



More Marital Myths (Don't Go to Bed Angry)

Probably one of the most commonly heard pieces of marital advice that we hear before we get married is “never go to bed angry.” Sounds innocent enough, right? Well, even this one can get us into trouble if we go into our marriage expecting that all the problems that come up within the relationship should be solved before bed.

The truth is, in marriages, we face both solvable and insolvable problems. Solvable problems are ones that don't usually involve deeper seated needs, and they don't usually generalize beyond the situation. For instance, your partner's responsibilities in the household are not being managed due to the increase in job responsibilities at work. This is a solvable problem. With healthy communication, respectful and gentle start-ups, you can find a solution to this.

Unsolvable problems are ones that reflect parts of our personalities or general temperaments and are considered stable personal traits. For instance, your partner is passionate and emotionally expressive when dealing with his or her feelings, whereas you may be quiet and reflective, preferring a less intense emotional debate. These aspects of your personality are likely not going to change and are simply parts of your relationship to which you will have to learn to adjust.

Amongst solvable problems, finding creative solutions and learning to work together to adopt new standards, values and ideas that address each of our needs doesn't always come quickly. In fact, many of these problems can take a lot of time and patience to arrive at the best solutions. Though some solvable issues seem less difficult, even petty at times, they are sometimes better left for the morning when we have rested, collected our thoughts and calmed our minds. With time, comes perspective.

Couples can get into trouble when they continue to debate an issue when their emotions are strong. During these times, it is hard to be our best self. We have trouble showing empathy and a perspective of “we-ness” where we are looking at how to find common ground that lets the relationship win. Renowned marriage researcher, Dr. John Gottman teaches us that when our heart rate exceeds 100 beats per minute, as it often does when we are angry, we are less likely to handle conflict well. So, whether petty or great, solvable or not, when you think of not going to bed angry, *try to not let that be an expectation for your relationship problems to be solved, but rather, a goal for your own inner peace to be present through your problems.*

“Be completely humble and gentle; Be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:2-3)