

How to Evaluate Your Relationship With Your Spouse

Every marriage needs evaluation. When you evaluate your marriage, you're hitting the pause button and looking at the condition of your relationship in a careful and thoughtful way.

By doing so, you'll both see what you're doing well along with areas in which you need to grow individually and as a couple. A meaningful evaluation of your marriage leads to acceleration in the growth of your relationship.

As you assess your relationship, if you're the one asking the question, listen without being defensive. If you're the one answering, be honest without exaggeration or personal attack. Avoid using *always* and *never* in your conversation. These words can uselessly sidetrack your conversation and frustrate your spouse.

This assessment can be done all at one time or it can be done by addressing one question each week over a period of time. You decide. It's also a good idea to take notes.

Here are the key questions you and your spouse should each ask and answer to evaluate your marriage:

1. How can I be a better spouse to you?
2. Have I seemed oblivious to anything important going on in the family?
3. What is one thing that you want or need from me?
4. What have I done recently that really encouraged you or made you feel loved?
5. Do I argue fairly?
6. What do you think about the way we spend time together?
How could it be better?
7. What would be one thing you wish I would start doing?

Stop doing?

8. What do you wish I would say to you more often? Stop saying to you?
9. In what areas of our marriage do you trust me most? The least?
10. On a scale of 1 to 10, am I a good listener? How well do I understand you?
11. Do you feel I support you with the kids? In front of the kids?
12. Do I compliment you enough? Do I criticize you too much?
13. Do you feel free to be yourself?
14. How do you know I love you?

By the way, if your spouse says something that you don't agree with, that's OK. This is not a time to address and resolve contentious issues. Just let them share their thoughts and feelings without correcting them. Remember, their perception is their reality.

And, here is list of questions to help you evaluate your relationship with your child.

When evaluating your marriage, what other questions do you think you should ask your spouse? Please share your thoughts below.

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit .