

Marriage and Honesty

Humans are not particularly honest creatures. We pretend we are, but really in the end, when we pile up all the individual little "I didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings" lies, we aren't brazenly honest at all. Is this a bad thing? Is being honest with your spouse 100% of the time a really good idea? Aren't there times when we shouldn't spill our guts, not even to our spouse? Or should we pride ourselves on being completely honest all the time no matter what? Unfortunately, honesty isn't as black and white of a topic as it should be.

Do you offer up to your spouse that the first time the two of you were sexually intimate it was rather disappointing, especially since it has gotten so much better? What good does that do? Is that different than if it is still continuously disappointing? Then what?

Most psychologists claim that if there is something to be gained on the scale of overall positive, then it is definitely worth being completely open with a spouse. However, most psychologists claim that if there is absolutely nothing to be gained on either side of the relationship, you may be fishing in dangerous waters.

Honesty can be a complicated subject. Honesty is in fact a cornerstone of a healthy relationship, and for most topics it is vital that honesty is laid out on the table. Being dishonest about something from the past, your true feelings about important topics, and your ultimate desires is naturally a cataclysmic event waiting to happen. Sucking down your husband's first attempt at cooking dinner isn't necessarily a bad lie, but then again you're probably going to have to suck it down again the next time he tries to be sweet.

So where is that magic line between knowing when to be honest, which is more than likely to result in hurt feelings, and when to pull back and allow an assumption to be made or even telling a bold face lie?

Lies are dangerous. Once you start with the little lies which make things easier and save feelings from absorbing pain, it becomes easier to tell lies just to make things easier. Then of course there are the lies that are told to cover up the lies that were meant to just make things a little easier. Before you know it, you're going to need a little black and white composition book to keep the lies straight. How incredibly disrespectful is all this lying to the spouse you're intending not to hurt?

Being able to rely on a spouse, whether it's a simple subtle suggestion to reconsider the clothes you thought were a good idea to wear to work to knowing that they'll call you on your behavior when you're wrong, is a vital piece of any healthy relationship. It's part of what keeps us accountable and in a state of healthy growth. There is of course a significant difference between having open and honest discussions which lead to growth and being a "yes" spouse. Honesty flows in both directions, from voicing a feeling about a situation to disagreeing with the other's viewpoint. Honesty is about maintaining the integrity of each person in the relationship, which in turn maintains the integrity of the relationship.

Some people believe in a 100% honest relationship. However, most people can't really handle 100% honesty all of the time. The majority of people fall into more of an 85-90% honesty range. This means they choose to ignore the dinner that was marginally edible and they haven't made a fuss about the ten extra pounds their spouse has put on and they simply avoid topics that would just be hurtful with no resolution at the end.

There is no denying that honesty can be painful, both for the individual delivering honesty as well as the individual receiving the honesty. Yet keeping honest thoughts and feelings inside to avoid conflict often results in the blurring out of an honest feeling during a heated moment. Now, on top of the original argument, there is an additional issue piled on to already sensitive feelings coupled with the fact that you obviously lied about it before. This can get messy. Being honest with your spouse is vital to opening communication. Even when honesty and truths make people momentarily uncomfortable, it is vital to open communication and to resolving conflicts which can ultimately mean the difference between developing a strong relationship and growing apart to the point of no return.

About the Author

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