By Kiddo Elliott, The Romance Mystic

111+ MARRIAGE DRAGONS

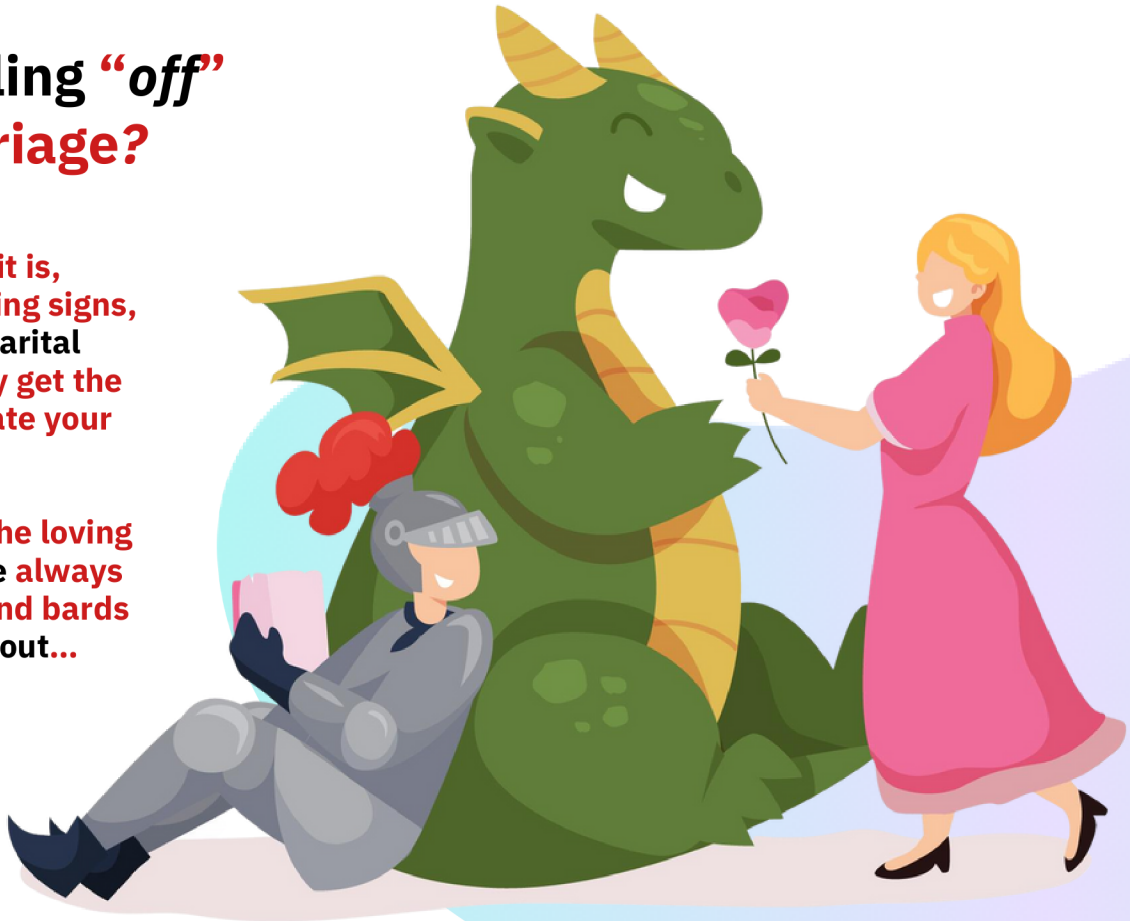
AND HOW TO SLAY THEM

Challenges | Symptoms | Solutions

Something feeling *"off"* in your marriage?

Find out what it is, recognize the warning signs, and vanquish marital threats before they get the chance to incinerate your bond.

So you can create the loving relationship you've always dreamed of—the kind bards write ballads about...





Every relationship will have its ups and downs...

...but there are *some* couples practically **DOOMED** to have *way* more than their fair share of those downs, let me tell ya!

That would be the couples with even ONE partner working to overcome the seemingly insurmountable penalties and setbacks of having been born to **emotionally immature parents**.

If you had such parents, other "well-meaning adults" in your life now might tell you, "So what? Get over it. You're not a kid anymore. Time to grow up."

You might tell yourself the same thing. **Your upbringing definitely trained you to be harsh with yourself, right?**

But platitudes like those are not at all about compassion or helping us move on either. **In the end, how can we "grow up" and become the happy, productive, emotionally mature adults we were born to be... if we had ZERO role models to show us the way?** And maybe none now?

And again, those well-meaning adults will glibly answer you, "Well, find some then."

That's what they told me. So, that's what I did.

Turns out, they were right because I knew I just had to do **SOMETHING** different if I didn't want to end up infected with a deadly STD, marrying 9 guys, and working dead-end jobs my whole life just like my teen mother. Or else hooked on drugs, booze, and cigarettes and landed my arse in prison like my father, aunt, and older (half) brother.

It was a hard journey, and I'll share more details with you sometime, but the point is this:

Sweet child, I cracked the code! Broke the mold! Stopped the cycle. Changed my family tree. Whatever you wanna call it, I learned how to set my marriage, career, and character on a completely different trajectory than my upbringing would even grudgingly allow me to.

And that's why I know exactly how you can do the same or most likely EVEN BETTER.

More importantly, it's why I can believe in YOU like no one else ever has, too. It's my superpower! A gift I bring back from my own hero's journey to share with you, darling.

The reality is that if you had such parents then they likely "gifted" you with deeply engraved and lingering subconscious programming. The worst, ambition-crushing, relationship-killing kind.

It can leave you appearing to be permanently stunted to varying degrees in most aspects of your life: emotional, relational, economic, spiritual, and professional.

It makes a happy marriage SO DAMN HARD to nurture. And a romance with a career and purpose that lights you up feels like an impossible dream. You might blame and hate yourself by now for all this, too, and decide it's just you. You *are* defective. You're just worthless, that's all.

You may end up having to bloom a little later in this life than some others who didn't come in with the mighty hill to climb as you had, but you are NOT defective, worthless, or permanently stunted. Far from it.

People are gonna see you're the headliner in this show called Your Life. You're saving the best for last, baby! While the rest of them wind down, you're just cranking up!

You're reading this because you already suspected this about yourself on some level anyway. And you're finally ready to see exactly how incredible that Real You is that you've just been holding back for all these years.

The poopy inheritance of our emotionally immature parents can be passed on for generations until someone like you and me decides to be the one who will break the cycle. So let's begin the work, right now. Today.

Starting with making our marriage SING!

Couples armed with plenty of knowledge, preparedness, a few quality influences in their life from people who get them and are rooting for them, and a determination to nurture and fight for their marriage will emerge not just intact but stronger, closer, and more in love than ever.

There are things in this guide you can do right *now*—and *if* the time ever comes—to build a marriage that grows in beauty and resilience through the years.

A love story that gets you through anything together and makes you the absolute *envy* of everyone you know. Especially your immature parent.

My own journey of 20 years in marriage has led me to precisely such an experience. Many have asked me to share my insights over the years, which inspired me to finally create this guide.

I hope it helps you battle on, darling one.

But let me assure you, this guide is just the beginning of our journey together, my friend!

While these pages provide a concise overview of the 111+ top challenges faced by modern-day lasting, joyful marriages and offer some solutions to each, **there's SO MUCH MORE waiting for you in our podcast and private community site.**



In every podcast episode, we will delve deep into ONE of these specific 111+ challenges...

...backed by the latest research, my personal experience and studies, and some *keen* (at least, I'd like to think so ☺) observations.

Even better, I'll seek YOUR wisdom and insights, along with those of fellow listeners and community members, on each specific topic.

After each episode, I'll compile this collective wisdom into a comprehensive, action-packed guide and workbook dedicated to that particular challenge.

So, while this guide offers a paragraph or two on each challenge and its potential solutions, our post-episode workbooks will deliver much more in-depth guidance, specific resources, and space for your personal notes and inspirations.

For members of our private community, the fun growth, and adventure continues!

Here, in the digital haven I've built for us all, we'll come together to discuss each topic freely to our heart's content, ask questions, groan over my LOTR references, and connect with peers who understand the journey we're all on—the journey to break free from the challenges imposed by careless, immature, selfish, narcissistic, or loveless parenting during our most impressionable years. A childhood without role models, adult guidance, or much love.

And because I am SO not claiming to have any sort of monopoly on the best information to help you blossom in your search for love, marriage, and career, I promise you I will always seek to make two things happen in our community.

First, you, you, you. I want your feedback and will give space for it and plenty of opportunities to share it.

Secondly, I will keep learning and seeking out other successful couples with decades-long marriages—humanity's wisest elders— to interview and preserve their marriage lessons and stories. We'll find our good examples and role models, by golly.

Good parents set their kids up for life, but you and I know that bad parents only set them back...and *we* won't let that happen to us anymore!

I warmly invite you now, wonderful, precious reader, to use this guide as a solid starting point for your journey.

Then, join me and your fellow dragon-slayers as we set off on our exciting quest of loving, mentoring, and re-parenting ourselves.

Together, we'll transform into the calm, confident, wise, patient, responsible, brave, honest, and loving adult marriage and career success stories we were always meant to be.

Til next time, Sunshine, I wish you love!

HASTA la PASTA + XOXO,

Kidde Elliott

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COMMUNICATION CRUSHERS



Don't dismiss this section as just another cliché or assume you've got it all figured out.

I get it; terms like 'communication' and 'seeking professional help' can make our eyes roll. And I, too, must gag and fight the eye roll here.

It's a reflex many of us, raised by emotionally immature parents, share.

But that's precisely why we're here – to break free from the communication patterns we learned from our upbringing.

Here is a crucial area where our emotionally immature parents bombed big time as role models. Yours, like mine, probably *still* suck at it, am I right? (Do you, too, have to or *want* to end nearly *every* call from your parent by hanging up on them? Ug.)

Then consider this your first major investment in your adult toolkit, a gift to your present self that your younger self never received.

So, as we strive to change our family tree, let's take a closer look at our communication patterns and ask ourselves if there are any blind spots we need to address.

Ready? Let's dive in.

#1 COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

Challenge: Poor communication is a leading cause of marital issues. Misunderstandings, lack of active listening, and an inability to express feelings can strain a relationship.

Manifestation: Frequent misunderstandings, arguments, or feeling unheard.

Solutions: Open and honest communication is key. Make time for regular check-ins, actively listen to your partner, and express your thoughts and emotions constructively. Consider couples therapy if needed.

#2 RESENTMENT ACCUMULATION

Challenge: Accumulated resentment can fester and harm the relationship over time.

Manifestation: Lingering bitterness or recurring arguments.

Solutions: Practice forgiveness and address conflicts promptly. Effective communication and conflict resolution skills are crucial. Show appreciation for everything your partner does for you, big or small. Consider seeking professional help if deep-seated issues persist.

#3 INADEQUATE CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS OR TOOLS

Challenge: A lack of effective conflict-resolution skills and tools can lead to recurring or escalating arguments and resentment.

Manifestation: Difficulty resolving disagreements. Frequent unresolved arguments or escalating conflicts.

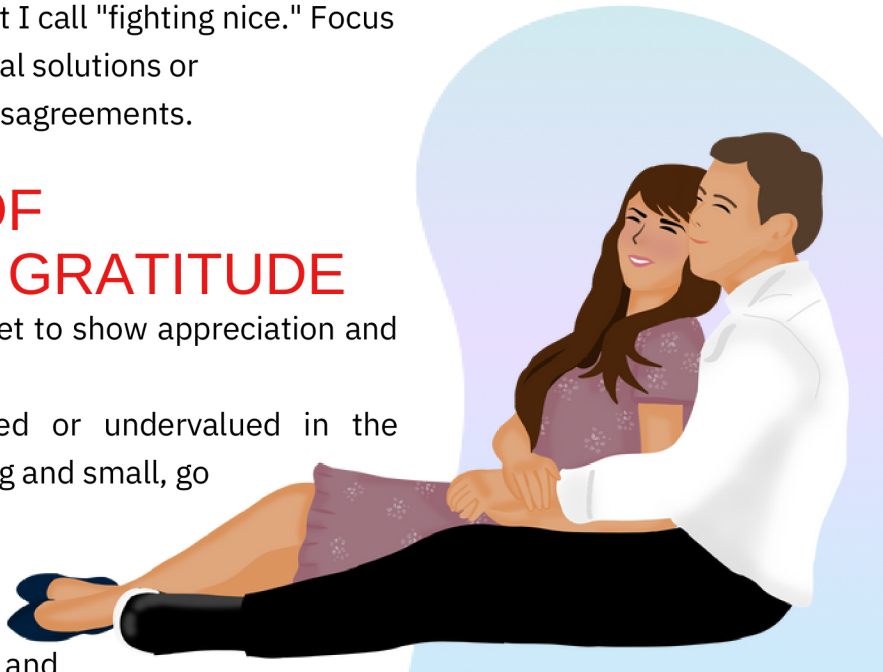
Solutions: Learn and practice healthy conflict resolution techniques, such as active listening and compromise and what I call "fighting nice." Focus on empathy and finding mutually beneficial solutions or compromises. Practice patience during disagreements.

#4 GENERAL LACK OF APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE

Challenge: Over time, partners may forget to show appreciation and express gratitude for each other.

Manifestation: Feeling underappreciated or undervalued in the relationship. Like the efforts you make, big and small, go unnoticed.

Solutions: Cultivate a culture of appreciation and gratitude in your relationship. Regularly acknowledge and thank each other for even the small gestures.



#5 UNRESOLVED PAST CONFLICTS

Challenge: Lingering unresolved conflicts from the past can resurface and disrupt the present.

Manifestation: Lingering unresolved conflicts from the past.

Solutions: Address past conflicts through effective communication and conflict resolution. Seek closure and forgiveness to move forward.

#6 FEELING UNHEARD OR INVALIDATED

Challenge: Feeling unheard or invalidated in the relationship can lead to resentment.

Manifestation: Feeling ignored or dismissed in conversations.

