

Why Owning Up to Your Sins Will Transform You—And Your Marriage

Now, I know we all know that as Christians, we are sinners. Yet I travel all around the country speaking at marriage conferences in churches, and I can't tell you how many men and women have shared with me that their spouse never apologizes or asks for forgiveness.

To me, this is almost funny. I know even in a good marriage with two mature Christians that there's going to be sin at least weekly. For someone to be unable to identify his or her sin readily is truly denial. This kind of denial is awful for the other spouse.

Couples like to play the game "your sin is bigger than mine" or "only your sin counts." Well, I want to help you all out a little bit to get a practical handle on sin.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, "Love suffers long and is kind; love envies not; love flaunts not itself and is not puffed up, does not behave itself improperly, seeks not its own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails."

Wow, this Scripture is convicting. If I'm impatient, rude or selfish, I'm actually sinning. Yes, I told you we were all sinners.

You see you might be tempted to use this list on your spouse to measure how he or she is failing. Although that might be tempting, it won't help change you or your marriage.

Making an agreement to be humble is something you can practice that will have great impact on your marriage. You see, if you are more honest about your sins in your marriage, it changes things. As you develop a ritual of asking for forgiveness of your sins like, "Honey, I sinned again by getting angry," or "Honey, I need you to forgive me for not being patient," you begin to set up a new paradigm in your marriage. The paradigm is "I sin, and I need to acknowledge and own my sin."

Now honestly it may take time for this new way of believing, behaving and communicating to work its way into the fabric of your marriage. But once your spouse sees that you can be honest, it gives them a greater opportunity to be honest with you. For some of you, it may take weeks or months for you to believe that you sin and need to be forgiven, but continue to be consistent at it.

In the beginning, your spouse may not know even what to say, but give them time. Remember, after all, this is new behavior he or she is seeing from you.

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@.