

3 Truths to Remember to Avoid the 'If, Then' Marriage Cycle

Does this sound familiar to you?

"Honey, *if* you would just plan fun things for us to do, *then* I would spend more time with you."

"*If* you would spend more time with me, *then* I wouldn't be so cranky."

"*If* you weren't so cranky, *then* I would plan fun things for us to do."

And around and around it goes. The endless cycle seen above is what I've come to call the "If, Then" marriage cycle. All too often, we find ourselves saying to our spouses, "If you would just do this, then I would do that." It's conditional love, which is really not love at all because true love is unconditional.

To save you and your spouse from becoming trapped in the "If, Then" marriage cycle, here are three truths to remember:

1. Love is not 50/50; it's 100/100. Giving half the effort to your marriage will never cut it. Having the mindset that once you do your part, it's up to your spouse to do the rest doesn't work well in marriage. It's important that both husband and wife are each giving 100 percent of themselves to the relationship.

2. Love sacrificially, not superficially. There will be times when you are tired and don't want to do the dishes or help the kids with homework or are too busy to leave your spouse an encouraging note on the counter. But love is about making sacrifices. So break the "If, Then" marriage cycle by loving your spouse through practical, daily, sacrificial actions.

3. Love is not a transaction; it's an action. It's vital for both husband and wife to change their mindset from what they can *get* to what they can *give*. So try giving of your time, your thoughts or your talents without the expectation of getting something back. Do it simply because you love your spouse, not because you want a favor in return.

What are some "if, then" challenges that you and your spouse struggle with, and how do you move past those struggles? Please leave a comment below.

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