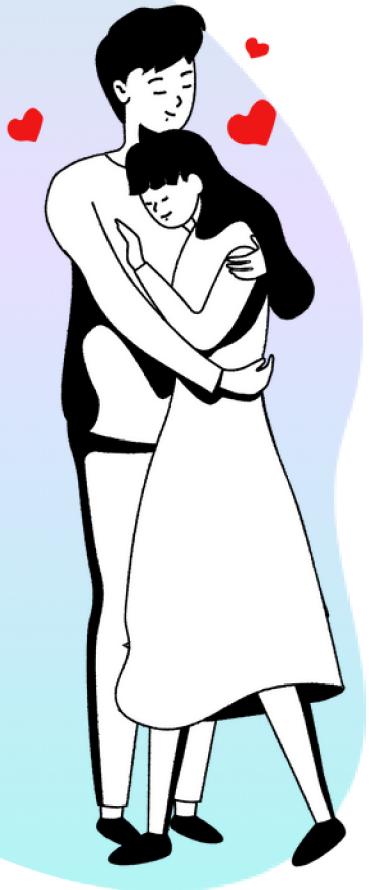
Solutions: Practice active listening and empathy. Validate each other's feelings and experiences, ensuring both partners feel heard and understood.

#7 LANGUAGE BARRIERS IN MULTICULTURAL MARRIAGES

Challenge: Language differences can lead to misunderstandings and communication breakdowns in multicultural marriages.

Manifestation: Language differences impacting communication.

Solutions: Invest in language learning skills together to improve communication. Practice patience and empathy. Use non-verbal cues and seek support from language tutors if necessary to bridge communication gaps.



FINANCIAL FURIES



Adult children of emotionally immature parents often find themselves in one of two distinct financial situations: soaring success... or perpetual struggle.

These outcomes can be traced back to our upbringing, where communication and emotional support were often lacking.

In the first situation, with the prosperous, uber-achievers among us, there are two types.

The first type may have developed an inflated sense of entitlement, leading to a material-centered mindset driven by any means necessary. These individuals may prioritize material gain above all else, sometimes at the expense of their relationships.

This scenario creates what I call the "dead-eyed bitches" or "dead-eyed douchebags." You'll hear more about these types in our podcast and community because I want to help you steer clear of marrying one of these. They bring their spouses nothing but misery.

The second type is characterized by a lifelong quest for validation, driven by a parent's underestimation of them or even their parent's jealousy. These individuals tend to really wrack up their accomplishments and strive for success to prove their worth, often seeking the approval they never received. To earn the ever-elusive love and respect from that critical or envious parent.

On the flip side, there are the chronic underachievers feeling like they are just barely scraping by.

Those who struggle financially may have received no guidance or role models for managing money, leaving them to navigate adulthood's financial challenges on their own. This struggle may be further exacerbated by a mindset that believes having *just* enough to survive is the limit of what they should even want and deserve.

Just enough to survive... but *never* thrive.

Many of you reading these words, myself included, will count yourself in this boat. And you will feel like you had to lose years or even decades to figure this all out... or still wonder if you *ever* will, right?

But the good news is that armed with awareness and understanding of our early influences, we can transform our financial future.

So whether you're on a journey of abundance or navigating financial challenges, it's essential first to recognize the influence of your childhood experiences with an emotionally immature parent.

Then, forgive yourself for past financial decisions and embrace your newfound awareness.

Finally, let go of the need for parental approval. It is a futile pursuit, my darling.

These are vital steps in rewriting your financial future.

In this guide and future podcast episodes, we'll explore the psychological impact of emotionally immature parenting and its financial repercussions, and then offer possible solutions.



By doing so, we can find peace in our relationship with our parents and achieve financial harmony in our marriages.

Your past does not have to dictate your financial future or career potential.

And let's not let money become the stumbling block in our marriages!

Instead, let's work together to overcome these financial challenges.

Read on to discover the top financial marriage challenges and some starter strategies to address them.

#8 FINANCIAL STRESS & STRAIN

Challenge: Money problems often lead to marital discord. Disagreements over spending, debt, and financial goals can create tension.

Manifestation: Frequent financial arguments, stress, or secrecy.

Solutions: Create a budget together, set financial goals as a couple, and discuss money matters openly. Seek professional advice if your financial situation becomes overwhelming.

#9 LACK OF FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY. (BENIGN)

Challenge: Involves one partner concealing financial matters from the other, such as not disclosing the true state of family finances--how bad they are or even how great!--or allowing insurance policies to lapse without notification. This can result in massive erosion of trust in the relationship.

Manifestation: The partner kept in the dark is made to feel like the most naive and trusting of fools when the truth is exposed. One partner is left entirely unaware of their financial situation or significant changes. The difference between this and Financial Infidelity is that motivations and intent here are usually positive or not deliberately seeking or plotting harm (e.g., they don't want you to worry, are embarrassed they messed up or can't handle finances properly, don't want you to spend more so you can retire or survive easily if they pass on, etc.).

Solutions: Prioritize open and regular discussions about finances, budgeting, and financial goals. Review your finances together, set clear financial objectives, and maintain open communication regarding spending habits and debts. No one should be kept in the dark about debts, expenditures, account balances, or insurance policies. Consider using financial management tools like Credit Karma and sharing login information for added transparency and trust restoration.

#10 A JOB LOSS OR MAJOR INCOME LOSS



Challenge: One or both spouses experience a significant reduction or loss of income, often leading to financial stress and instability.

Manifestation: Increased financial tension, arguments over money, anxiety about the future, and a strain on the marital relationship.

Solutions: Involves open communication about financial concerns, creating a budget and financial plan, exploring new job opportunities or income sources, seeking financial advice or counseling, reaching out to loved ones for help and support, and supporting each other emotionally during the financial hardship to maintain a strong and resilient partnership.

#11 FINANCIAL INFIDELITY, HIDDEN FINANCES, AND FINANCIAL SECRETS: (DANGER)

Challenge: Entails undisclosed financial issues, resulting in financial deception leading to trust breaches.

Manifestation: This challenge involves hidden financial issues, such as secret debts, undisclosed spending, or concealed insurance policies. It can result in one partner signing up for credit in the other's name without their knowledge or approval. Betrayal and selfish mal intention is the signature of this challenge.

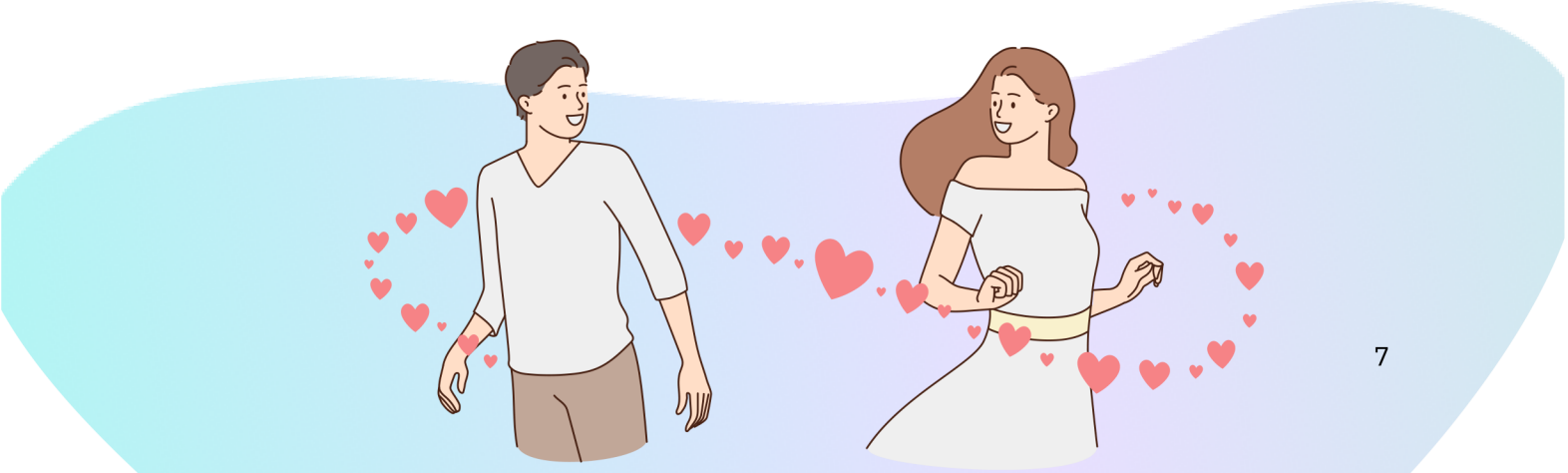
Solutions: It's essential to promote financial transparency and rebuild trust. Initiate open conversations about financial matters and ensure both partners are fully aware of their financial situation. Regularly review financial accounts and statements together to detect any hidden financial issues. Establish clear boundaries and agreements regarding financial responsibility and decision-making within the relationship to prevent future financial secrets from emerging. Open up free accounts at Credit Karma and share login information for added trust restoration. All that said, THIS challenge is a huge, huge, huge danger sign in a marriage that the partner could be planning you harm. It's how nearly every murder documentary I have ever watched begins.

#12 RESISTANCE TO SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP IN GENERAL

Challenge: Hesitation to seek professional help when facing challenges--medical, legal, financial, technical--or just relying on someone you know who *thinks* they can do a job for you can hinder progress and cost you much more in the long run.

Manifestation: Unwillingness to call and pay a qualified, experienced, proven professional for help with something neither of you knows how to do yourself causing stress, tension, lost time, money, discomfort, and conflict. Potentially straining friendships, too.

Solutions: You cannot do it all yourself. Paying a professional their reasonable fees to take care of something you are not trained in or knowledgable about saves you much time and aggravation. Normalize seeking professional guidance in all matters for a healthier marriage.



INTIMACY AND ROMANCE EXTINGUISHERS



Intimacy and romance are essential elements of a fulfilling marriage, but they can be challenging for many couples, *regardless* of their upbringing.

Whether you had loving parents or faced difficulties in your childhood, intimacy issues can arise for all of us at some point in our relationships.

Why is that?

First of all—and this is just my opinion—I think it's partly because we weren't all raised by geishas and courtesans.

Meaning we don't get any *formal* training on this topic.

So most parents won't exactly be sitting you down, taking you on their knee, and saying something like, "And now honey, I am going to tell you exactly how to move your hands in perfect symphony with your mouth all over your hubby's manhood so that he worships you forever...just like Daddy worships me!"

Shudders Do you even want to imagine that parental conversation?

No way! Sexual intimacy is something even the best of parents don't offer us much role modeling on. And thank goodness for that!

Instead, sexual intimacy is often learned through personal exploration.

However, we do have some special words for the bad parents who do expose us to sex prematurely: child abusers and groomers.

Having had such parents is sadly why some individuals may carry the trauma of past sexual abuse into their adult relationships, leading to intimacy challenges.

Moreover, the widespread availability of explicit content, especially online porn and sites like Only Fans, has introduced complex dynamics into relationships. Understatement of the year, right?

Addressing all these challenges is vital for a happy, satisfying, and enduring marriage.

In this section and throughout our podcast and membership site, we'll delve into these issues, providing guidance and solutions.

We aim to richly empower couples—including adult children of emotionally immature parents—to navigate intimacy and romance successfully in their marriages.

Eventually, you'll hear more about my own experiences and successes in this area. For all their pain, they have fabulously equipped me to help so many struggling in this area.

Stay tuned for upcoming content.

Very soon, I will release my very first gamified online course (for men only) designed to enhance marital satisfaction in the most surprising way!

Meanwhile, just know we're here to support you on your journey to a happier and more fulfilling marriage.



#13 LACK OF SEX

Challenge: A lack of physical intimacy can erode the connection between partners.

Manifestation: Lack of physical intimacy.

Solutions: Prioritize intimacy in your relationship. Communicate your needs, be open to trying new things, and invest time in sexual connection. Seek medical help, therapy, or counseling if intimacy issues persist.

#14 DIFFERENCES IN LIBIDO

Challenge: Mismatched sexual desires can create frustration and tension.

Manifestation: Mismatched sexual desires causing tension.

Solutions: Openly discuss your needs and desires. Seek compromise and consider professional guidance from a sex therapist if necessary.

#15 SEXUAL INCOMPATIBILITY

Challenge: Differences in sexual desires, preferences, or intimacy levels can create frustration and dissatisfaction.

Manifestation: Dissatisfaction or avoidance of sexual intimacy.

Solutions: Openly discuss your sexual needs and desires. Consider seeking professional guidance from a therapist or sex counselor to improve sexual compatibility.

#16 UNSATISFYING SEX LIFE

Challenge: A lack of sexual satisfaction or desire discrepancies can strain intimacy.

Manifestation: Dissatisfaction or infrequency in sexual intimacy.

Solutions: Prioritize open and honest communication about your sexual needs and desires. Explore new ways to connect and rejuvenate your sex life, and consider seeking professional help if needed.



#17 INFERTILITY AND FERTILITY STRUGGLES

Challenge: Difficulty conceiving can put immense emotional strain on a couple's relationship. So, so painful. So unfair.

Manifestation: Difficulty conceiving or coping with fertility treatments.

Solutions: Seek medical guidance and support for fertility issues. Lean on each other for emotional support, and consider alternatives like adoption or fertility treatments if needed.

#18 CHANGE IN PHYSICAL ATTRACTION

Challenge: As partners age, physical appearances may change, impacting attraction.

Manifestation: Changes in physical appearance affecting attraction.

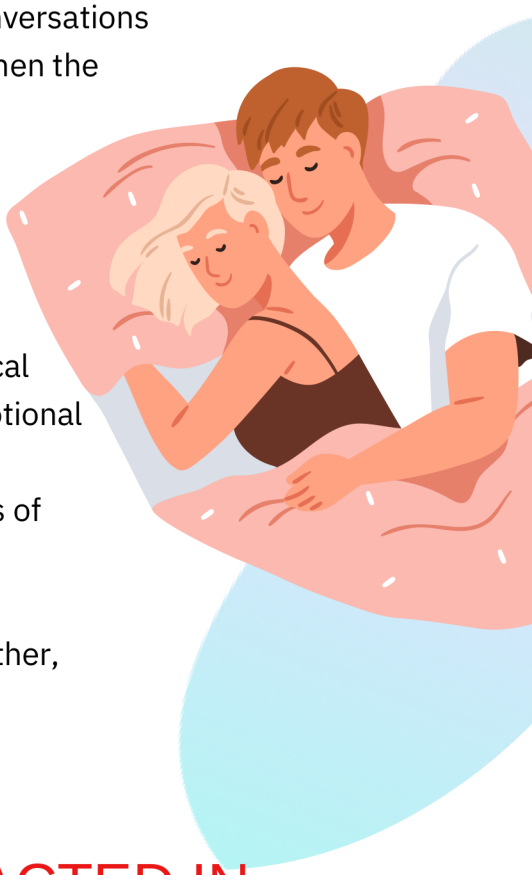
Solutions: Embrace the natural changes that come with age. Focus on emotional and intellectual connections and express love and appreciation for each other's evolving beauty.

