

3 Powerful, Prayerful Tips for Reconnecting With Your Spouse

You are feeling seriously disconnected from your spouse, and it's just plain awful. You've determined you will no longer ignore, accept or project your marriage problems; you're going to do something about it. So how do you make a step to reconnect with your spouse?

Living in shame for your own faults or blaming your spouse for their faults won't help. You've probably tried nagging your spouse or waiting for them to make the first move. How's that worked out so far?

You've probably also tried praying about it. Don't stop praying! Stay on your knees!

But here are some practical steps *you* can do in working to reconnect with your spouse. And combine these steps with your prayers; invite God to help you do these things.

1. Work on you.

You can't change your spouse. But you can work on changing *you*.

This does not mean you necessarily started the problem, or are the primary one to blame for the problem. It does not mean your spouse has no responsibility. This is simply focusing your attention in the only area you have the power to change: you.

Intentionally look at your own heart with both honesty and compassion. You may be tempted to wallow in shame; don't! That's the enemy's tactic. Or you may be tempted to minimize your role in the relationship disconnect; don't. Even if your

role is 3% of the problem, that's the only place you have power. Focus on that part. Imagine what it's like to be married to you.

Are you carrying old baggage that's impacting your relationship? Do whatever it takes to deal with it. Do you respond with contempt, anger or neediness? Find the root and address it. Is your communication style more hurtful than helpful? Learn new ways of communicating. Are you coming to your marriage with selfishness, aggressiveness, pride or lust? Deal with it.

You will not be perfect; that's not the point. But by focusing on where you *do* have power to make a difference, your relationship cannot help but be different as a result. As *you* become healed and mature, it's very likely your spouse will want to come closer.

2. Seek to understand.

Unless your spouse has an evil heart, he or she doesn't wake up in the morning deciding to hurt you. He or she doesn't say, "I'm going to do everything I can to build a higher wall between my spouse and me today." And there are many possible reasons for how they respond.

Like you, your spouse is a sinner. But they also have accumulated traumas and hurts in life. They see the world in their unique way. They learned patterns of communication and behavior that explain so much—if you only could understand.

Intentionally look at your spouse's heart with honesty and compassion. This does not excuse bad behavior, but seeking to understand can change everything.

Prayerfully seek to look at the world through your spouse's eyes. Perhaps he or she grew up in a home where sex meant shame, where anger was the only way power was expressed or where problems were never talked about. Perhaps he or she is

afraid of being hurt again in some way, or is walking under a load of guilt, shame, frustration, overwhelm or other pressures.

Your husband responds with anger when you try to talk. Why? Your wife continues to criticize you in public. Why? Your spouse may very well be wrong. But seeking to understand the *why* will be critical in knowing what to do next.

And understanding where your spouse is coming from can give you priceless information and empathy in knowing how to work to solve the disconnect between you.

3. Invite, don't pressure.

You're working to change you. You've come to understand some of your spouse's perspective. Now you can take steps to invite them to reconnect.

An invitation is just that, an invitation. It's not an ultimatum, a maximum pressure campaign, passive-aggressive manipulation, a gauntlet or a guilt trip. You invite your spouse to come closer by working to remove barriers and making reconnection appealing and safe.

Sometimes that invitation involves setting boundaries. You cannot reconnect while destructive behavior continues.

Sometimes that invitation includes asking for and extending forgiveness.

With an invitation, you don't control the outcome. Your choices going forward will depend in part on how your spouse responds, but you cannot control how they respond. Don't try. Imagine how you would feel if you were in your spouse's shoes. If you were them, how could you create an invitation to come closer that would appeal to you? How can you make it safe and appealing for them to *want* to reconnect?

And keep making that invitation as long as you are married.

How well do you understand your spouse? Now, how are you going to invite your spouse to come closer?

Your turn: *Have you taken the time to understand what things in your own heart and in your spouse's heart are keeping you disconnected? Now, how are you going to create a safe and appealing invitation to come closer? Leave a comment below.*
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