

How Would You Grade Yourself on Your Wedding Promises?

Today, I want to go through the four promises generally made in wedding vows. I take couples on a journey through these promises as a tool to evaluate/remind them of the specific promises that they made to one another and the meaning of those promises.

I've found this exercise to be very helpful for intimacy anorexics as well as the spouses of intimacy anorexics, because it serves as an eye-opening example of what marriage is supposed to be based on their own vows. Here are four promises you made to your spouse on your wedding day:

Forsake All Others

Right away, the intimacy anorexics will be proud of themselves because they immediately say they have not had sex with anyone even if they have been acting out with pornography for decades.

Then I hone in on the word *all*.

All means forsaking yourself and your safety for the other person.

Intimacy anorexics are more committed to their own safety than their spouse's safety. They are in a promise to protect themselves and their image over protecting their spouse's heart.

Then I ask if any of this resonates with the intimacy anorexics. Generally, they sheepishly nod.

If you haven't forsaken you, you're still married to you and your need for safety, distance, looking good and so on. You're married to you until you forsake you.

Then I move on to the next marital promise: love.

Love

Here I will go two directions. I say to the intimacy anorexic: "If I put a gun to your head and say, 'Tell me how your spouse will feel loved,' what would you say?"

They could tell me five things in less than a minute. Almost without fail, this is the case.

Then I ask how often they do these things they mentioned without being asked or as a way out of the doghouse?

(Naturally, intimacy anorexics know how to use these techniques as a way to get out of trouble.) You see, they know how to love their spouse; they just aren't doing it. This realization that they know what to do and aren't doing it starts to sink in at this point.

The second tactic would be to ask, "What is your spouse's love language?"

The five love languages are:

1. Acts of service.
2. Gifts.
3. Touch.
4. Praise.
5. Quality time.

When their spouse's love language is revealed, I ask, "How often do you actively do these without prompting or as a way out of the doghouse?"

Remember to believe behavior.

I then move on to the next promise, which is to honor your spouse.

Honor

Honor is giving value to the other soul just because they are a soul. It's focusing on strengths and gifts, not weaknesses and flaws. It's consideration of the heart, ideas, sexuality, relationships and interests they might have.

I ask them for a rating of the honor in their relationship. On a scale of one to 10, how would you rate this in your relationship?

Does your mind more quickly go to the negative or the negative narrative in your mind to justify distance?

After clarifying what it means to honor in a marriage relationship, I move on to the fourth marital promise: cherish.

Cherish

Do you hold as important the things that your spouse considers important?

How are you at remembering the following?

–Spouse's birthday.

–Anniversaries.

–Dates.

–Special Occasions.

–Christmas.

–Important holidays to your spouse.

How are you at privately praising and nurturing your spouse (not dailies)?

(Again, many intimacy anorexics are not good at this.)

However, we need to delineate between private and public praise and cherishing. Some will do things for their spouse in

public to make themselves look good, but at home, there is little to no cherishing.

Remember, intimacy anorexics are married to themselves. Therefore, they will do anything to make themselves look good.

I then set up to evaluate their grade of their relationship on all aspects of the promises.

The Final Grade

I will ask for a letter grade on all four promises: A-F.

–Forsaking all (myself included).

–Love.

–Honor.

–Cherish.

Evaluate the grade if the spouse is present. Get them both to grade (often intimacy anorexics give themselves higher grades).

Then discuss the facts of the facts. Do the facts support that they are married to themselves or married to their spouse? Believe behavior. Again, this can be a very eye-opening experience.

Taking them down memory lane and reviewing the vows they made can be very enlightening. This is a very helpful tool when working with an intimacy anorexic and their spouse. This can bring restoration, healing and sometimes acceptance of an intimacy anorexic who is unwilling to change.

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