#19 LACK OF EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Challenge: Over time, emotional distance may develop due to life's demands and distractions.

Manifestation: Feeling emotionally disconnected or distant.

Solutions: Rekindle emotional connection through meaningful conversations and shared experiences. Prioritize quality time together to strengthen the emotional bond.



#20 LACK OF AFFECTION AND PHYSICAL TOUCH

Challenge: Sometimes, couples may experience a decrease in physical intimacy. Characterized by a noticeable absence of physical intimacy, such as hugs, kisses, and cuddling, which can erode emotional connection and lead to emotional distance.

Manifestation: Emotional distance, reduced intimacy, and feelings of neglect, leading to a decline in overall marital satisfaction.

Solutions: Open communication about each partner's needs and desires for physical affection, scheduling regular quality time together, and working on rebuilding intimacy through physical touch and non-sexual affectionate gestures to reignite emotional connection and closeness.

#21 SECRETLY SAME-SEX ATTRACTED IN HETEROSEXUAL MARRIAGE

Challenge: One spouse discovers or realizes they have same-sex attractions while in a heterosexual marriage.

Manifestation: This can manifest as emotional distance, secrecy, and potential infidelity as the individual grapples with their identity and desires.

Solutions: The solution involves open and empathetic communication, therapy (either conventional or reintegrative therapy), and, in some cases, making decisions about the future of the marriage, such as pursuing an amicable separation or seeking support in navigating a mixed-orientation marriage.

QUALITY TIME KILLERS



In the grand tapestry of marriage, the threads of quality time are woven delicately, yet they hold immense importance. Whether you're an adult child of emotionally immature parents or come from a different background, the challenges that surface in this realm can affect *any* couple.

Quality time is the lifeblood of a thriving relationship, fostering connection, intimacy, and joy. Yet, it's a facet of marriage that often goes overlooked or underserved in our busy lives.

We get caught up in our routines or our schedules and forget how to have FUN! We forget how satisfying it is to make beautiful memories together we can look back on in the future.

In this section, we'll explore the hurdles that couples encounter when it comes to spending meaningful time together.

From the lack of spontaneity to the absence of shared interests, these challenges can chip away at the foundation of your partnership.

But fear not, for we are here to guide you through these challenges. Let’s put the FUN back in dysfunctional, shall we? Together, we'll discover strategies and solutions to rekindle the flames of adventure, spontaneity, and shared experiences in your marriage.

Stay with us on this journey, and you'll find that nurturing quality time is not just about strengthening your marriage; it's about enriching your lives as individuals and as a couple.

#22 LACK OF QUALITY TIME

Challenge: Busy lives, work commitments, and daily routines can lead to a lack of quality time spent together as a couple.

Manifestation: Feeling distant, disconnected, or neglected.

Solutions: Prioritize quality over quantity. Schedule regular date nights or weekend getaways to reconnect. Make an effort to be present and fully engaged during these moments, free from distractions.

#23 LACK OF SPONTANEITY OR SURPRISES

Challenge: A predictable and routine-oriented life can lead to a lack of excitement, spontaneity, surprise, and FUN.

Manifestation: Feeling stuck in a monotonous routine. A lack of surprises or spontaneity in the relationship. Every day seems the same and blurs into the next.

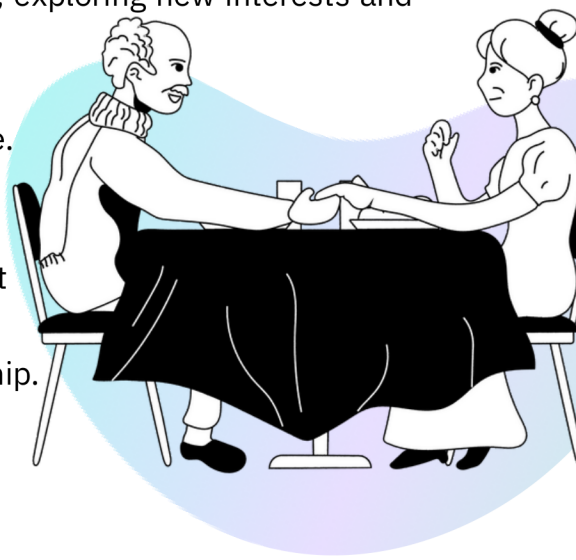
Solutions: Let's put the fun back in dysfunctional, shall we? Inject spontaneity into your relationship by planning surprise dates or activities. Embrace opportunities for adventure and novelty. Take the scenic route home. Try reacting the opposite of how you might normally, saying yes instead of no. Flip a coin.

#24 STAGNATION AND LACK OF ADVENTURE OR NOVELTY

Challenge: A lack of novelty and a monotonous routine can lead to boredom and a sense of stagnation in a marriage. In a sense, you have stopped making memories together.

Manifestation: Feeling stuck in a monotonous routine or loss of excitement. Lack of new experiences.

Solutions: Keep the relationship fresh by trying new activities, exploring new interests and places together, and making spontaneity a part of your routine. Explore new adventures and experiences together. Keep fun and adventure alive by trying new things and embracing change.



#25 NEGLECTING FRIENDSHIP

Challenge: Over time, couples may neglect the friendship aspect of their relationship.

Manifestation: Losing the friendship foundation in the relationship.

Solutions: Cultivate a strong friendship foundation. Spend time together doing enjoyable activities, maintain humor and playfulness, and cherish each other as friends.

#26 LACK OF SHARED INTERESTS

Challenge: A lack of shared hobbies or interests may lead to emotional distance.

Manifestation: Few shared hobbies or interests.

Solutions: Discover new interests together or make an effort to support each other's individual pursuits. Finding common ground can strengthen your bond.



RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS DESTROYERS



In every marriage, the intricate dance of relationship dynamics unfolds, influenced by a myriad of factors. Whether you've had a stable upbringing or navigated the challenges of emotionally immature parents, understanding and managing these dynamics is crucial.

This section delves into the obstacles that can disrupt the harmonious flow of a marriage. From unrealistic expectations about roles and responsibilities to disagreements about household tasks, these challenges can create tension and strain in your relationship.

But here's the good news: by acknowledging and addressing these issues head-on, you can not only strengthen your marriage but also foster a deeper sense of connection and understanding between you and your partner.

In the following chapters, we'll explore strategies and solutions to overcome these relationship dynamics destroyers. Whether you're in a long-distance relationship, facing resistance to change, or experiencing difficulties during life transitions, this section aims to provide valuable insights and guidance.

Join us on this journey as we navigate the intricate maze of relationship dynamics and discover the path to a more fulfilling and harmonious marriage.



#27 UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Challenge: Unrealistic expectations about marriage, often fueled by media portrayals, can set couples up for disappointment.

Manifest: Persistent disappointment and dissatisfaction when the relationship doesn't meet an idealized and often unattainable vision of constant perfection or perpetual happiness. It may also lead to frequent conflicts and frustration as partners struggle to live up to unrealistic standards.

Solution: Openly discuss your expectations and create realistic goals together. Remember that no one is perfect, and abandoning one marriage in hopes of finding the ideal elsewhere shows a complete denial of the fact that the next marriage partner will come with traits and habits you will eventually find just as troublesome as your current spouse. It's important to embrace imperfections and come to see them for what they are--just your beloved being your beloved. Over time, their irritating traits will transform into cute quirks you find adorable... if you let them. Decide to work through challenges as a team, and change what you can, accept what you cannot.

#28 GENDER ROLE EXPECTATIONS

Challenge: Traditional gender roles or expectations can lead to conflicts and unmet expectations.

Manifestation: Conflicting expectations regarding gender roles.

Solutions: Have open discussions about roles and expectations within the marriage. Define responsibilities that align with each partner's strengths and preferences.

#29 UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ABOUT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Challenge: Unrealistic expectations about roles and responsibilities can create tension.

Manifestation: Unrealistic expectations regarding roles and responsibilities.

Solutions: Communicate openly about roles and responsibilities, ensuring that both partners' expectations are realistic and manageable.

#30 DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES

Challenge: Differences in how household chores and responsibilities are shared can lead to frustration.

Manifestation: Frequent arguments about chores and responsibilities.

Solutions: Discuss and establish clear roles and expectations for household duties. Consider creating a shared calendar or chore chart to maintain fairness.

#31 DIFFERENCES IN HOUSEHOLD CLEANLINESS EXPECTATIONS

Challenge: Varied standards of cleanliness can lead to frustration and arguments.

Manifestation: Frequent disagreements about cleanliness and tidiness.

Solutions: Set expectations for household cleanliness and chores. Enlist the children and other household members because everyone can help with this. Create a cleaning schedule that works for both partners and revisit it as needed. Consider investing in the gift of a paid weekly housekeeper if you can afford it--the low costs may surprise you!

#32 LACK OF HOUSEHOLD ORGANIZATION AND CLUTTER

Challenge: The house may be clean, but there is too much stuff, and you can never find anything when needed. This can contribute to stress and disagreements if one partner prefers a more organized environment while the other is more relaxed about clutter.

Manifestation: Increased stress and tension as the clutter accumulates, leading to arguments over the mess and a sense of disarray. It may also result in difficulty finding essential items, impacting daily routines and creating frustration for both partners. Ultimately, it can strain the overall harmony and functionality of the home environment.

Solution: Start with open and honest communication with your partner about your shared goals for a clutter-free and organized home. Create a joint plan to declutter and establish organization systems, ensuring that responsibilities are divided fairly. Additionally, consider setting regular cleaning and organization routines and encouraging each other to maintain a tidy environment, making it a collaborative effort rather than a source of conflict. Make it a social or family bonding event by including the children and any extended family members you know who love doing this sort of thing. We all have at least one in the family, lol.



#33 RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Challenge: A partner's resistance to change or personal growth can hinder the relationship's evolution.

Manifestation: Resistance to personal growth or adapting to new circumstances.

Solutions: Encourage personal growth and change as a natural part of life. Be supportive and flexible as you both navigate new phases and ambitions.

#34 COMPARISON TO PAST RELATIONSHIPS

Challenge: Comparing the current relationship to past ones can create insecurity.

Manifestation: Comparing the current relationship to past experiences.

Solutions: Focus on the uniqueness and strengths of your current relationship. Avoid making comparisons and celebrate your shared journey. The past with other partners is completely unconnected and unrelated to how this relationship will be. Disconnect the two in your mind, and love again like there is no such thing as a broken heart.

#35 LACK OF PERSONAL SPACE

Challenge: Overcrowding in the relationship can lead to a sense of suffocation.

Manifestation: Feeling crowded or suffocated within the relationship.

Solutions: Balance time spent together with individual space and pursuits. Define a room or some space in your home that is 100% the other's private personal space--their man cave, command center, meditation room, or hobby space, etc.

#36 LONG-DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS

Challenge: Physical separation due to work or other reasons can strain a marriage.

Manifestation: Struggles in maintaining emotional connection due to physical distance.

Solutions: Maintain regular communication, set clear expectations, and plan visits to spend quality time together. Trust and commitment are vital in long-distance relationships.



#37 LACK OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DURING LIFE TRANSITIONS

Challenge: During significant life changes like relocation or career shifts, partners may struggle to provide emotional support.

Manifestation: Feeling unsupported during significant life changes.

Solutions: Communicate your needs during these transitions and be receptive to your partner's feelings. Support each other through change with understanding and empathy.

#38 RESISTANCE TO SEEKING PROFESSIONAL MARITAL HELP

Challenge: Hesitation to seek professional help when facing marital challenges can hinder progress and conflict resolution.

Manifestation: Hesitance to seek therapy or counseling for conflict resolution.

Solutions: Normalize seeking therapy or counseling when needed. Emphasize the importance of addressing issues proactively to maintain a healthy marriage. Highlight the benefits of professional guidance for a healthier marriage. Also, finding resources online, in books, or marriage coaches can be a more palatable stepping stone to move a resistant partner toward seeking professional help.



BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY BATTLES



Life is a delicate juggling act, and when it comes to balancing the demands of work with the needs of your family, the challenges can be daunting. Missteps can lead to stress, conflict, and exhaustion.

But learning to keep all those balls up in the air is a skill worth mastering because harmony between your career and family life is essential for a fulfilling marriage. After all, your family is what you are working so hard for in the first place, right?

Regardless of your background or upbringing, the pursuit of career ambitions and the nurturing of family relationships can sometimes clash.

In this section, we'll explore the battlefields where career and family obligations intersect. These challenges can test the resilience of any marriage.

But take heart, for within these challenges lie opportunities for growth, understanding, and deeper connections.

By navigating these battles together, you and your spouse can emerge stronger and more united.

Join us as we discuss the complexities of balancing work and family life. We'll provide valuable insights and practical solutions, giving you a good start for overcoming these obstacles, creating a stronger foundation for your marriage and a more fulfilling life overall.

#39 CAREER RELOCATION STRESS

Challenge: Frequent career relocations can create stress and disrupt family life.
Manifestation: Stress related to career-related relocations.
Solutions: Prioritize open communication about career plans and the impact of relocations. Make informed decisions together, considering both partners' career aspirations and family well-being.

#40 CAREER AND AMBITION CONFLICTS

Challenge: Differences in career aspirations or ambitions can lead to stress and conflicts.
Manifestation: Competing career priorities leading to tension or neglect.
Solutions: Align your career goals with your partner's. Discuss long-term career plans and make compromises that support both individual and shared aspirations.



#41 CAREER ASPIRATIONS VS. FAMILY TIME

Challenge: Balancing career aspirations with family time can be challenging.
Manifestation: Conflicts between career aspirations and spending time with the family.
Solutions: Prioritize family time and create a schedule accommodating both partners' goals. Make quality time together a priority.

#42 BALANCING WORK SCHEDULE AND STRESS WITH FAMILY

Challenge: Modern life often demands a hectic work schedule, leaving less time for family and personal life.
Manifestation: Neglecting family time or constant work-related stress.
Solutions: Prioritize your relationship and family time. Set boundaries at work, schedule regular quality time together, and consider shared responsibilities for household and childcare duties.

#43 OVERWHELMING FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

Challenge: Excessive family obligations can leave little time for the marriage.
Manifestation: Feeling burdened by extended family obligations.
Solutions: Communicate boundaries with extended family and make time for your relationship. Balance your commitments to ensure a harmonious marriage.

FAMILY & PARENTING DYNAMICS DECIMATORS



Family and parenting dynamics are like the ever-turning pages of a novel, each chapter revealing new challenges and joys. However, for those of us who have walked the path of recovering from the examples set for us by our emotionally immature parents, these dynamics might often read like a horror novel, lol!

