

Sarcasm Can Destroy A Marriage

I was shocked recently during a recent Marriage Intensive as I listened to a man and woman talk to each other. I watched as the man and woman, Gene and Victoria, sniped at each other mercilessly.

What was just as amazing as the potshots they easily took at one another was the fact that neither seemed to even notice the wincing their mate did when the other made their sarcastic digs.

The woman opened the sarcastic volleys with this shot:

"You think I'm supposed to get excited now that you decide to change," she sneered. "It's a little late for that."

Feeling the bite and clearly hurting, Gene countered with, "Hey, at least I'm changing. That's more than I can say for you." Ouch!

"I've been begging you to change," she continued, "so don't expect the band to play now that finally seem to be listening," she sniped.

"I could become a brand new man and you probably wouldn't even notice. But watch out if I make any comment on how much you spend on your nails and hair." Another jab.

"Folks," I interjected, amazed that they would talk this way in the first place, and do it so easily in front of me. "Do you see what you're doing to each other? Do you even hear how sarcastic and mean you are to each other? You seem to use hurtful language so easily, and I don't think you notice the deadly impact it's having on your relationship."

Both looked at me blankly. Again. What was incredible was that

if I didn't step in and stop this bloodbath, it would likely continue. This is likely the way they talk to each other behind the closed doors of their home and the impact on their marriage is horrific.

"We've been doing this for years," Gene said. "I guess we're hardened to it."

"You mean there's another way," Victoria questioned.

Sarcasm is a cutting remark intended to hurt. There is a deadly bite that may have an ounce of truth hidden in the lines, but it is said in a way to bring pain.

Why would we want to intentionally hurt the one we love? Because, we have been hurt by them. I've said before, "Hurting people hurt people." It's easy to see why we might be motivated to strike out against the one we love. Yet, doing so only causes deeper wounds—more repairs that will one day need to be made.

Let's consider how to eliminate this kind of language from your marriage.

1. Be honest with yourselves about the cancer of sarcasm in your relationship. Sarcasm is not funny nor is it innocent. It is terribly destructive. There is nothing healthy or helpful that comes from sarcasm. We may believe our words are "only the truth," but that is not accurate. Sarcasm is hurtful. It never leads to reconciliation or honest change.

Solomon had this to say about the tongue: "The tongue has the power of life and death. Those who love it will eat its fruit." (Proverbs 18:21) This clearly says that if we plant positive seeds with healthy, loving talk, we will reap its fruit. If we plant weeds of hurtful talk, we will reap that fruit.

2. Take responsibility for your sarcastic language. You will

never change your language unless you take responsibility for hurting others with it. Look carefully and honestly at the impact your language has on others. Look into your mate's eyes after you have said something hurtful. Notice the ongoing impact of your actions. Notice the lasting damage to your mate's self-esteem. Then, after taking this fearless inventory, determine to change.

3. Make an agreement with your mate to change your language.

Replace indirect, sarcastic insults with clear, respectful, direct messages. Be assertive, using calm, concise, conciliatory language that leads to a healthy connection. Ask for what you want and need in a respectful way.

4. Hold each other accountable for change. Changing longstanding patterns is never easy. You may be surprised at how entrenched your behavior patterns are and how difficult it is to change them. However, if you quickly and honestly confront each and every violation, change will occur.

Emotions are contagious. Thus, if you change, it is very likely that your mate will change as well. If you apologize for your sarcastic, biting words, it is likely that your mate will begin changing as well. Loving language encourages loving language in another.

For the original article, visit .

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