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life advice

Wanting More Than Just an OK Marriage

Why saying or comparing your marriage to OK isn't really OK.

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August 2012



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Get off the rails of average and strive for much more with your marriage.

You're going along in your job, and it's OK. Not a wonderful job, not a terrible job, but just a job. It pays the rent, puts food on the table. It's OK.

You grouse a fair amount about it, complain about your boss, the hours, your salary, the commute, but hey, it's a job. It's OK.

You're going along in your marriage, and it's OK. Not a terrible marriage, Heavens no! Just not a great marriage, not a terrible marriage, but then, who's is?

You have a mate to go to the movies with, a spouse to share your bed with, it's OK. You grouse a fair amount about it, complain about your partner's bad habits, what you have to do to keep him or her happy, the lack of meaningful conversation, passion, genuine growth, but hey—it's a marriage. It's OK.

Except that your marriage is a huge part of your life, and when seen in that light, "OK" isn't really "OK."

Sometimes what's going on is this: "My marriage is OK *for now*. I'm handling as much as I want to at the moment, and even though I recognize my marriage isn't how I want it to be forever, I'm

content to let it be this way for now."

That's fine. You're aware of what you're doing. You have made a conscious decision to let things be for the moment. But most of the time, for too many of us, what's going on is this: "I'm too busy/preoccupied/lazy to really take stock of whether or not what is going on with my marriage is truly 'OK' with me. Maybe I'm too afraid of what I'll find if I look. Maybe I can't do any better than this, maybe I don't have what it takes to have a really deep-down satisfying marriage. Maybe I like grousing better than changing, because change scares me half to death. Maybe I can't admit any of this to myself so I'll make unhappy noises, but I'll stay with how things are."

And all that stays buried somewhere in your unconscious, while you muddle through life with things just being "OK."

Revolt! Rebel! Stand up for yourself! You deserve better than "OK." This is your life! Why spend it just making do? And rather than spin your wheels blaming your current marital condition on your spouse's real or imagined deficiencies, your parents' pathetic marital example, or some real or imagined flaw in your person, rise to the occasion!

Ask yourself a key question, "Where is this leading me?"

For example, if your marriage is ho-hum, filled with meaningless silences, boring conversations, and too little you enjoy doing together, ask yourself, "Where is this leading me?" Clearly to an unfulfilled and unfulfilling marital life. Again, get real. If this is truly what you want, fine. Quit complaining! But if it's not, bite the bullet and embrace change. Change how you behave within the marriage so the marriage becomes a more satisfying one.

Change how you view your spouse. Look for 10 things about your spouse that you can appreciate—genuinely, wholeheartedly—every day. Dwell on your courtship and honeymoon memories. Fantasize about how you'd like things to be with you and your husband or wife. Plan date nights, flirt with your spouse, explore new activities both of you could enjoy, deliberately seek out topics of conversation of interest to both of you.

The deceptively simple question, "Where is this leading me?" can be a profound life-changer. However many lives we may have, we are only aware of the one we are currently living. So make the best of it! Don't accept "It's OK" when you don't mean it. Challenge yourself to have the most fulfilling, happy, loving marriage you can create for yourself. It is one of life's best rewards.

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