We have A LOT to talk about on this subject, don't we, my dear, you and I?

For us, our happy marriage—if we are fortunate enough to have one yet (and yes, you can and you will, dear one)—can feel like a miracle.

We may even think we don't deserve it and find ourselves bewildered as we seem to be constantly trying to sabotage that happy marriage.

We say we don't know why we do this, but psychology suggests that it is because, subconsciously, our programming is pushing us to return to normalcy as we knew it growing up.

It can be the most frustrating experience because, perhaps more than anyone else, we are the ones who understand the priceless value of a loving family life and longed for it growing up more than anything. So it is devastating when we start falling short. Doubly so if we know it is because of our own emotional incompetence and mishandling.

On the flip side, some of us—for a season at least, like myself—may outright reject seeking a family life or trying to conform to its most natural demands and responsibilities.

We learned, after all, that family equals pain. Family equals not ever having enough of what we need. We feel there is no one we can truly trust with our fragile, battered hearts.

And those so-called "natural" demands and responsibilities—things like parenting, providing, maintaining a tidy household, handling disagreements, giving attention and affection, etc.—don't seem natural for us at all... because we never got to see them carried out in their healthy and mature forms.

We have no healthy pictures, vision, or blueprints to work off of here!

How much more a test of our souls it is, though, when we marry and soon realize we now have to manage a whole *other* family's brand of crazy? AKA dealing with in-law dramas.

And let's face it, the in-law dynamic can try us even more because we realize *we* are often the ones contributing to the drama. How can we not? We just don't know how to set boundaries, communicate, compromise, and how to trust.

But I say the #1 problem in this area of married life—indeed, the root of more than 80% of the chaos—is that we don't know how to select the best spouse in the first place.

Yep. But why is that?

It's because subconsciously, again, psychology suggests we are *programmed* to feel the highest level of chemistry with the person who most strongly resembles the immature and rejecting parent figure we just escaped from!

We don't know how to set solid standards for spousal selection. Not at all!

Looks and a sense of humor are about all most of us will lamely come up with if asked. And many just find themselves falling for whoever comes along who seems to be interested in them.



"*Nothing is more interesting than being interested*" is a wonderful standard for building relationship bonds and intimacy... but the absolute *worst* standard for selecting whom we will try to build those bonds within marriage.

We will talk A LOT about all of the above and more in future podcast episodes, courses, and our private member site. Lordy, have I got so much compassion, experience, and success here to pass on for your enormous benefit, I hope!



For now, if, like me, your childhood included such oh-so-wonderful experiences like fatherlessness, multiple stepparents and half-siblings, secrecy, and constant fights with or even ex-communication from extended family, this section highlights the traps and pitfalls to stay mindful of.

I urge you to get as much education, inspiration, and help as you can to master them. I aim to make my podcast become an excellent resource for you in this regard.

So now let's scrutinize the potentially knotty web of family life and its profound impact on marriages...especially for those who have journeyed through the complexities of childhood marked by emotional challenges.

From navigating the minefield of disagreements about parenting methods to unwrapping the layers of complex relationships with in-laws, these challenges can trigger memories and emotions tied to our upbringing. The arrival of each child, the joys and complexities of blended families, and the sometimes poignant and bittersweet transition to an empty nest—**all these moments carry a unique weight and call for both a creatively fresh and time-tested approach.**

But amidst all the complexities here, never lose track, my darling, of the fact that there's an opportunity for growth and healing waiting for us all here, too.

Nothing else compares to the joys and rewards of taking on a marriage and family life. Nothing.

I've come to believe that when our priorities are suddenly made crystal clear on our deathbeds, we all will see this. And we will realize that while we now have to leave everything else behind, even our bodies, we take the love we learned, grew, gave, and received with us.

No love is ever lost or wasted. Hear this and know it now.

By recognizing how our past experiences shape and influence our present, we can strengthen our marital bonds and embrace the evolving chapters of family life with resilience, understanding, and wisdom.

Join us as we embark on a heartfelt exploration of family and parenting dynamics through the lens of those who have faced the challenges of emotionally immature parents. We'll share valuable insights and practical guidance to help you nurture a loving and resilient partnership, no matter the challenges life may bring.

We say, "Bring it on! I'm ready to learn and grow in love now."

I know I am. Aren't you?

If you're still not sure—or you start beating yourself up for all your "mistakes" again in this area—NEVER forget this truth:

NO ONE is *lucky* in love, but EVERYONE can be *learned* in love.

So just keep learning to love, and you'll keep growing, too.

It is an eternal journey... but a most beautiful one. I promise.

And you and me and your fellow listeners can all take it together now. So excited about what we will learn as we go!

You are not alone. You are so worthy. You are so loved. Now and always.

If your soul went missing, creation would be incomplete.





#44 DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT PARENTING METHODS

Challenge: Conflicting parenting methods and approaches can lead to arguments and tension.

Manifestation: Frequent disagreements about parenting styles and approaches.

Solutions: Establish a unified parenting approach. Attend parenting workshops or counseling to learn effective co-parenting strategies.

#45 PARENTING DECISION DIFFERENCES

Challenge: Disagreements in parenting decisions can create tension.

Manifestation: Frequent disagreements about parenting or decisions.

Solutions: Establish open communication about parenting. Discuss and compromise on important parenting decisions and seek guidance from parenting resources or counselors.

#46 DIFFERENCES IN PARENTING VALUES

Challenge: Varied parenting values can lead to disagreements.

Manifestation: Conflicting values regarding parenting and child-rearing.

Solutions: Establish a united front when it comes to parenting. Communicate openly about values and goals and seek compromise to create a harmonious parenting style.

#47 FAMILY AND IN-LAW CONFLICTS OR INTERFERENCE

Challenge: Conflicts with extended family members or in-laws or their interference can strain a marriage.

Manifestation: Overbearing or intrusive in-laws causing tension.

Solutions: Set clear boundaries with family members and in-laws, communicating your priorities as a couple and united front. Address conflicts calmly and respectfully, and consider couples counseling if necessary to navigate complex family dynamics.



#48 NAVIGATING BLENDED FAMILIES

Challenge: Merging families from previous relationships can be complex and challenging.

Manifestation: Challenges in blending families from previous relationships.

Solutions: Prioritize open communication and set clear boundaries when navigating blended families. Seek counseling or support groups for blended family dynamics.

#49 FIRST CHILD IS BORN

Challenge: When a couple experiences the significant life transition of becoming parents for the first time.

Manifestation: Sleep deprivation, increased stress, changes in priorities, and potential conflicts due to the adjustment to new roles and responsibilities.

Solutions: Open and supportive communication between partners, sharing parenting responsibilities, seeking guidance and support from experienced parents or professionals, and nurturing the emotional connection between partners to navigate this transition successfully and strengthen their marital bond.

#50 SECOND CHILD IS BORN AND SO ON...

Challenge: When a couple has more than one child and must manage the demands of raising a larger family.

Manifestation: Increased stress, time constraints, exhaustion, and potential marital conflicts due to the juggling act of parenting multiple children. Parents report that the stress effect isn't linear but exponential. For example, having a second or third child can seem not just twice or three times as challenging to manage but exponentially challenging.

Solutions: Effective teamwork, establishing routines, seeking support from family and childcare resources, prioritizing quality time together as a couple, and maintaining open communication to manage the challenges of parenting multiple children while nurturing the marital relationship.

#51 THE EMPTY NEST

Challenge: When a couple's children grow up and leave home, resulting in an empty household.

Manifestation: Feelings of loss, identity crisis, or a sense of purposelessness as parents transition into a new phase of their lives.

Solutions: The solution involves rediscovering shared interests, nurturing the marital relationship through quality time, pursuing individual passions, seeking personal growth, and embracing the opportunity for a new chapter of closeness and adventure as a couple.



SOCIAL INTERACTIONS WRECKERS



Navigating the complex terrain of social interactions as a married couple can be akin to arranging a beautiful vase of roses.

Each challenge can feel like a thorny prick. Or we might just act like one!

Yet, with care, understanding, and getting familiar with one another's personality type tendencies and preferences, these thorns can lose their sting.

As a florist for 12 years, I observed over and over again how the roses without thorns were often the ones without fragrance, too.

Sure, they looked good and had other color and petal shape qualities, perhaps. But to hurt us less, these roses had lost something we consider the essence of what it means to *BE* a rose.

Turns out, we can always change what we *call* a rose, but without its thorns, it *won't* smell as sweet!

Maybe you'll find, as I did, that these thorns of your personalities or differing beliefs can become just one more part of what makes you both unique, beautiful, and loveable. Part of what makes them them, and you you. Take it away, and something more important might be lost.

For those of us who grew up with emotionally immature parents, these challenges can feel even more daunting. No doubt! The shadows of our past may loom over our social interactions, casting doubts and insecurities.

However, when we consider the influence of our personality types, such as introversion and extroversion, we uncover a treasure trove of understanding. Just wait; I'm telling you it will generate a ton of "Aha!!!" moments for you when we start to cover this on our platform.

It certainly did for our marriage. This knowledge of personality—together with the knowledge of the influence our parental upbringing can have on us—helped us as a couple better understand *everyone* else in our lives as well.

It makes acceptance and tolerance and even appreciation and respect SO much easier to express in every interaction. Unconditional love becomes easier, too.

So, for example, introverted individuals may grapple with the pressure to conform to social norms, seeking solitude as a source of solace. In contrast, extroverts might find themselves struggling to balance their need for social interaction with their marriage's demands.

Maybe you'll discover, like my hubby and I did, that you are the *only* introvert (or extrovert) in your family. Understanding these personality dynamics can offer valuable insights into how we approach social situations.

Furthermore, understanding the personality profiles of the key people in your life can shed light on how differing beliefs and values impact your relationships. A thinker married to a feeler may experience disparities in handling social and political issues, requiring patience and open communication to bridge the gap.

Cultural traditions and religious disparities may also create a complex tapestry within a marriage, influenced by personality traits.

An intuitive individual may be more open to exploring differing beliefs, while a sensing partner may seek concrete traditions. Recognizing these distinctions can lead to acceptance and more harmonious resolutions.

Lastly, the influence of mutual friends and social isolation can be seen through the lens of personality types. Introverted couples may find comfort in solitude, while extroverted pairs t thrive on an active social life. Striking a balance that honors both partners' needs becomes essential.



In this section, we'll explore the challenges of social interactions to provide you with insights and some basic solutions. But this is a topic we will cover in much greater depth on the show, bringing in the personality element.

Together, let's take this journey hand in hand, navigating the diverse landscapes of social interactions in your marriage with love, understanding, and a commitment to thriving amidst these complexities.

#52 CULTURAL PRESSURE TO CONFORM

Challenge: Cultural pressures to conform to certain norms or expectations can create stress.

Manifestation: External pressure to conform to societal expectations.

Solutions: Discuss cultural pressures openly and define your own values and priorities within your marriage. Support each other in making choices that align with your beliefs.

#53 PRESSURE TO CONFORM TO SOCIAL NORMS

Challenge: Pressure to conform to societal norms can lead to unrealistic expectations. This may include arguments about the division of household responsibilities, career choices, or conforming to specific gender or cultural roles that both partners may feel pressured to adhere to but may not align with their personal values or desires.

Manifestation: Tension and disagreements over decisions related to traditional roles, cultural expectations, or societal conventions.

Solutions: Define your own values and priorities within your marriage. Resist external pressures and prioritize what's best for your unique relationship.

#54 LACK OF BOUNDARIES WITH FRIENDS AND EXES

Challenge: Overstepping boundaries with friends or ex-partners can create jealousy and insecurity.

Manifestation: Crossing boundaries with friends or ex-partners.

Solutions: Communicate openly about boundaries with friends and exes. Respect each other's comfort levels and establish clear guidelines for maintaining trust.

#55 CULTURAL TRADITIONS CLASHING

Challenge: Clashes between cultural traditions can create misunderstandings and conflict within multicultural marriages.

Manifestation: Clashes between cultural traditions in multicultural marriages.

Solutions: Embrace and learn from each other's cultural traditions. Find common ground and create new traditions that honor both backgrounds.





#56 CULTURAL RELIGIOUS DISPARITIES

Challenge: Religious disparities can impact values and beliefs in a marriage.

Manifestation: Conflicts or misunderstandings related to cultural or religious beliefs.

Solutions: Respect and appreciate each other's cultural or religious backgrounds. Find common ground, engage in interfaith or multicultural dialogue, and celebrate diversity.

#57 DIFFERING RELIGIOUS, PHILOSOPHICAL OR SPIRITUAL BELIEFS AND VALUES

Challenge: Differing religious or spiritual beliefs can cause conflicts in values and lifestyles. For couples with strong spiritual or philosophical beliefs, differences in these areas can be a significant challenge.

Manifestation: Conflicts or differences in religious or spiritual beliefs. Frequent disagreements or conflicts over fundamental beliefs, practices, or life goals.

Solutions: Embrace and respect each other's beliefs. Find common values and rituals that honor both partners' spiritual or religious perspectives. Open and respectful communication to understand each other's perspectives, finding common ground where possible, and making compromises that respect individual values and allow both partners to coexist harmoniously. Seeking guidance from a trusted spiritual leader or counselor can also provide valuable insights and support in navigating these differences.

#58 DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT SOCIAL OR POLITICAL ISSUES

Challenge: Differences in political or social beliefs can lead to heated arguments.

Manifestation: Frequent arguments about social or political topics.

Solutions: Approach discussions about social issues with empathy and respect. Focus on common values and find a compromise or agree to disagree respectfully.

#59 NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS

Challenge: Negative influences from friends or social circles can strain a marriage.

Manifestation: Friends knowingly or unknowingly negatively impacting the relationship or encouraging unhealthy behaviors.

Solutions: Maintain open communication about friendships and express concerns. Encourage each other to prioritize healthy relationships and set boundaries when needed.

#60 LACK OF MUTUAL FRIENDS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

Challenge: A lack of shared social circles can lead to feelings of isolation.

Manifestation: Feeling socially isolated or lacking shared friendships.

Solutions: Make an effort to nurture your social life as a couple. Join groups or activities that interest both partners, and foster new friendships together.

#61 SOCIAL OR CLASS DIFFERENCES

Challenge: Social disparities can lead to misunderstandings and clashes in a marriage.

Manifestation: Clashes over or difficulty understanding each other's backgrounds.

