

Tearing Down the Emotional Blockade Between You and Your Spouse

Emotions are complicated. If they only have a few outlets, it can cause what I call “emotional blockage.” Emotional blockage is when a person has many more feelings than he or she has the skills to express or identify. This blockage will show itself differently in various people. Some fly into a rage, while others pout or stop talking to their spouse for days at a time. Regardless of how this blockage manifests, it never moves a couple toward intimacy.

This issue can be a serious roadblock to connecting emotionally. Sometimes we are unable to identify our real emotions, but we are still trying to get our points across. If your relationship has ever been there, you know that it can take hours or days to sort through the confusion. If you don't have the ability to identify your own emotions, how can you share them with your spouse?

Like most things, getting over emotional blockage is a skill that can be learned. Being able to better identify your own feelings and effectively share them with your spouse will help you to build and maintain connectedness or emotional intimacy. Emotional connectedness is something we all need. We all need someone who will hear us.

The key to attaining emotional connectedness is to shift the way we think about emotions. We need to move our minds to honor them. By honoring emotions, you assert that they are a real, valuable and precious part of the person you love. These feelings are an essential part of your spouse's being. As human beings, we can think and behave differently than we feel, but we can't feel differently than we feel. When your

spouse shares a feeling, honor it for what it is. Do not try to change, alter or rationalize away what he or she may be feeling at the moment. Our spouses will not feel any one particular feeling forever. Feelings change, and being honored and heard are very important.

Beyond emotional blockage, unresolved conflicts can lead to neglect and abuse that block the intimacy of a marriage. These negative results can be connected with addictions to alcohol, drugs, sex, food, work, lies and empty promises. The scarring of physical and mental abuse causes more than just a buildup of painful events—it often causes legitimate rage. The effects of sexual infidelity, rape and child abuse will most certainly traumatize any marriage. Though these things ideally shouldn't happen in a sound marriage, they sometimes do, and can create feelings of resentment between spouses.

Refusing to share your heart only increases this unspoken anger and fuels the internal rage inside your spouse. If you are a wounded spouse, the perpetrator is responsible for your feelings. Yet the responsibility to heal is yours. Open up to your spouse and let the growth of trust and intimacy replace the anger.

A spouse may have entered into a marriage with wounds from the past, and new wounds may occur during the marriage. Silent anger about your wounds can block intimacy, even when you long for it in your marriage. You can be healed from inner pain, regardless of the source. Once you identify the roadblock and take responsibility for your own healing, you can begin to move forward once again. Healing can take time, but it is possible. {eoa}

To learn more about controlling your emotions, purchase Dr. Doug Weiss' book, Emotional Fitness.

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