

Sex is good, its the other 23 hours worrying me
Posted by Elya K - 27 Mar 2020 16:59

The Sex is Good, It's the other 23 hours I'm struggling with!

In my couple's intake survey, I have new clients rate their partnership satisfaction from Very Dissatisfied to Very Satisfied and everything in between. Invariably, I see a lot of couples who are extremely dissatisfied with closeness, attention, arguments and respect for each other, but the sex is good!

This tells me some very important and interesting points about this couple.

- They are basing their relationship on sex, not on the other 7 forms of intimacy. And there probably isn't much intimacy in these relationships either. Intensity without love is not intimacy.
- People cannot change themselves when all they want is for their partner to change. You have to differentiate yourself, change yourself by increasing your communication skills. Then your partner will likely change their attitude toward you.
- Couples don't set limits on conflict. They keep arguing and fighting until wee hours of the morning, then they're too tired the next morning to discuss core issues in a more relaxed atmosphere.
- Therapy is about developing new, reliable patterns of communication which allows each partner to experience the benefits of "leaving the prison" of their old way of relating to others.

Relationships based on "good sex" alone do not last. Hence a 60% divorce rate. Dr. John Gottman offers four predictors of divorce which he calls the Four Horses of the Apocalypse.

1. Criticism versus gentle startup using "I" statements rather than accusations.
2. Defensiveness versus responding with empathy and not sarcasm.
3. Contempt like calling your partner names, giving over an air of superiority and using power and manipulation to get your way.
4. Stonewalling, caused by overwhelming emotions, one partner cannot process everything they are feeling and short-circuit the conversation to calm down and retain control.

Good sex alone will not make a marriage thrive. Learning intimacy in all 8 areas gives you a much better chance of survival. And that's what counseling aims to accomplish, intimacy rather than the distractions of work, technology and emotions which thrive on intensity.

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