Solutions: Embrace and learn from each other's backgrounds. Encourage open dialogue and compromise to bridge social gaps.

#62 DIFFERENCES IN SOCIALIZING PREFERENCES

Challenge: Some couples may struggle when one partner is more social, extroverted, and outgoing while the other prefers a quieter, more introverted lifestyle.

Manifestation: conflicts over how much time is spent socializing, the choice of social activities, and even the frequency of hosting guests. One partner may desire more social interaction while the other prefers solitude, causing feelings of isolation or overcrowding. This disparity in social preferences can strain the couple's ability to find a balance that satisfies both partners' needs for social engagement and personal space.

Solutions: Open and respectful communication is key. Begin by having an honest conversation with your partner about your individual needs and boundaries regarding social activities. Seek to find a compromise where you both have opportunities for socializing and alone time that align with your comfort levels. Consider planning a mix of social events that accommodate both preferences and always prioritize understanding and respecting each other's need for social engagement or solitude.



PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS ANNIHILATORS



As we venture into the domain of **Physical Health and Wellness** within the context of marriage, we find ourselves standing at the intersection of life's undeniable realities. These challenges are not just chapters in the book of matrimony; they are the vivid brushstrokes on the canvas of your shared journey.

For those of us shaped by emotionally immature parents, these challenges can feel like uncharted territory.

Interestingly, many emotionally immature parents will make sure a child's *physical* needs are met and even give them the most attention when they are ill. This is one reason why emotionally deprived children often do not even realize their parents were not such great parents after all and were leaving a huge hole where their child's more life-altering needs for emotional connection, affection, and even independence should be.

This is why I encourage you to take the quiz on my website home page to see if your parent could be considered emotionally immature—you likely don't know the signs to look for because their approach is all you've ever known.

I had no clue! I just felt empty and alone as a child; now I know that is far from normal.

So while our emotionally immature parents might meet our physical needs in the moment, they often won't take the time to teach us the skills for how to care for ourselves in a healthy, preventative way. Like how to cook, for example. And outside of illness, little attention is given to our emotional needs.

This dynamic can create the hypochondriac. Or a sense of total dependency on the parent that stays with us into adulthood. It creates learned helplessness in the face of meeting our own physical needs or dealing with illness or stress. Such normal, everyday hurdles like these for others can feel too overwhelming for us.

On the flip side, you might have had the most seriously neglectful parent who didn't even meet your physical needs.

Often, this parenting type is coupled with a very cynical and paranoid view of all doctors and conventional medicine. As a kid, they may have convinced you to adopt this attitude, which you can probably see as an adult was just a not-so-clever rationalization and excuse to avoid spending the money and time to give you the care you needed... what a shock, right? They offer no time or care for you in all other matters; why would it be any different in this area?



Or maybe your parent was a blend of these two types?
Providing for all the physical (at least the bare minimum), none of the emotional, but also never took you to see a doctor and railed against it.

My mother and baby sister had HIV. While they were constantly in and out o going to see the doctor, my little brother and I never even got taken to a dentist as a kid. When I dislocated my knee, my little brother reset it!
I also had the most painful ingrown toenail in my big toe for YEARS—my socks soaked in foul-smelling puss and blood— that my mother allowed to fester and never got cared for.

I had to do that for myself when I was 21 years old (with my then-fiancee's urging) and finally had medical insurance of my own. My doctor (and hero), Dr. Dott, gasped, "That is the biggest ingrown nail I have ever seen." It was the size of a quarter.



Can you even *imagine* letting your child live for 10 years with something like that? Never wearing sandals or flip-flops?

It is one thing to desire to seek a holistic approach to health and healing, taking into account all possible medical options. It is another to dismiss a whole branch of medicine outright. That is not balanced.



If we are ill, we should explore all healing avenues: Conventional, naturopathic, psychological, and spiritual.

So, the echoes of our upbringing may reverberate in our approach to health and wellness, adding a unique layer of complexity for us that other adults don't have.

We must recognize that health-related issues can cast a shadow over even the strongest of marriages. However, by embracing a holistic approach to physical well-being and acknowledging the possibly misguided influence of our past experiences, we can emerge from these challenges stronger and more resilient as a couple.

In the following pages, we will look at some of these physical health and wellness challenges to a marriage, but there is a lot more to be said about all of these challenges. Looking forward to diving into it all with you and getting your perspective on our podcast and member site.

Together, we will navigate the terrain of health and wellness with love, resilience, and a commitment to thriving amidst life's uncertainties.



#63 FEAR OF AGING AND MORTALITY

Challenge: Fear of aging and mortality can lead to existential concerns.

Manifestation: Fear and anxiety about aging and mortality.

Solutions: Share your fears and concerns about aging and mortality with each other. Support one another in embracing the natural stages of life.

#64 AGING AND HEALTH ISSUES

Challenge: As partners age, health concerns can become a significant factor in the relationship.

Manifestation: Coping with aging-related health challenges or concerns.

Solutions: Support each other's health and well-being. Encourage healthy lifestyle choices, seek medical advice when necessary, and provide emotional support during health challenges.

#65 DIFFICULTY MANAGING STRESS

Challenge: High stress levels can impact the emotional well-being of both partners.

Manifestation: Struggling to manage stress, impacting the relationship.

Solutions: Develop stress management strategies together, such as exercise, meditation, or therapy. Support each other during stressful times.

#66 COPING WITH AN UNEXPECTED MAJOR ILLNESS OR INJURY

Challenge: Dealing with an unexpected major illness or injury can strain a marriage.

Manifestation: Emotional distress, role adjustments, financial stress, intimacy issues, communication difficulties, and potential social isolation.

Solutions: Couples can overcome these challenges by fostering open communication, seeking professional and social support, and adapting together to the new circumstances, ultimately strengthening their bond in the face of adversity.



#67 DEALING WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS OR HEALTH CONDITION

Challenge: One or both partners dealing with a lifelong medical condition can be a strain on the relationship.

Manifestation: Persistent emotional stress, role adjustments, financial strain, intimacy issues, communication difficulties, and potential social isolation.

Solutions: Couples can overcome these challenges by fostering open communication, seeking professional support, and adapting together to the ongoing circumstances, ultimately fortifying their relationship in the face of chronic health issues.

PERSONAL GROWTH AND IDENTITY SUBDUERS



Venturing into the realm of Personal Growth and Identity within the context of marriage feels to me like we're treading on sacred ground. These challenges are the building blocks of your shared experience as a couple, each one contributing to the unique story that defines your relationship.

This is also where I find that "Sacred Mission" feeling comes into play: we are together to help each other fulfill our individual life's missions—faster and better than we ever could on our own—but we also have a joint mission.

The trick, I find, is that it may take YEARS for us to discover or decide what those missions are going to be. It's such a thrilling creative process, this part of the marriage thing!

But some of us will never decide at all. We just drift. Waiting for something to happen.

Sometimes, that is all a part of the process. Goals have a certain element of timing to them. So we may have to wait sometimes.

But it is in the waiting that we tend to waste time we could have spent getting to know who we both are or learning skills we might need later. We stop working on improving ourselves. And it is in this waiting that couples can fall apart without a sense of purpose or something higher to hold them together.

For those of us who carry the legacy of emotionally immature parents, these challenges can take on a distinct hue. Our upbringing may have left an indelible mark on our sense of self, our independence, and our aspirations.

It's in these moments of self-discovery and growth that the echoes of our past become particularly poignant.

As we embark on this exploration, it's crucial to recognize that personal growth and identity are not solitary endeavors but shared pursuits within the context of a marriage. The interplay between individual aspirations and the union of marriage is a delicate dance, one that requires acceptance, understanding, and unwavering support.

We must believe in each other. Or at least act like we do when we're not feeling it!

Not believing in our spouse, not supporting their goals and aspirations, their growth and success, is a direct attack on ourselves. Why? Because we are now as ONE.

You now share each other's destinies—for better or worse. So why not constantly root for the better when your partner desires to grow?

I think a lot of us are afraid that if our spouse grows or improves or succeeds in their individual goals, they may leave us...

This *can* happen. We see it every day.

But it *usually* only happens in two scenarios: with the couples whose partner wasn't cheering them on all the way up on their climb to the top; and with the partner married to someone who never tries to grow or improve. So work on yourself, too!

We all already survived parents who doubted us or even wished us to fail. Don't do that to your spouse! Because, again, you only attack yourself and your own family. And don't just spend the rest of your life streaming videos and social media. No one wants to be married to a dull slug. **The fruits of your ACTIONS are what keep you forever young and interesting.**

This section examines the landscape of personal growth and identity challenges as a couple. Instead of marital breakdown, these challenges can be catalysts for growth, transformation, and a deeper connection in your marriage... **if you decide to make it so.**



#68 LACK OF SELF-IDENTITY

Challenge: Neglecting or losing your sense of self-identity can lead to marital dissatisfaction.

Manifestation: Neglecting self-care and personal growth as individuals.

Solutions: Prioritize self-care individually and as a couple. Invest time in self-discovery, personal growth, and self-expression to maintain a healthy self-identity.

#69 FEAR OF LOSING IDENTITY IN MARRIAGE

Challenge: A fear of losing one's identity in the marriage can lead to resistance.

Manifestation: Fear of losing personal identity within the marriage.

Solution: Foster individual growth and self-identity within the marriage. Encourage pursuing personal interests and goals.

#70 LACK OF INDEPENDENCE

Challenge: Over-reliance on one another can lead to a loss of individual identity and personal growth.

Manifestation: Feeling smothered or losing personal identity.

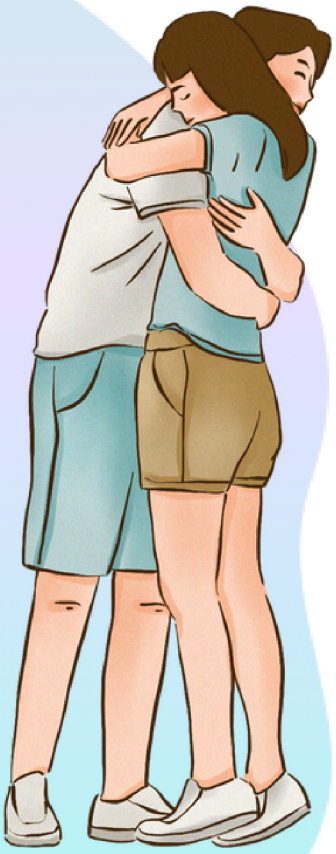
Solutions: Maintain a healthy balance between togetherness and independence. Encourage each other's individual pursuits, hobbies, and friendships.

#71 FEAR OF LOSING INDEPENDENCE

Challenge: Fear of losing independence in a marriage can lead to resistance.

Manifestation: Fear of losing personal independence within the marriage.

Solutions: Maintain a healthy balance between independence and togetherness. Reassure each other that personal autonomy is valued.



#72 DIFFERENT LIFE GOALS AND VALUES

Challenge: Partners with divergent life goals and values may struggle to align their futures.

Manifestation: Frequent disagreements about priorities or future plans.

Solutions: Talk candidly about your life goals and values early in the relationship. Find common ground and create a shared vision for your future together. Be willing to compromise and adjust your goals to accommodate each other.

#73 NO INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Challenge: Relying solely on the marriage for emotional support can lead to strain.

Manifestation: Lacking individual support systems outside of the relationship.

Solutions: Cultivate individual support systems through friends, family, or support groups. Share your needs and concerns with your partner to maintain a healthy balance.

#74 LACK OF SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL GOALS

Challenge: One or both partners feel unsupported or hindered in pursuing their personal aspirations, ambitions, or individual growth within the relationship. Sometimes, couples may struggle when they don't support each other's ambitions and goals outside of the marriage.

Manifestation: Frustration, resentment, or a sense of being held back in pursuing personal goals, leading to tension in the marriage.

Solution: Open and empathetic communication, a willingness to compromise and find a balance between individual and shared goals, and actively supporting each other's personal growth and aspirations while maintaining a healthy connection as a couple.

#75 NEGLECTING SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Challenge: Neglecting self-improvement can lead to personal growth stagnation, boredom, and dissatisfaction within a marriage.

Manifestation: Neglecting personal growth and self-improvement.

Solution: Both partners should invest in and encourage self-improvement and growth individually and as a couple. Pursue hobbies, learn together, and support each other's aspirations, education, and self-discovery. This will keep the relationship fresh and dynamic.



ADDICTIONS AND RECOVERY BATTLERS



Welcome to the section where we address one of the most Herculean challenges a marriage can face – Addictions and Recovery. This is a space where the strength of your love and commitment will be put to the test like almost no other, but it's also where the resilience and potential for growth in your marriage can shine the brightest.

For those of us who grew up in the shadow of emotionally immature parents, the journey through addiction or recovery can feel like an uphill battle. Doubtful we'll get much support from our parents now, right?

Our past experiences may have left us more vulnerable than most to certain behaviors, but...

They have also instilled within us a unique capacity for empathy, understanding, and the determination to heal.

In this section, we will touch on addiction and recovery within the context of marriage. Obviously, this topic is too big to address in a few paragraphs in this guide. Again, this is another topic I can now say I have been blessed with so much experience being around—blessed because I know I can truly understand and help others who are there now, too.

So bring your questions and wisdom to our podcast and member site!

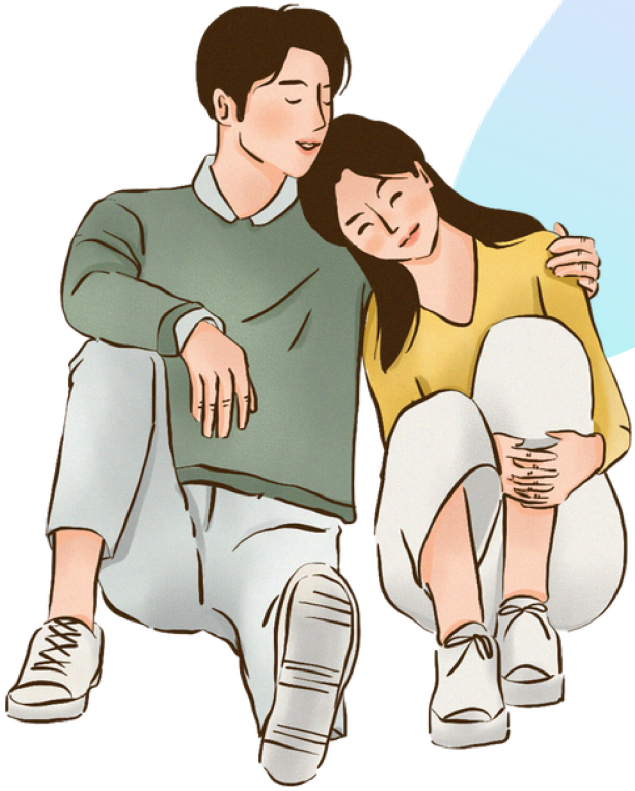
We won't shy away from the challenges that substance abuse can bring, but we'll also celebrate the hope and transformation that recovery can offer.

