

This Simple Agreement May Be the Key to Healing Your Broken Marriage

Love agreements promote the development of behaviors. These behaviors foster good relationships over time with consistency. Anybody can change his or her agreements and behaviors.

You alone have the power inside your heart to make a new love agreement. Once you make the agreement, then you can harness the power of your soul. The new edict, which we call love agreements, commands your mind, will, and emotions (to follow).

Making a love agreement isn't magical. Just making an agreement does not immediately cause instant change. We have to go one step further than just a positive confession; we must take action. You see as we take action, the process starts. Your behavior begins to change the system of how things are usually done in your marriage.

I remember Carl and Karla, a relatively young couple who were having great difficulty in their communication system. When either of them would start a conflict, or at least a perceived conflict, the other would up the ante as far as the volume of their comments. They would also increase the cutting remarks. Before you knew it, this otherwise good Christian couple began screaming curse words at the top of their lungs. They could go for more than an hour like this at a time.

Of course, they would eventually kiss and make up, but what a mess they would make of their relationship. They came to counseling looking for all the deep-seated issues they thought they had to work on. Although those issues were present, we went to the behavioral route to change. I asked them to go

home and make a stop sign and place it on the refrigerator.

The rules were that either party could grab the stop sign and place it near the face of the other person. This initiated an immediate five-minute time out. Neither spouse was able to say a word to the other until the timer in the kitchen went off. If they started to fight again, the stop sign could be used again.

This couple followed directions to a T, and within a few weeks they were able to get control of the escalating verbal abuse they were previously doing to each other. What was the secret to this couple's success wasn't just the stop sign. It was the consistency in which this couple utilized it.

You see, their consistency created a habit over a few weeks. Day after day, and sometimes several times in a couple hours, the stop sign created silence. Getting control of their volume and the cutting nature of their remarks was achieved by consistent behavior. As this couple consistently applied a simple behavior, something else was happening. Their characters were changing. They were moving from anger to greater self-control. {eo}

Doug Weiss, Ph.D., is a nationally known author, speaker and licensed psychologist. He is the executive director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the author of several books including, *The 7 Love Agreements*. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, or on his Facebook, by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.