

Honey, Please Come to Bed

Every night, thousands of spouses go to bed alone while their partners are at work, watching television, playing games, or doing chores. Is that such a big deal? Sometimes the already in-bed-spouse is so desperate for companionship he or she would cry out in great agony “Honey, please come to bed.”

One of the cardinal rules for happy relationships is spouses are to go to bed the same time at least three nights a week. Many couples do go to bed every night at the same time and this is to be the goal for all couples. However, due to work schedules, household chores, school assignments or even personality differences, it is not always possible for every spouse to go to bed with his or her partner at the same time. Therefore, couples are to intentionally plan, no matter the schedules or personality quirks, that at least three nights a week they will turn in for the night together. I’ve discovered that three nights a week can do the trick of keeping the marriage strong if during the other nights if it is understood that individuals are not just being selfish to do his or her thing or “killing” time to keep awake.

A SERIOUS WARNING

Here’s the warning. It does not matter your circumstance, work schedule or personality; if you are not going to bed at the same time with your spouse at least three nights a week, then your marriage is in big, big, trouble. It is a serious missing or weak link in the chain of love. There is absolutely no excuse not to be in bed with your partner at the same time at least three nights a week. This is so serious to the health of a relationship that one might need to change jobs to save a marriage.

Here is the dangerous reality. One or both spouses may not even be aware that this simple behavior is having a serious impact on the marriage. They might have been raised in a family where mom and dad never went to bed together and they did not recognize that their parents had a problem. In very traditional relationships, usually one spouse believes (usually the wife) that it is “normal” or “okay” for a husband to go to bed when he wants to even though she is unhappy with it. They might even stay together until death, but they would not enjoy maximized romance and passion in the relationship. It is as though they would have had a life-long “common cold” and “stuffy nose” and not do anything about it. Since they could still “breathe” they do nothing about it. However, they are not aware that not sufficient “oxygen” is going to the brain and filling the lungs to provide optimum health. Thus, they live with a potentially debilitating disease, thinking it is okay. This is not what marriage is all about.

In 2009 I wrote that “the spouses that sleeps together understands, heals, grows, and stays together.” This is true because many couples grow apart and are not aware of it until it is too late. Not going to bed together is often of the sign that they are growing apart. Research by the Gottman Institute “shows that many marriages end due to loss of intimacy and connection, especially 10 to 12 years into the relationship. But a “silent drift apart” typically starts much earlier: One person starts to feel unhappy with the lack of closeness in the relationship—less connection, less intimacy, less conversation, less time spent together, less appreciation, etc.” This may be manifested by not going to bed together.” The research indicates that “about three-and-half years into a relationship, couples also tend to stop going to bed at the same time.” Things begin to get stale and they refuse to recognize it.

Research Jeffrey Laron states: "Couples whose wake and sleep patterns were mismatched (e.g., an evening person married to a morning person) reported significantly less marital adjustment, more marital conflict, less time spent in serious conversation, less time spent in shared activities and less frequent sexual intercourse than matched couples."

There is certainly something special about going to get the same time or what I would call turning in for the night the at the same time. You enjoy more intimacy. You learn that it is okay just being close without sex on the agenda. You learn to understand each other better. Here is the research indicates about another reason to go to bed at the same time. "It makes female partners view daytime interactions more positively the next day. It's pretty amazing that such a simple, easy gesture of togetherness provides a female partner with rose-colored glasses for the following day's interactions. For male partners, simply getting a good night's sleep makes them feel more positive about interactions with partners the next day

Here's another important point. Going to bed the same time also means falling asleep close to each other. Research tells us the couples who fall asleep within one inch from each other are more content than those who are thirty inches apart. The night's pillow talks, or chatting are also key to connecting in the relationship. Making sure the cell phone is not in the room or unplugging the land phone is key in respecting and honoring the relationship.

Here is another big mistake. There are far too many couples who have a child sleeping with them in the bed. It is not healthy. It inhibits intimacy. Not just sexual intimacy, but intellectual and emotional intimacy. Some couples really do not know how to handle long hours together alone. The child becomes an excuse for going to bed long after the other spouse does to minimize conversation. Thus, sex, when it does happen, becomes mechanical and less romantic.

My request is that couples reexamine their marriages. If partners are not going to bed the same time, make it an intentional, deliberate effort to do so. You will never regret it. You may need counseling to help remove the "debris" that's causing the divide. Spouses, do not ignore the pleas to "come to bed, honey." If you do, your marriage will be in trouble. If you must change job and even get less money to save you marriage, then do so. Your relationship is priceless. This simple act will work miracles in your relationship. "Honey, please come to bed."

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