

Coaching: Marriage Matters



Week 5

Giving and Receiving in Marriage

In a healthy marriage, there is a balance of giving and receiving. When the balance of giving and receiving is not proportionate, there's the likelihood that unnecessary stress and unhappiness will occur.

For instance, think of a pond. When water flows into a pond more than it flows out, the pond may become stagnant, toxic, or full of sediment; it might even overflow and cause damage to its surroundings. More so, if the water flowing out of the pond is not adequately replenished, the pond may become dry and unable to provide in times of drought.

A solid marriage is one where the commitment to the relationship sees beyond whatever may be missing at the moment. Ideally, marriage is a reciprocation of affection, respect, work sharing, and fidelity, but this will not always be the case. There will be times in any marriage when one member of the couple will fail the other or when one partner in the marriage will “carry” the other by “taking up the slack” either emotionally, financially, spiritually, or physically.

Giving is not just about buying something shiny or new for your partner. The greatest forms of giving actually take place when you gift your partner with encouragement, affection, acknowledgment, comfort, assistance, etc. Giving also happens when you shower your partner with the gifts of forgiveness, compassion, respect—and when you pardon your partner if they're having a crummy day.

It's also important to be aware that should you or your spouse become chronically needy or excessively benevolent, these extremes will not only affect the emotional ecology of the relationship but can dramatically affect the “give and take” balance that is needed for the maintenance of a healthy marriage.

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