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life advice

Overcoming Personal Fears in Marriage

Why fear (particularly from a job loss) should never dictate the positive forces in your marriage.

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Clear the clouds of fear and watch your day brighten.

You've been going along, happy as can be with your marriage. Then, in an instance, one single phrase meets lips, "I got fired."

It's a scary place. You ask yourself, "Will our marriage weather this financial storm? What if we start arguing about money morning-noon-night?! I hate arguing! What if the stress of it all tears the two of us apart?"

Caught in the maelstrom of these fears, you're either paralyzed or make poor decisions. You do nothing—which guarantees you'll be broke and desperate in short order, or you take the first job that comes along. A job you hate, which neither challenges your creativity nor rewards your talents.

Arguments ensue—stressed by everything you can barely breathe, and the joy seems to have bled totally out of your marriage. Not a pretty picture. But so many of us, much of the time, allow our lives to be run by fear rather than handling the situation and allowing our lives to be run by choice, self-respect and self-love.

Recognizing Fear

Instead of becoming paralyzed or panicked into poor decisions when "life happens," recognize that you are scared, forgive yourself for being scared (it's one of the instinctual emotions that serves us well in certain life-threatening conditions) and be willing to handle your fear.

How do you do that?

First, weed out the absurd fears. Do you really and truly believe in your heart-of-hearts that you will never find another job and will starve to death? Probably not. Are you 100 percent convinced that you and your spouse will start arguing 24/7? Unlikely. Do you really think that financial stress will tear your love to shreds? I doubt it.

Be truthful with yourself. Sort out what are the absurd fears—those with little genuine foundation—and which are the real fears, or the portion of your fears that feel real to you.

Second, dismantle those fears which remain. Ask yourself, "Which part of me is scared? The inner child part of me

who feels powerless? The parent part of me that wants me to do things the way I 'should' and blames me for 'failing' by getting downsized rather than letting me move on? What are my belief systems here? Do I believe in a nasty hostile world where there is so little opportunity for decent work I'll never get any? Why do I believe I'll never get any? Do I think so little of my talents and skills?" Work with the parts of you that stop you from growth, work with the beliefs you hold that get in your way. Dismantle your real fears by removing the beliefs and attitudes which hold them in place.

For example, it may seem difficult to find a new job, but if you focus on those qualities and talents you have, which could serve others and are of value, you will indeed discover that you do have what it takes to find work you love. Or at least enjoy enough to do with enthusiasm. Focusing on your qualities and talents will build your confidence to go out and find that work.

If a real fear that remains is that you'll argue with your beloved constantly over money in the face of financial stress, then talk with him/her about budgeting, work together to make decisions about how to handle various financial issues so there is no need to argue. Will you still experience stress? Of course. But there's a vast difference between stress, and Chicken Little running your life.

In other words, don't let fear stop you. It isn't fear that stands between you and your joy, but instead your willingness to let that fear stand unchallenged that gets in the way. Everyone gets scared. The only difference between successful people—be that successful in work, love or just plain life—and others, is that successful people don't let the fear stop them. Value yourself, love yourself enough to free yourself from your fears and make positive choices for yourself and your marriage.

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