

Tips for Encouraging Your Spouse to Walk in Their God-Given Gifts

I want to take a few minutes to talk to you about the gift of your spouse. If you have kids, as a good parent, you take the gifts of your children very seriously. You realize God gave you that child or children as gift(s), and that each child has several gifts inside his or her little being. That is the way I think it ought to be, at least.

Lisa and I, perhaps like you, have spent incalculable hours on bleachers, pews, grass or in classrooms and churches watching your children grow in some area of talent (or wannabe talent). However, not every parent invests in his or her child's talent. Lisa and I observed other parents who had the exact opposite view of investing in their children. They had very specific financial goals and saw investing in lessons or sports for their children as a total waste of time and money. Sadly, these parents often denied extremely gifted children an investment from which they could have benefitted tremendously.

You may be old enough to remember the old *Star Trek* series and movies. If not, you are surely aware of the reboot of the series in theaters recently. Regardless of your knowledge of *Star Trek*, you have been introduced to the main characters, Captain Kirk and Spock.

Captain Kirk did life from his gut, based on hunches and emotion. Spock, on the other hand, used logic to solve conflicts, which at times limited him from solving the crisis at hand. Just like them, in any marriage, one person is better at handling money and the other is usually more or less skilled in emotion. This is often due to no fault of either spouse. If your dad did not teach you how to change the oil in

your car, you simply do not know how to change oil. However, emotions are part of our everyday life. Learning some basic emotional skills is a great way to serve your marriage.

Lisa and I did this by investing years of our lives (and lots of money) into letting your children experiment with activities and sports. Our son played almost every sport during his school years. Our daughter did voice lessons, cheerleading, piano, teen court and debate in high school. Every summer, Lisa had the children take lessons for something they never tried before: fencing, horseback riding, golf, baseball, tennis, guitar, drums and so on. By doing this, she was trying to let the children experience different activities to see if they had a gift in those areas.

As a parent, you almost instinctively think like this, because you want your child to be all that God called him or her to be. As servants toward our spouses, we should be excited to support their gifts.

These are gifts God has given to them. Now, I am not talking about running off and abandoning you and the family. I am talking about within reason, to allow your spouse to explore new things or engage in things they already enjoy.

Lisa and I are recent empty nesters. Lisa has had a gift for art throughout her life. When we dated, I remember encouraging her to take art classes, and she did amazing work. As we had children, they utilized her talent for art regularly with their projects. Now that the children are gone, Lisa got interested in painting on old windowsills. She is very good at it, so some Saturdays, we shop for old windowsills. As a servant spouse, you want to be aware of your spouse's talents and encourage them to experiment in life with various interests to discover latent talents.

In taking this approach, you may have to invest some time and money, just as you would have for your children. My experience

is, it is worth it to see my wife grow and become the woman God wants her to become.

As a couple, you will have to decide how much time or money is appropriate to invest in your own development. This will definitely shift as children become part of your marriage and as they leave. Seriously, you might need to get your calendars and phones out to see what is possible. However, I will say that in many of the marriages I have worked with, I have consistently seen that one person wants to learn, grow, adapt, change, educate and reeducate themselves about one or several topics, while that person's spouse is more bent toward staying the same, with no inward desire to grow or change unless a crisis demands such from them.

This is a matter of accepting each other as opposed to trying to change each other. In these circumstances, one person might request more time while the other refuses to evolve. This will take communication and agreement as you celebrate each other's desires. {eoa}

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, *Servant Marriage*. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, or on his Facebook, by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.