

5 Telltale Signs You're Having a Spouse Attack

Over the course of being married, either spouse can get what I call a spouse attack. I don't mean times when your spouse might be yelling at you, although it might happen then as well. Rather what I mean by a spouse attack is having a moment when all of a sudden, out of the blue, a flood of negative thoughts hits you about your spouse. These spouse attacks are almost like panic attacks.

You're all of a sudden focused on negative thoughts of things they have done or haven't done over the years of the marriage. Yes, that's normal; it happens to many of us now and again. These spouse attacks can be more prominent under periods of financial, sexual or personal stress in the marriage. They can happen the day after a big emotional confrontation. They can also move in when you realize your spouse isn't going to change the way you want them to change, and you begin to feel hopeless about it.

Spouse attacks are very real. How you handle these spouse attacks can influence you, and your marriage for days, weeks, or even longer. Sometimes you may not understand what's going on with your spouse; you just know they are acting and treating you differently. They may have experienced a spouse attack of which you are simply not aware.

Let's look at some of the characteristics of a spouse attack. When you see these characteristics you know you are right in the middle of the storm.

1. *Self pity*

That sneaky feeling that nobody appreciates you is usually a major theme of a spouse attack. You are to be pitied because you are not understood, appreciated or validated by your

spouse. Self pity is a feeling and it doesn't have to be true for you to feel this. If you think feelings are always true, you are in real trouble in a spouse attack. Whenever you start to feel self pity, it is really best to stop and really challenge what you are thinking and feeling.

2. *Globalizing the Negative*

Every human being who walks planet earth has shortcomings. All of us have areas of weaknesses that irritate our spouse. All of us can be forgetful, stubborn, selfish and irrational. In theory we might believe this but when we marry, they are supposed to be different, you know caring.

Honestly, most of us don't deserve the spouse we have. Many of our spouses have great moments of coming through for us, showing us love, picking up the kids, and giving us time for ourselves. When you get into a spouse attack the wonderfulness of our spouse goes almost totally away. In the spouse attack they are "always" this or "never" that, and it is globalized.

3. *Eternalizing the Bad*

The statement, "They will always be such and such," or "They will never change" are examples of internalizing the bad. I know we are all capable of bad attitudes beliefs and behaviors at anytime. That is what makes us human. We are all flawed but loved.

When we eternalize the bad we focus on the flawed aspect of our spouse. As we get better at handling the spouse attacks we will be able to focus on the lovely parts of our spouse as well. When you learn to be more successful in handling a spouse attack you see the picture as one in a long line. Some of the future pictures are that of your hero or heroine saving the day again.

4. *Doomed*

Once you globalize the negative, wallow in some self pity, and

internalize the negative you are doomed. The natural conclusion is you are trapped, hopeless, and the victim of this once decent person. Feeling doomed for me is always a red flag as to whether I am in reality. Again, feelings are feelings, not facts. I may feel fat or ugly and may not have gained one pound in 10 years. Feelings and facts are different. When you're in a spouse attack you can get confused that your feelings are facts. Doomed is a feeling like the millions of feelings you have already experienced in your life, the feeling of doomed will pass.

5. *I Have No Responsibility*

When you're in a spouse attack, you tend to get into "black and white," or "all or nothing" thinking. Therefore the spouse is 100 percent of the issue, and you are 0 percent of the problem. There is no way they are acting out of deprivation from you.

When you are not in a spouse attack you can see some cause and effect in the relationship. Also when you are not in a spouse attack you can usually see that there may be a possible relationship between the two behaviors that can be worked out.

Winning the Battle

You are going to have spouse attacks. What you do with them is critical. Instead of going with the thoughts and feelings of the spouse attack, how about mounting a counter attack. To mount a counter attack I want you to write out five things you love, like, or value about your spouse that is absolutely true.

I want you to say them out loud and alone. Say them with emotion because these are true about your spouse. You see a spouse attack is false because it doesn't give an overall picture but only a photograph.

Go ahead and time yourself. It will take you less than one

minute to have success and win over a spouse attack. That's why I call it the one-minute turn around, because in one minute you can go from the funk of a spouse attack to clarity on why you love this person.

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