into the driveway after work and begrudgingly drag myself in the door where I have come to expect a sink full of his dirty dishes and a lazy husband plopped down in front of the Xbox. He wants me to make his dinner and clean up after him. He thinks I'm his mom!"

After working hard all day she regularly returned to the responsibilities of their shared home. Before the

wedding, she had assumed that they would share in the work of building a home. Now she felt as if she was married to an adolescent still trying to conquer the next video game while she took care of all the chores...

ALONE!

Several times a month both wives and husbands tell me, *“I am the parent in the relationship...and I’m sick of it!”*

Jimmy described his frustration with his wife. He had been attracted to her outgoing and vibrant personality when they were dating. She was the life of the party and he loved the way she brought him out of his shell around people. After being married for several years with a small child at home, Jimmy was becoming very frustrated by the amount of time she was out “partying” with her girl friends. She told me that she wasn’t really ready to grow up and resented the responsibilities that had been placed upon her by having a husband, home and child. Jimmy was tired of being a single parent!

Be very careful if you find yourself on either side of one of these scenarios. They never end well. Think about it. What is the eventual outcome of all parent-child relationships?

Failure (in a sense) right? Child grows up. Child leaves (or parent gives child the boot!)

As you grow your new relationship take great care to make sure you are carrying your load. It’s time to grow up. Take responsibility for yourself. Your job is to be a partner, not a parent. That will come soon enough!

12. Place the responsibility for your happiness on your spouse

A **common myth** about getting married that most buy into at some level is this:

“When I get married I will be fulfilled and happy!”

“My partner will fulfill all my deepest desires and needs. When I get married I will be fulfilled and happy!”

You’ll probably admit that you already expect marriage to bring with it a set of responsibilities, right? Of course, you and your partner will have to divide duties and obligations around the house and work.

What you might not have admitted, however, is that on some level you also have a set of expectations around your happiness. We all do. Who doesn’t want be happy? I mean, why else would we marry another person if we didn’t buy into the dream of that person also being able to meet our deepest needs for romance, love, connection and support?

On some level we place a heavy degree of hope in the dream that our partner will never let us down. We believe they will never betray our trust and will always think of our best interests. Now, I know that you know, at least at

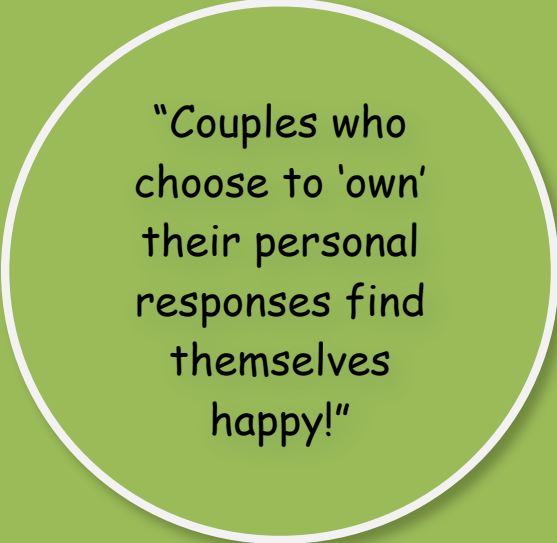
a head level, that this isn't a true expectation. The reality, however, is that we are often caught off guard when our partner does something selfish, betrays our trust in some way, or fails to meet our needs. When this happens (and it will) your sense of well being and happiness may be shaken. You may be tempted to blame your partner for your unhappiness.

You, however, are responsible for your own actions, reactions and responses to the things that happen to you, whether perceived or intentional. It is your choice how you are going to respond when your partner fails you.

Couples who choose to "own" their own responses find themselves happy.

Those who decide they are merely "victims" of their partner's failures often experience feelings of depression and hopelessness. They soon begin a downward spiral of blame and resentment which only deepens their pain and further divides their relationship.

Now I'm not saying it will be easy or feel good when your partner fails you. (Nor will it be easy on them when you fail them in some way!) I also know that it can be incredibly difficult to see through the pain when you're in the middle of it. But if you choose to forgive and love your partner when they fail you, you will indeed find happiness.



"Couples who
choose to 'own'
their personal
responses find
themselves
happy!"

13. Sweep "issues" under the rug (avoid conflict at all costs)

Engaged couples often take pride in coming in and telling me, ***"We've never had a fight!"***

It's hard to burst the bubble the happy couple is floating around in. The sad reality, however, is that in many cases it's not long after the wedding night that the bubble bursts... and the fall hurts!

"We've never had a fight" is actually a giant red flag in many cases.

There are a variety of reasons why couples have been able to avoid conflict during their dating/engaged years. It may be that they rarely, or never, engaged in those deep types of conversations where the potential for conflict exists. They might not really know each other. In some cases their relationship might actually be built primarily upon their passionate physical relationship...and not much else.



