

## **Solutions to couple's problems**

You can help improve your relationship challenges by:

- \* Recognizing that relationship problems are normal. Most people have never been taught how to succeed as a couple. This is a bit like trying to fix a car with no knowledge of mechanics.
- \* Recognizing the fact that you need information or advice about relationships at the very least, and to see a qualified therapist well trained as a couple's counsellor. Check out improve my relationship and make me into an excellent partner! to get some immediately helpful ideas.
- \* People who read self-help books without the help of expertise have a poor track record of successfully making changes. Knowledge is one thing, being able to create change is another.
- \* Appreciate that information is not enough. Because our buttons being pushed has its origins in our relationship history, this must be explored, understood, owned and worked with at an emotional level.
- \* Commit to discovering what really goes on in your relationship, why the dynamics are repetitive, that it is taking two of you to perform the current tango, and both must be fully engaged to change old habits. You will find that marriage behaviours will alert you to your style of behaving in conflictual situations.
- \* Committing to the long haul. Relationship dynamics are usually a long time in the making, and require time, strong intention, and a collaborative effort to change positively.
- \* Committing to practicing at home strategies learned in therapy. Saving your marriage is all about communicating in new ways, adopting new attitudes towards your partner's unique personality style, and understanding self and other better.
- \* Recognizing that when a relationship hits turbulence, it's less a reflection on the participants, and more a reflection on a shortfall in training about what must be done to make a relationship work.

\* Learning more about yourself. Because we each bring baggage from our past to a relationship, noticing how we react under relationship stress is essential so that we can learn to manage those reactions more productively. Learning the art of creating a constructive marriage is essential. Check out the article [Tips for a Successful Relationship](#).

### **Solutions that don't work:**

\* Doing more of what drives a wedge between you. Notice what you do that upsets your partner, and consider whether or not more of this will help save your marriage.

\* Showing contempt, being critical, stonewalling, being defensive, or being belligerent have all been shown to be predictors of imminent divorce. Read [Save your marriage to learn more](#).

\* Wanting to be right, or placing an emphasis on being right when you disagree with your partner, is often an indication that you're barking up the wrong tree. The world is awash with divorced people who had all the answers.

\* Emotions are a guidance system, indicating what is going on for you in your relationship. Rather than ignoring them, or rubbing them, successful couples use their feelings to alert them to the need to communicate constructively.

\* Neither pursuing your partner, nor withdrawing, are successful ways to manage conflict. Read the article [which explains why](#), and offers better alternatives to driving your relationship towards divorce. [Save your marriage](#) offers grim insight into those habitual and undermining behaviours that you just can't afford to let rip on your partner.

\* Ignoring a disagreement - walking away from the problem. This approach leaves festering emotions, greater distrust, and greater insecurity about the relationship. Over time, hurt, resentment and anger will build. Each of these slowly, like a cancer, eats away at the love that originally dominated the relationship.

Read many more excellent articles about relationships from the developer of Emotionally Focused Therapy, Dr Sue Johnson. Read her blog at <http://blog.holdmetight.net/>