

4 Ways to Escape the Negativity in Marriage

Do you tend to have a negative outlook on things? Whether it's your to-do list, your job or even making nit-picky complaints about your spouse, we're probably all guilty of negative thinking from time to time.

The good news is that no one is born with a bad attitude; it's developed over time. With a little effort, we can move past negativity and begin to turn our attitudes—and our relationships with our spouses—around.

Here are four ways to nip the negativity in the bud:

1. Look for the positive. This simple step can be revolutionary for some couples. It involves trying on a new mindset, one that looks for good things in your partner and positive solutions for your predicaments. Look beyond the negative traits of your spouse and see the good.

2. Refuse to be a victim. Whatever your situation, no matter how tough, you will gain nothing by being a victim. Self-pity will likely drain the energy from you and your relationship. Don't allow it to sabotage your attitude and your marriage.

3. Give up grudges. Nothing keeps good attitudes from emerging more than a good grudge. Bitterness and resentment are the poisons of positive thinking. So in your desire to build a better attitude, it's essential to give up your grudges, no matter how well-justified they seem to be.

4. Give yourself and your marriage some grace. Negative attitudes can be habit-forming, and it can be hard to break out of that pattern. Give yourself and your partner grace along the way. Remember each new day presents another opportunity to start fresh. And each day that you make this

effort to improve your attitude brings you closer to the marriage you desire.

Married in 1984, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott founded the Center for Relationship Development on the campus of Seattle Pacific University in 1991—a groundbreaking program dedicated to teaching the basics of good relationships. Their books have sold over 1 million copies in more than two dozen languages, and include best-selling and Gold-medallion winner Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts.

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