As we navigate these dark waters together, remember that your love and support for each other can be powerful anchors.

Addiction may have been a part of your journey, but it doesn't define your future.

Your shared commitment to overcoming this challenge can be a testament to the strength of your marriage and your love's enduring power.

And such an incredible inspiration for others, too.



#76 SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTIONS

Challenge: Substance abuse or other addictions can wreak havoc on a marriage, causing emotional and financial strain.

Manifestation: Destructive behaviors, secrecy, or loss of control.

Solutions: Seek professional help for addiction issues. Encourage your partner to participate in therapy or support groups. As a couple, attend counseling to navigate the challenges associated with addiction and recovery.

#77 SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION RECOVERY

Challenge: Substance abuse or addiction issues can take a toll on a marriage, even after recovery efforts.

Manifestation: Struggles with addiction recovery and potential relapse.

Solution: Support recovery with patience and understanding. Attend support groups or therapy together and ensure a stable and sober environment.



TIME MANAGEMENT AND LIFESTYLE RAVAGERS



Navigating the ever-shifting currents of marriage often resembles an intricate dance. A dance where the steps change with each passing season, guided not only by the rhythm of our lives but also by the unique melodies of our personalities.

In this section, we'll explore the delicate choreography of time management and lifestyle choices that can either harmonize our marital waltz or trip us up along the way.

As adult children of emotionally immature parents, we bring a wealth of experiences and traits that shape the way we engage with time and manage our lifestyles.

No doubt about it, our upbringing, marked by emotional complexities and unique challenges, may influence how we prioritize our commitments, allocate our precious minutes, and find a balance between our social lives, personal needs, and the cherished bond of marriage.

Let's think about this multifaceted realm, where the symphony of personality types plays a crucial role.

In the Myers-Briggs framework, for instance, “judgers” may need to plan everything out and be very sensitive to time, while perceivers might be more go with the flow and seem to have an inconquerable “time blindness.” Understanding these differences and learning how to make the most of them can be a mega key to finding harmony in your marriage.

Now imagine an introverted spouse, craving solitude and introspection, married to an extroverted partner who thrives on social gatherings and perceives the introvert's need for alone time as a withdrawal from the relationship.

Situations like these can be a gargantuan source of tension if not handled with care.

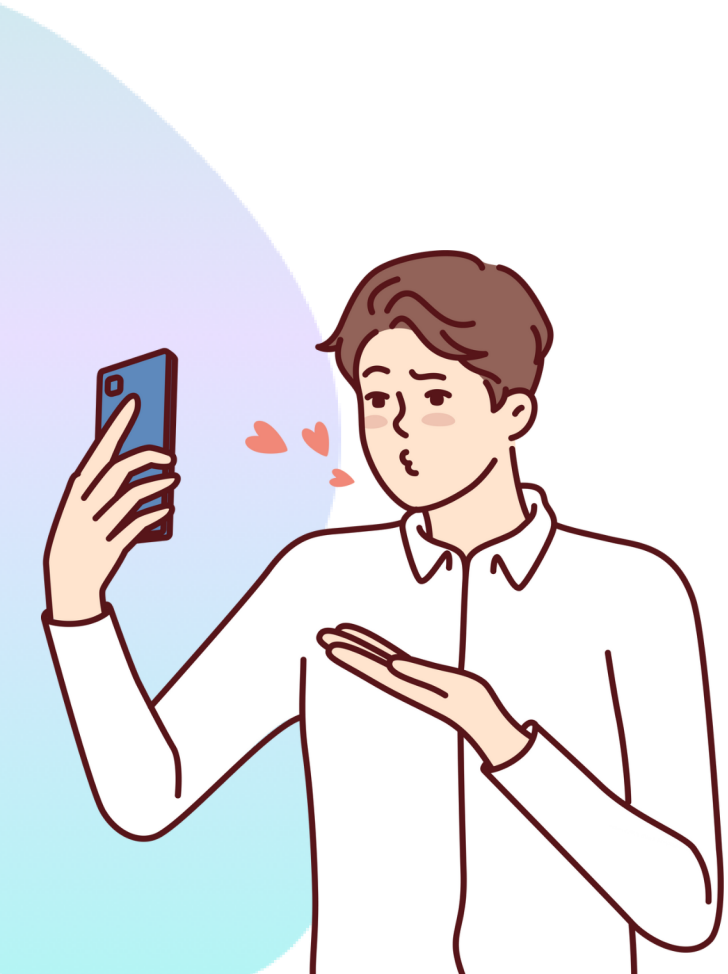
But they can also be a beautiful opportunity for growth. It's about finding a rhythm that respects both partners' needs and the way their brains are wired, celebrating who we are as unique individuals living now a shared purpose.

In this section, we'll list out the various facets of time management and lifestyle choices that might challenge our marriages. We'll shine a little light here on the importance of understanding and honoring each other's unique needs. But we will dive into this subject so much on our podcast, I promise.

Remember that this guide is not meant to overwhelm but to empower.

So, what follows are a few insights and strategies to help you and your spouse navigate the intricate terrain of time and lifestyle in a way that fosters love, understanding, and growth.

Now, dear reader, let's step onto the dance floor of this area together and explore how to create a harmonious and fulfilling marriage amidst life's time management challenges, guided by the diverse melodies of your personalities.



#78 CHANGE IN LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

Challenge: Unexpected life events, such as job loss or health issues, can strain a marriage.

Manifestation: Challenges arising from job changes, relocation, or health issues.

Solutions: Face life's challenges as a team. Support each other through difficult times, adapt to change together, and seek external assistance if needed.

#79 TIME MANAGEMENT DISCREPANCIES

Challenge: Differences in time management styles can lead to frustration and missed commitments.

Manifestation: Differences in managing time and schedules.Time blindness.

Solutions: This can be a genuine hardwired personality setting: the way a person relates with time. Coordinate schedules and use time management tools to align your routines. If one is stronger with time management than the other, create a plan to support the other's weakness with your strength in this area. Respect each other's time and commitments.

#80 TIME MANAGEMENT OVERCOMMITMENT

Challenge: A busy lifestyle with over-commitment to work, activities, and external responsibilities can leave little time for the marriage and lead to neglect of the relationship.

Manifestation: Overwhelmed by external commitments, neglecting the relationship. Overcommitting to external obligations at the expense of the relationship.

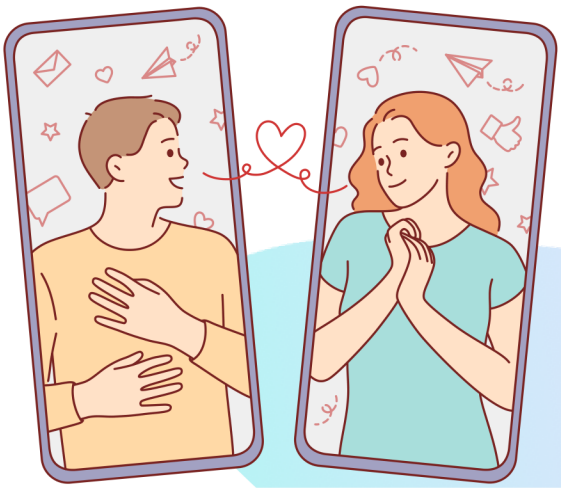
Solutions: Balance external commitments and prioritize your relationship by setting boundaries on work and commitments. Ensure that you schedule dedicated quality time to nurture your connection.

#81 DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT SCREEN TIME AND TECHNOLOGY USAGE

Challenge: Differences in technology usage and screen time can lead to conflicts.

Manifestation: Conflicting opinions on technology usage within the relationship.

Solutions: Set boundaries and guidelines for screen time and technology usage in the relationship. Agree on screen-free times and screen-free spaces in the home to connect with each other.



#82 EXCESSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA

Challenge: Excessive use of social media can lead to disconnection within a marriage. It is also proven to feed feelings of depression and anger.

Manifestation: Excessive screen time or distraction during quality time.

Solutions: Set boundaries for social media use or consider disengaging altogether. Make a conscious effort to be present with your partner. Consider digital detoxes to reconnect.

#83 UNREALISTIC SOCIAL MEDIA COMPARISONS

Challenge: Comparing your marriage to idealized versions on social media can create feelings of inadequacy.

Manifestation: Negative impact of comparing the relationship to others on social media.

Solutions: Remember that social media often portrays a curated version of reality. Focus on your unique journey, celebrate your accomplishments, and maintain open communication about social media's impact on your relationship.

#84 DIFFICULTY BALANCING SOCIAL LIFE AND MARRIAGE

Challenge: Struggling to balance a social life with the marriage can lead to neglect.

Manifestation: Either one or both partners spending excessive time with friends, resulting in limited quality time together, potential resentment, arguments, and a decline in emotional connection within the relationship.

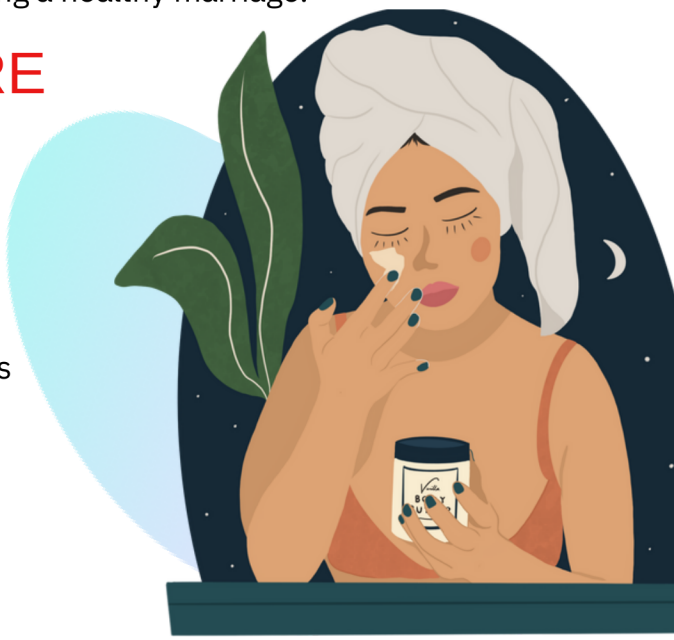
Solutions: Prioritize quality time with your partner while maintaining a social life. Create a balanced schedule that allows for both. Finding the right balance through open communication and compromises is crucial to maintaining a healthy marriage.

#85 NEGLECTING SELF-CARE

Challenge: Neglecting self-care can lead to burnout and diminished well-being for both partners.

Manifestation: Ignoring personal well-being or lacking self-care routines.

Solutions: Prioritize self-care for both yourself and your partner. Encourage relaxation, exercise, and mindfulness practices to enhance your overall happiness.





#86 LACK OF PERSONAL ALONE TIME

Challenge: Not having enough alone time can lead to frustration, especially for introverts

Manifestation: Insufficient personal time for individual pursuits.

Solutions: Respect each other's possibly very different needs for solitude and personal time. Recognize it is not a threat but a genuine psychological health need some experience more than others. Schedule designated alone time and maintain communication about your space needs.



TRUST AND SECURITY INCINERATORS



Ah, trust and security, the sturdy pillars upon which the grand edifice of marriage stands tall. In this section, we'll explore the challenges to trust and security within the realm of our marriages. As adult children of emotionally immature parents, our past experiences can cast long shadows over our ability to trust and feel secure in the embrace of our partners.

Ain't no denying it, honeybun; trust is a fragile thing. It's the most delicate flower that requires nurturing, care, and time to bloom—like trying to grow peonies here in Texas, lol.

Our unique backgrounds might have planted seeds of doubt or sown the weeds of insecurity in the fertile garden soil of our hearts.

Trust issues can manifest in various ways in the grand mosaic of marriage. Some of us may grapple with jealousy and insecurity, fearing that we're not enough or that our partner's eye might wander.

Others might carry the scars of past betrayals, making it challenging to trust again fully. That's the most tragic, in my opinion: judging the chance for love in the man or woman before you today based on the actions of the fool before them who threw your love away. It's unfair, but we all have done it! I know I have. How about you?

The fear of emotional exposure, rejection, or abandonment due to past trauma can cast a long shadow over the sunny meadows of our relationships, too.

None of these challenges are uncommon. In fact, they're part of the human experience, and they affect individuals from all walks of life.

However, as adult children of emotionally immature parents, our journey through trust and security has a unique hue. Our upbringing may have left us with unresolved trust issues from past relationships, a fear of vulnerability, or a hesitance to commit fully.

I mean, sheesh, we couldn't trust our own Mother or Father. **These people are like God to us in our childhood minds!** Not being able to trust them causes trust and security issues? You better believe it!

But fret not, dear reader, for this guide is not just a mirror reflecting your challenges but a lantern to light your path forward.

We'll list some of the strategies to overcome jealousy, heal from past wounds, and build trust from the ground up.

Please understand that trust is not a static state; it's a dynamic force that ebbs and flows.

We must all learn how to sail the high seas of insecurity and fear, mend the broken anchors of trust, and create a safe harbor of love and security in the heart of your marriage. This is also a topic you can look forward to richly studying in our podcast and member site. Boy, I bet you have some stories to share, am I right?

So let's set sail on the bright purple Sea of Love and treasure hunt for the gems of wisdom that can help you build a love that stands the test of time, nurtured by the warmth and affection you so deeply deserve.



#87 TRUST ISSUES IN GENERAL

Challenge: Trust issues, including infidelity, can shatter a marriage's foundation.

Manifestation: Suspicion, jealousy, or betrayal.

Solutions: Rebuild trust through open conversations, transparency, and forgiveness. Couples therapy can help navigate the complex emotions involved in overcoming infidelity.

#88 JEALOUSY AND INSECURITY

Challenge: Feelings of jealousy or insecurity can damage a relationship's trust and harmony.

Manifestation: Constant suspicion, low self-esteem, or possessiveness.

Solutions: Address the root causes of jealousy or insecurity, which often stem from past experiences or personal insecurities. Build trust through open communication and reassurance.

#89 LACK OF TRUST DUE TO PAST BETRAYALS

Challenge: Previous betrayals, such as cheating or dishonesty, can erode trust in a marriage.