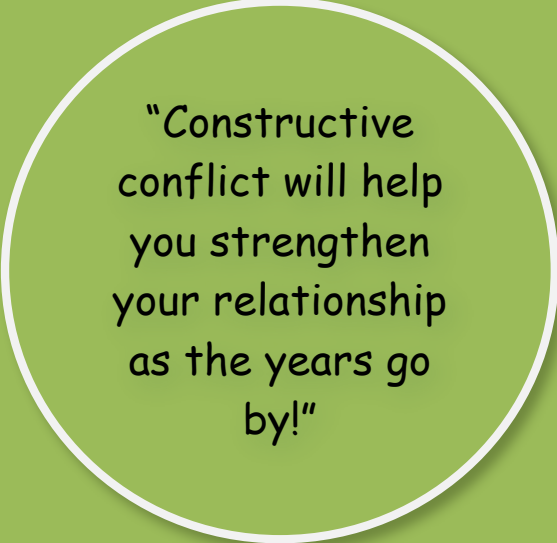
The main issue many times, however, is that one or both of the partners are masters at minimizing issues.

A person might have a problem but experience anxiety around bringing up the issue for fear of hurting or angering their partner. They love their partner and desperately want to avoid anything that might hurt the relationship. After all, they have staked their current (and future) happiness on making the relationship work.

It makes sense, doesn't it!?

The big problem here, however, is that sweeping these things under the proverbial rug leads to a breakdown of the mechanisms that enable a couple to develop a deep trust in one another. In the long run resentment may enter the relationship. You also may end up finding that you don't trust your partner to truly hear and understand you, for better or worse.

Constructive conflict will help you strengthen your relationship as the years go by. Believe it or not, you can make it through a fight and come out on the other side actually knowing each other more intimately.



**"Constructive
conflict will help
you strengthen
your relationship
as the years go
by!"**

Yesterday a young couple came into my office desperate for help. Well, actually, Amber was desperate. Jake responded with, “There’s no problem... She just needs to get over it... We don’t need to waste a bunch of money doing counseling. She’s just overreacting.”

Amber responded, “There are plenty of problems! He just avoids them and won’t talk to me!”

In private, Amber went on to explain how Jake would walk away anytime she became frustrated with him. If she tried to talk with him about anything that was bothering her, he would either change the subject or leave the room. Of course, Amber would become even more agitated. She

reported feeling unloved and uncared for. “He doesn’t even care enough about me to stay there and have a good fight...We never fight, I have no idea who this man is I married!”

Of course, Jake told me that he deeply loved Amber but was afraid of fighting with her. “I don’t want to hurt her... and I don’t want her to hurt me either. I just want to focus on the good things!” He found himself frightened by her occasional animated and emotional responses.



Jake had been brought up learning to walk away from conflict. He never saw his parents yell at each other. The people he did see yelling at each other, though, usually ended up in divorce.

“...by avoiding her
in her pain...he
was telling her
she wasn't
important...”

Jake didn't want to hurt Amber, but by avoiding her in her pain he was doing just that. He was telling her she wasn't important enough to him to deal with her in both the good times and tough times.

Now, I'm not encouraging you to “yell” at your partner. But, as uncomfortable as it may feel to stay in the room with your upset partner, do it. If things are getting out of hand, take a “time-out” and come back together after you both have had time to calm down. You owe it to yourself and to your partner to respect them enough to hear them out.

Many books have been written about the “how-to's” of effectively communicating and resolving our differences. That is beyond the scope of this particular guide. Just know that if you avoid all conflict with your partner you will slowly eat away at the intimate relationship you are so longing for.

Parting Thoughts

As I conclude this, I am in a coffee shop seated at a table that has undoubtedly witnessed the life stages of many relationships. Like many coffee shops, my seat has hosted conversations of young couples meeting for the very first time, sharing hopes and dreams for their futures. One gentleman just arrived with a single rose to the delight of his girlfriend. I'm sure other couples have shared this seat as they've explored much more difficult space.

Relationships can be incredibly fulfilling, but they can also be tortuously difficult at times.

Great marriages aren't born. They're built one brick at a time through consistent growth and attention. Like houses built to withstand storms, marriages built upon strong foundations are able to withstand life's storms when they arrive. Like it or not, a storm will blow in at some point! So prepare yourself for success!

My hope for you is that you will avoid some of the mistakes of the couples described here. There are many talented marriage therapists, counselors, and relationship coaches who can help you to repair things when storms do appear. But it is much easier (and less painful) to build a strong storm-resistant and bulletproof marriage from the beginning. . . . So get to building! If I can help you in any way, let me know!

About the Author

Timothy Shetter is a marriage expert and relationship coach specializing in helping couples “Bulletproof” their marriages.

Trained in the art and science of Marriage and Family Therapy, Tim has worked extensively with successful individuals and their partners along the many stages of their journey. Tim is passionate about helping couples intentionally connect with each other and those around them in powerful and life giving ways.

If you’d like to “Bulletproof Your Marriage” we invite you to contact us now! Why wait? We specialize in helping successful couples build their marriages for a lifetime of joy and fulfillment! Utilizing research-based assessment tools we will help you identify strengths and reinforce the potential kinks in the armor!

Call now to schedule a free consultation!

Timothy C. Shetter, M.S



Call Now to “Bulletproof
your Marriage!”

Free consultation

(970) 599-1409

Tim@ExperienceHopeCounseling.com

www.ExperienceHopeCounseling.com
www.MarryOnce.com