

# How You Can Battle This Toxic Element in Your Marriage

There they both sit, night after night. A couple refusing to acknowledge their unhappy marriage as they go through the motions of necessity.

The kids have been put to bed, the toys somewhat put back in place, and they stare at the television as bedtime quickly creeps up. He looks her way and has a romantic intention, but it evaporates as fast as it came. "Too much work," he thinks as he mentally resigns to self-satisfaction. As she weakly smiles his way, a million different thoughts race through her mind, including *I'm not desirable enough for him to want me anymore*. Her heart believes the lie. They exchange an "I love you" with an insincere peck on dry lips and part ways until the next day. Apathy has laid waste to their marital joy.

So what's the good news? If you're feeling apathetic in your marriage, know this problem can most certainly be fixed. Your marriage can be rejuvenated, and the happiness you once felt together can be restored. I've been married nearly 20 years, and we have seen plenty of ups and downs. Our saving grace has been that we both come from broken homes and agree our marriage will not be one. So we fight for each other.

Are you willing to fight for your marriage and family? Here are five ways to do so:

**1. Find the problem.** Which bad habits has your marriage fallen into? Has it become sexless or close to it? What is your communication like? What are your thoughts about her? What do you think she feels about you? Pinpoint where your marriage has allowed apathy to grow.

**2. Reconnect.** Depending on the seriousness of your situation, professional couple's therapy or pastoral assistance might be

required. Tell each other how you really feel. Avoid overreacting or thin-skinned sensitivity. Do not embellish, place blame or engage in personal attacks. Just put how you both view the marriage on the table. That will establish the starting point for the solution to begin.

**3. Take initiative.** Arrange opportunities. Design the family schedule so it includes designated adult time. If that means dropping a kid's sport here or a dance class there, so be it. Your kids want happy parents. Start dating each other again. Woo each other. Remember when you would have been mortified if she had a bad impression of you? Rediscover the man who made a sincere effort. It's likely she'll respond in kind.

**4. Dream together.** What is the ideal situation for your family? Build a dream together and establish the larger picture of where you both want to lead your family. My wife and I are laying the foundation we pray will last for generations, one of joy, stability, commitment, sacrifice and example to follow. This grand vision keeps us unified. What do you and your wife dream together?

**5. Understand marriage is hard work.** When we see one of those special couples celebrating 50 years of marriage we all bow in admiration. Can you imagine the fights and squabbles they had—the dreams that never materialized, and the unexpected ones that did? I like to think I will have a lasting marriage. But it won't be because any of it came easy. {eo}

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