Manifestation: Lingering doubts or paranoia due to past betrayals.

Solutions: Rebuilding trust takes time and effort. Be transparent, consistent, and honest in your actions. Seek couples therapy to work through trust issues.

#90 FEAR OF EMOTIONAL EXPOSURE

Challenge: A fear of emotional exposure can hinder emotional connection and intimacy.

Manifestation: Difficulty expressing emotions or fear of vulnerability.

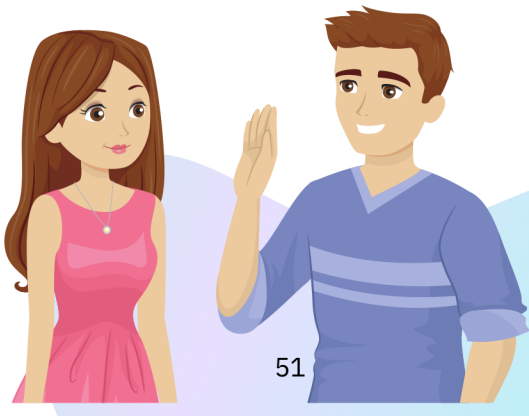
Solutions: Create a household culture of vulnerability, safety, and validation of feelings. Encourage each other to express feelings and fears without judgment or criticism.

#91 FEAR OF REJECTION

Challenge: Fear of rejection or abandonment can hinder emotional vulnerability.

Manifestation: Insecurity or fear of rejection within the relationship.

Solutions: Create a safe space for vulnerability by reassuring each other of your love and commitment. Encourage open expression of feelings.



#92 FEAR OF ABANDONMENT DUE TO PAST TRAUMA

Challenge: Past traumatic experiences may lead to a fear of abandonment.
Manifestation: Fear of abandonment stemming from past traumatic experiences.
Solutions: Seek therapy or counseling to address past trauma. Provide consistent reassurance and support to help your partner overcome their fears.

#93 UNRESOLVED TRUST ISSUES FROM PAST RELATIONSHIPS

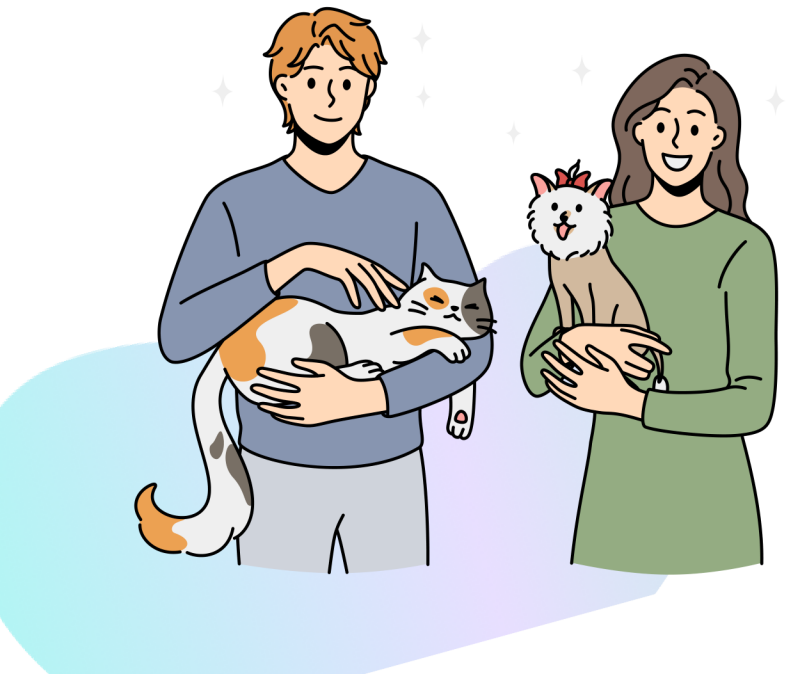
Challenge: Trust issues stemming from past relationships can affect the current marriage.
Manifestation: Lingering trust issues from past relationships affecting the current one.
Solutions: Address trust issues through open dialogue and transparency. Seek professional guidance if trust issues persist.

#94 FEAR OF VULNERABILITY

Challenge: Fear of vulnerability may prevent partners from opening up.
Manifestation: Difficulty expressing emotions or fear of emotional exposure.
Solutions: Foster emotional safety in the relationship. Encourage gradual vulnerability and reassure each other that your feelings will be respected.

#95 FEAR OF COMMITMENT

Challenge: One partner may fear commitment, leading to hesitation about the future.
Manifestation: Fear or reluctance to commit to a long-term relationship.
Solutions: Engage in open discussions about commitment. Allow the hesitant partner space to express their fears and seek therapy or counseling to work through commitment issues.



MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH HELLIONS



Welcome to the "Emotional Health Hellions" section of this guide. In the rollercoaster of life and marriage, emotional well-being plays a pivotal role. As with most other areas in this guide, for the adult children of emotionally immature parents, safeguarding emotional health within a marriage can be uniquely challenging.

This section highlights the profound impact that emotional neglect, unresolved grief, and the weight of unresolved childhood trauma can have on a marriage.

We'll look at coping with losing loved ones, including the heart-wrenching experiences of pregnancy loss and miscarriage, a strangely invisible loss to the world but one which can strain the strongest of bonds.

Another truth I can testify to from personal experience, alas.

If you've known this unique pain, please know I see you there. What are words for comfort? Impossible. So I say I am so sorry for your loss, darling one.

Hidden mental health issues and the division of emotional labor can lurk beneath the surface, affecting the partnership in ways that demand understanding and compassion.

We'll tackle the feeling of being unappreciated, a topic I am extremely passionate about helping couples address, let me tell you. A little appreciation goes a long way!

We'll look at the fears about the future that can cast shadows on an otherwise sunny relationship. Such a struggle, though. We can be such worryworts, right? I know I am. But there are tools I use, and you can, too.

Mental health challenges and the inability to resolve past traumas are hurdles that many couples face. **However, as we journey through this section, remember that acknowledging these challenges is the first step toward healing and strengthening your marriage.**

Our aim here is to shed light on these "hellions" of emotional health and offer insights, strategies, and support.

Your emotional well-being is the cornerstone of a strong and enduring marriage, and together, we'll explore ways to navigate these challenges with love, empathy, and resilience.

So, let's dive in and uncover the tools and wisdom to conquer the emotional health hellions that may threaten your marital bliss!



#96 EMOTIONAL NEGLECT

Challenge: Emotional neglect, where partners don't provide emotional support or validation, can lead to feelings of loneliness and detachment.

Manifestation: Feeling emotionally neglected or unsupported.

Solutions: Cultivate emotional intimacy by expressing love, appreciation, and understanding regularly. Create a safe space for vulnerability and actively listen to your partner's feelings and needs.

#97 UNRESOLVED GRIEF

Challenge: Unresolved grief from past losses can affect emotional well-being and relationships.

Manifestation: Grief and loss affecting emotional well-being.

Solutions: Seek individual or couples therapy to address and process grief. Be understanding and offer support as your partner copes with loss.

#98 COPING WITH THE LOSS OF A CHILD

Challenge: Losing a child at any age to accident or disease can seriously challenge a marriage.

Manifestation: Emotional distancing, blame, communication breakdowns, heightened conflict, social withdrawal, and emotional distress. Possibly spiritual challenge or crisis of faith.

Solutions: To navigate this difficult journey, couples should prioritize open communication, reach out to family, friends, church, and seek professional support when necessary, and take steps to care for their emotional well-being and connection as they grieve together. Many find this to be a turning point for better or worse in their relationship to God or their spiritual life.



#99 COPING WITH LOSS OF LOVED ONES IN GENERAL

Challenge: Coping with the loss of loved ones can strain the marriage.

Manifestation: Grief and loss affecting the relationship.

Solutions: Support each other through grief and loss. Seek therapy or grief counseling if needed to navigate the mourning process.

#100 UNRESOLVED CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Challenge: Unresolved childhood trauma can affect the dynamics of a marriage.

Manifestation: Impact of unresolved childhood trauma on the relationship. Feeling like you are repeating parents' mistakes.

Solutions: Seek individual therapy or counseling to address and heal from childhood traumas. Share your experiences with your partner to build understanding and empathy.

#101 COPING WITH PREGNANCY LOSS, STILLBORN OR MISCARRIAGE

Challenge: Losing a pregnancy or having a stillborn child is an incalculably cruel loss and grief a couple may have to endure, and it is a unique grief for the couple to bear because it is often invisible. In the eyes of the rest of the world, nothing is missing.

Manifestation: Emotional distancing, silence about their feelings, blame or guilt, decreased intimacy, increased conflicts, and even depression or anxiety.

Solutions: To address these challenges, couples should communicate openly, seek therapy for support and guidance, and prioritize their emotional well-being as they navigate this difficult experience together.

#102 HIDDEN MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Challenge: Concealing mental health issues can lead to misunderstandings and distance.

Manifestation: Concealing mental health challenges within the relationship.

Solutions: Encourage open discussions about mental health. Seek professional help and support each other through mental health challenges.



#103 INEQUITABLE DIVISION OF EMOTIONAL LABOR

Challenge: One partner may bear the majority of the emotional labor in the relationship.

Manifestation: Disproportionate emotional labor within the relationship.

Solutions: Discuss and divide emotional labor equitably. Share the responsibilities of emotional support, empathy, and communication.

#104 FEELING UNAPPRECIATED

Challenge: A lack of appreciation for each other's efforts can lead to resentment.

Manifestation: Feeling unappreciated or taken for granted. Or even as if the other person thinks they are simply entitled to your continued good performance.

Solutions: Never ever stop expressing gratitude and appreciation regularly, even for the same thing they have done for you every day for 50 years. Acknowledge each other's contributions to the relationship and show love and respect.

#105 FEARS ABOUT THE FUTURE

Challenge: Anxiety and fears about the future can create uncertainty.

Manifestation: Anxiety and fear about the future.

Solutions: Share your fears and anxieties with each other. Work together to create a plan and a sense of security for the future. Recognize that the mind is evolutionarily designed only to perceive problems and dangers, seeing only how things could go wrong at every turn; it is absolutely awful at predicting how RIGHT things may go instead. Reassure each other that everything is going to be okay.

#106 MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Challenge: Mental health issues, such as depression or anxiety, can impact both partners and their relationship.

Manifestation: Frequent mood swings, anxiety, or depression.

Solution: Prioritize mental health care. Seek therapy or counseling when necessary, and offer unconditional support to your partner during their mental health journey.

#107 INABILITY TO RESOLVE PAST TRAUMAS

Challenge: The difficulty couples face in addressing and healing from past emotional wounds, which can continue to affect their relationship. Past traumas, either individually or as a couple, can affect the marriage if they are not addressed and resolved.

Manifestation: Recurring conflicts, emotional distance, or unresolved issues related to past traumas, causing ongoing tension and emotional distress in the marriage.

Solutions: Seeking professional therapy or counseling to navigate and heal from past traumas together, fostering open and empathetic communication, and prioritizing mutual emotional support and understanding to promote healing and strengthen the marriage.



INFIDELITY, ABUSE, AND AFFAIRS ASSASINS



Welcome to the final, and perhaps most challenging, section of this guide – "Infidelity, Abuse, and Affairs Assassins." We've intentionally saved these topics for last because they address the darkest and most heart-wrenching challenges that marriages can face.

While not all emotionally immature parents are what we would call abusers, all abusers are definitely emotionally immature for sure.

Odds are, therefore, as adult children of emotionally immature parents, we are a group who have experienced more than our fair share of some of the issues in this section.

Just seeing the list can stir up a whirlwind of emotions and complexities for some of us that are uniquely taxing.

Within this section, we'll confront some of the darkest shadows that can loom over a marriage: emotional affairs, infidelity, and the harrowing discovery of child abuse by one parent.

We will also address the deeply troubling matters of physical spousal abuse and the pervasive influence of pornography, which can pose the most dangerous threat of all.

It's important to acknowledge that some of these challenges are so formidable that a marriage may not, and perhaps should not, survive them. The pain and devastation they can bring are profound, and the scars they leave can be lasting. Even deadly.

However, even in these darkest moments, it's crucial to remember that you are not alone.

There is support, understanding, and guidance available to help you navigate these treacherous waters. We'll explore ways to protect your emotional well-being and, if it's your choice, work toward separation, healing, and recovery.

Infidelity, abuse, and affairs assassins are the toughest adversaries a marriage can face, but confronting them head-on is the first step toward a path of healing, whether individually or as a couple.

Our aim is to provide you with insights, resources, and a compassionate ear as you navigate these difficult waters. Please study the "Power and Control Wheel." This will help you recognize the warning signs and symptoms further. However I disavow the term "Male Privilege" in this wheel since women can do exactly the same things listed.



And if you or a child are in danger, please, please, please reach out or contact emergency services, precious reader. What might happen if you leave or tell someone is far less worse than what might happen if you don't.

