

What a Healthy Marriage Government Looks Like

Every week, I work with couples in my counseling office who have a variety of issues. One of the first things I ask the couple early on in their session is that they describe their government to me. This is referring to how they make decisions in their marriage. Most couples don't have a clear government in place, other than systems that manipulate or bully the other spouse.

I walk through some basic governments that could be a part of their decision-making process. These ideas are explained in more detail in my book, *The Ten-Minute Marriage Principle*. Firstly, they could be using a government system based on a monarchy. This is when one person is innately superior and makes all the decisions for the other spouse and the other obligingly carries out these directions. Another government system that some couples utilize is a theocracy. This is when both spouses try to figure out what God is saying and attempt to follow His direction.

A couple's government system that is based on a democracy is when both spouses are considered equal and they vote through their decisions. In a democracy or theocracy, it is good to establish how you break a tie vote or when you believe that each hears differently from God. Finally, there is a corporation. Here, both spouses are considered vice presidents over different areas of responsibility. Each has 100 percent authority over these assigned areas. They can consult each other, but they don't have to obey each other. They establish a board and they can add a person or couple to this board as needed. The board is for large decisions the couple needs to make.

What government are you operating in currently? I know for

some couples, it's more chaos than order. But now comes the fun part. For right now, let's presume you are both equal. How do you want to govern your marriage? You both can vote and come up with a government system that has more power than either one of you manipulating or bullying the other spouse.

Figuring out how you will make your decisions is critical for an optionally functioning marriage. You both deserve to have a clear way of knowing how you make decisions. Once you decide how you will do this, you will find that you will argue much less. Just take a moment and imagine a marriage with less conflict and more peace.

Now go a step further. Imagine a child being raised with less conflict within the family and knowing how decisions are made. Now imagine orderly marriages continuing to be passed down for the next several generations. That's when it gets exciting. Once you establish a government for the decisions made within your marriage, it is much more likely to be duplicated by others.

Imagine your grandchildren's children sitting down and deciding how they will govern themselves. Even better would be that they just govern well because that's just the way it's been in their family for generations. Be a blessing to those you love and decide what government thou art!

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