

How to Turn a Messy Marriage Into a Meaningful One

Each one of us is unique. We have unique minds and personalities. We have different ways of seeing and processing things. We differ on how we interact with each other, our kids, and others.

My wife, Susan, and I are alike in some ways, but very different in others. So, our marriage can be messy at times. But throughout our years of marriage, we've found that our messiness often turns into something very beautiful and meaningful. Here are 4 areas of messiness in your marriage that can become meaningful:

1. Communication is one of the messiest parts of marriage. The Same Old Marriage Fights can create a big mess. And if you're experiencing the If, Then Marriage Cycle, things may not look too pretty either.

But, the messiness of conversation patterns can be a great opportunity to build a more meaningful and stronger marriage. Being able to move past the same scripted fights as a couple by using the Speaker-Listener Technique will enable you to work better as a team and will move you to greater intimacy in your relationship.

2. Conditional love. The mess of only doing something for your spouse "If" they do something in return can be cleaned up when you learn to love your spouse unconditionally ... no matter what. When you love your spouse without any conditions, you'll better understand the true meaning of marriage.

3. Parenting styles. When our kids were young, tucking them into bed each night was always an adventure. Susan would try to calm them down and read stories to help them unwind, only for me to burst through the door and tickle them until they

were as hyper as ever. Obviously, our parenting styles created clashing moments like this.

But over time, Susan found meaning in this messy part of our marriage. She understood that even if it meant the kids getting to bed 15 minutes later than she'd wanted, they would go to bed knowing that their dad loved them deeply.

4. Conflicting paces. Husbands and wives don't always think and move at the same pace. Susan and I both move at a fairly fast pace. But here's the difference: Susan thrives on, and is energized by, being around people. While I enjoy being with others, I need to have alone time to recharge.

Susan will say "yes" to a lot more things than I will. So to keep our schedule from getting messy, I often have to forcefully pull in the reins when I see too many things crowding our calendar. This helps us to have some "clean space" on our schedule so that we can spend one-on-one time together with each other, and with friends, having meaningful interaction.

Where have you found meaning from the messiness of your marriage? Please share your comments.

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