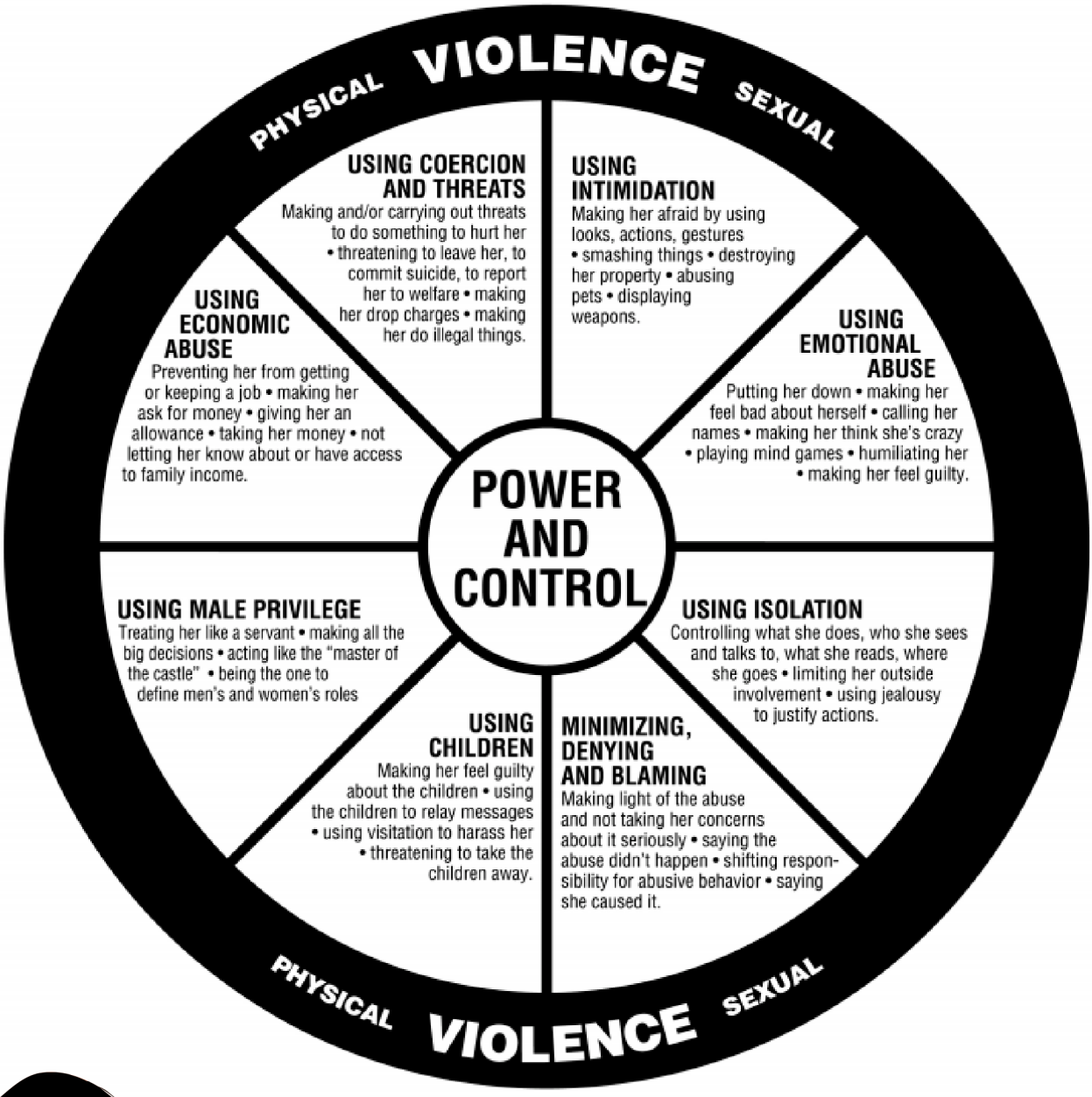
Abusers only get bolder the longer their abuse goes unconfronted.

So, with the weight of these challenges in mind, let's explore these issues, knowing that understanding and support are at your side as you journey through this section.

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE ARE READY, ABLE, AND WILLING TO LISTEN TO YOU AND TO HELP YOU:

National Center for Elder Abuse: 1-855-500-3537
National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888
National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453
Report Animal Cruelty (pre-cursor to human cruelty!): First, call police...
If police are unresponsive, call PETA at 757-622-7382 and/or your state SPCA

WARNING: People suffering from abuse can be in danger if they are caught viewing a website geared toward helping victims and survivors or making phone calls. Please call from a phone your abuser will have no access to. Any ordinary stranger or local business you walk up to will gladly let you use their phone to call the police or any of these numbers above.


PHYSICAL
VIOLENCE
SEXUAL
USING COERCION AND THREATS
Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her • threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare • making her drop charges • making her do illegal things.
USING INTIMIDATION
Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures • smashing things • destroying her property • abusing pets • displaying weapons.
USING ECONOMIC ABUSE
Preventing her from getting or keeping a job • making her ask for money • giving her an allowance • taking her money • not letting her know about or have access to family income.
USING EMOTIONAL ABUSE
Putting her down • making her feel bad about herself • calling her names • making her think she's crazy • playing mind games • humiliating her • making her feel guilty.
POWER AND CONTROL
USING MALE PRIVILEGE
Treating her like a servant • making all the big decisions • acting like the "master of the castle" • being the one to define men's and women's roles
USING ISOLATION
Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes • limiting her outside involvement • using jealousy to justify actions.
USING CHILDREN
Making her feel guilty about the children • using the children to relay messages • using visitation to harass her • threatening to take the children away.
MINIMIZING, DENYING AND BLAMING
Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously • saying the abuse didn't happen • shifting responsibility for abusive behavior • saying she caused it.
PHYSICAL
VIOLENCE
SEXUAL



#108 EMOTIONAL AFFAIRS

Challenge: Emotional connections outside the marriage can create emotional distance and conflict.

Manifestation: Emotional romantic connection with someone outside the marriage.

Solutions: Recognize the signs of emotional affairs early and address them openly with your partner. Prioritize emotional connection within your marriage.

#109 SEXUAL AFFAIRS

Challenge: Sexual affairs outside the marriage can severely damage trust and commitment. Like... duh, right?

Manifestation: Physical infidelity.

Solutions: Avoid situations that may lead to affairs, nurture emotional and physical intimacy within the marriage, and prioritize rebuilding trust through therapy or counseling if an affair occurs. If a second one occurs? Then, it may be time to consider separation. Talk to someone you can trust to help you think clearly about it.

#110 DISCOVERING CHILD ABUSE BY ONE PARENT

Challenge: When one spouse learns about child abuse committed by the other parent, creating a profound and distressing crisis within the family.

Manifestation: Shock, anger, betrayal, and a breakdown of trust between the spouses, leading to significant strain in the marriage.

Solutions: If you haven't just murdered the abuser (and perhaps you shouldn't because your poor child is left now without either parent), the solution typically involves immediate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of the child through legal interventions, seeking therapy or counseling to address the emotional impact on both partners and the child, and, in some cases (and IMO should be in ALL cases), making decisions about the future of the marriage, including seeking support in navigating separation or divorce.



#111 PHYSICAL SPOUSAL ABUSE

Challenge: Involves one partner inflicting physical harm or violence on the other, leading to a cycle of domestic violence.

Manifestation: Physical injuries, fear, emotional trauma, and a pervasive atmosphere of intimidation within the marriage.

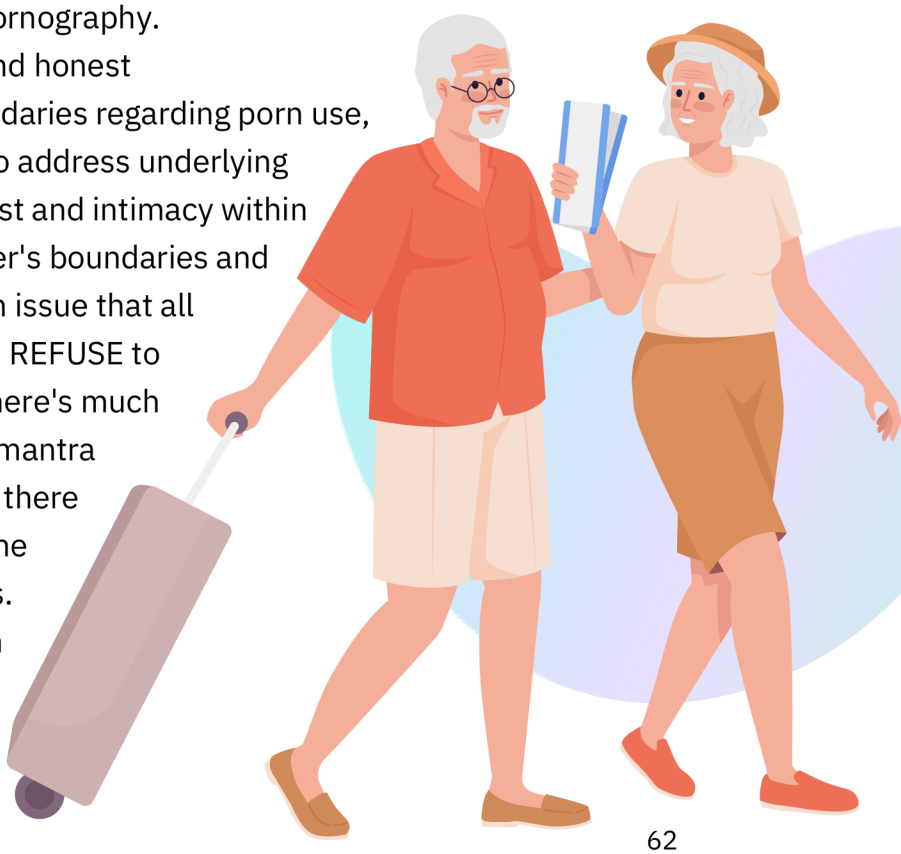
Solutions: The solution necessitates immediate prioritization of safety, seeking legal protection if necessary, and accessing support services such as therapy, counseling, or support groups to address the abusive behavior and its underlying causes. In many cases (and, in my opinion, in ALL cases of physical abuse), it may also involve leaving the abusive relationship to ensure the victim's safety and well-being.

#112 PORN, MOST DANGEROUS THREAT OF ALL?

Challenge: One or both partners regularly consuming pornography, which can impact their sexual and emotional connection within the relationship. The time to keep playing dumb about this industry and its products or giving this threat a pass is over. This may be the most dangerous threat of all. Sounds like a leap? We'll dive in on our podcast show, in my courses, and the community, too. This industry hurts and destroys absolutely EVERYTHING and EVERYONE that gets involved with it.

Manifestation: Decreased sexual intimacy, trust issues, insecurity, and potential conflict due to differences in attitudes toward pornography.

Solutions: The solution involves open and honest communication about feelings and boundaries regarding porn use, seeking couples therapy or counseling to address underlying issues, and mutual efforts to rebuild trust and intimacy within the marriage while respecting each other's boundaries and needs. However, in my opinion, this is an issue that all comes down to and starts with the eyes. REFUSE to look. Make that your aim. Start today. There's much more I will share, but making that your mantra is a simple starting place, and I am right there with you, my friend. I have a course in the works to help people struggling with this. This industry needs to die, but join me in the community or podcast chat, and let's hash it out!



Complete List of Marriage Dragons

Communications Challenges

1. Communication Breakdown
2. Resentment Accumulation
3. Inadequate Conflict Resolution Skills or Tools
4. General Lack of Appreciation and Gratitude
5. Unresolved Past Conflicts
6. Feeling Unheard or Invalidated
7. Language Barriers in Multicultural Marriages

Financial Struggles

8. Financial Stress & Strain
9. Lack of Financial Transparency (Benign)
10. Financial Infidelity, Hidden Finances, and Financial Secrets (Danger)
11. Resistance to Seeking Professional Help in General
12. Job Loss or Major Income Loss

Intimacy and Romance

13. Lack of Sex
14. Differences in Libido
15. Sexual Incompatibility
16. Unsatisfying Sex Life
17. Infertility and Fertility Struggles
18. Change in Physical Attraction
19. Lack of Emotional Connection
20. Lack of Affection and Physical Touch
21. Secretly Same-Sex Attracted in Heterosexual Marriage

Quality Time

22. Lack of Quality Time
23. Lack of Spontaneity or Surprises
24. Stagnation and Lack of Adventure or Novelty
25. Neglecting Friendship
26. Lack of Shared Interests

Relationship Dynamics

27. Unrealistic Expectations
28. Gender Role Expectations
29. Unrealistic Expectations About Roles and Responsibilities
30. Disagreements About Household Responsibilities
31. Differences in Household Cleanliness Expectations
32. Lack of Household Organization and Clutter
33. Resistance to Change
34. Comparison to Past Relationships
35. Lack of Personal Space
36. Long-Distance Relationships
37. Lack of Emotional Support During Life Transitions
38. Resistance to Seeking Professional Marital Help

Balancing Work and Family

39. Career Relocation Stress
40. Career and Ambition Conflicts
41. Career Aspirations vs. Family Time
42. Balancing Work Schedule and Stress with Family
43. Overwhelming Family Obligations

Family and Parenting Dynamics

44. Disagreements About Parenting Methods
45. Parenting Decision Differences
46. Differences in Parenting Values
47. Family and In-Law Conflicts or Interference
48. Navigating Blended Families
49. First Child is Born
50. Second Child is Born And So On...
51. The Empty Nest

Social Interactions and Pressures

52. Cultural Pressure to Conform
53. Pressure to Conform to Social Norms
54. Lack of Boundaries with Friends and Exes
55. Cultural Traditions Clashing
56. Cultural Religious Disparities
57. Differing Religious, Philosophical or Spiritual Beliefs and Values
58. Disagreements About Social or Political Issues
59. Negative Influence of Friends
60. Lack of Mutual Friends and Social Isolation
61. Social or Class Differences
62. Differences in Socializing Preferences

Physical Health and Wellness

63. Fear of Aging and Mortality
64. Aging and Health Issues
65. Difficulty Managing Stress
66. Coping with an Unexpected Major Illness or Injury
67. Dealing with a Chronic Illness or Health Condition

Personal Growth and Identity

68. Lack of Self-Identity
69. Fear of Losing Identity in Marriage
70. Lack of Independence
71. Fear of Losing Independence
72. Different Life Goals and Values
73. Lack of Support for Individual Goals
74. Lack of Individual Support Systems
75. Neglecting Self-Improvement

Addictions and Recovery

76. Substance Abuse and Addictions
77. Substance Abuse and Addiction Recovery

Time Management and Lifestyle

78. Change in Life Circumstances
79. Time Management Discrepancies
80. Time Management Overcommitment
81. Disagreements About Screen Time and Technology Usage
82. Excessive Social Media
83. Unrealistic Social Media Comparisons
84. Difficulty Balancing Social Life and Marriage
85. Neglecting Self-Care
86. Lack of Personal Alone Time

Trust and Insecurity

87. Trust Issues in General
88. Jealousy and Insecurity
89. Lack of Trust Due to Past Betrayals
90. Fear of Emotional Exposure
91. Fear of Rejection
92. Fear of Abandonment Due to Past Trauma
93. Unresolved Trust Issues from Past Relationships
94. Fear of Vulnerability
95. Fear of Commitment

Mental and Emotional Health

96. Emotional Neglect
97. Unresolved Grief
98. Coping with the Loss of a Child
99. Coping with Loss of Loved Ones in General
100. Coping with Pregnancy Loss, Stillborn or Miscarriage
101. Unresolved Childhood Trauma
102. Hidden Mental Health Issues
103. Inequitable Division of Emotional Labor
104. Feeling Unappreciated
105. Fears About the Future
106. Mental Health Challenges
107. Inability to Resolve Past Traumas

Infidelity, Abuse, and Affairs

108. Emotional Affairs
109. Infidelity, Sexual Affairs
110. Discovering Child Abuse by One Parent
111. Physical Spousal Abuse
112. Porn, Most Dangerous Threat of All?