

MAXIMIZE YOUR *Marriage*



What to Do When Your Spouse is
Getting On Your Nerves

COUPLE'S GUIDE



Take a second to think and ask yourself this question:

“Am I really annoyed by my spouse? Or the situation?”

Then determine - in the grand scheme of things, is it a big deal, or is it small stuff that is magnified during this time? Does it just bug me? Or is it a big deal? **Is it a real problem or an inconvenience to be managed?**

If you are clear that it's something you want to talk about with your spouse, do it. But, when you go into the conversation, remind yourself that you are talking with the one you love. **You can be annoyed and still behave in a loving manner.**

4 Strategies for a Drama Free Conversation

- 1 Determine the best time to have a conversation** - It could be early in the morning, later in the evening, or on a walk outside without your children.
- 2 Make sure you are rested** - When you're tired, your fuse is shorter and it makes problem solving more complicated.
- 3 Focus on one thing** - Guard against bringing multiple topics to the conversation. It becomes overwhelming when you go in too many directions.
- 4 Listen to understand** - Most of us listen to respond. Instead, try listening to understand your spouse. The goal here is to make sure you get as much information as possible before moving forward in the conversation.

PRO-TIP Ask questions, avoid being defensive, and really consider what is being said. Be willing to look at yourself. Being self-aware is healthy and helpful to your relationship.

Imagine if what your spouse says is true... and after some self-reflection, you know it's true. Say to them, “You know what, you're right. I have/have not been doing *(insert thing here)*. Thank you for bringing it to my attention. I'm really going to work on changing that.” You'll be surprised how changing one thing can change the tone of your marriage relationship.

Remember this: *It takes two to tango, but only one to change the dance.*

If You Find Yourself Struggling to Move Forward with an Issue...

- Hit the **Pause Button** on your conversation for 20-30 minutes and then try to come back together and talk through the issue again.
- Remember that even if it's important to your spouse but not necessarily to you, **it is still a conversation worth having.**
- **Choose to respond** versus react.
- Apologies are powerful - if you know you went into attack mode, **own it and be willing to say, "I am sorry."**

Use These Discussion Questions to Get Started

1. When we are communicating about our differences, I would say **I'm more likely to...**

A) stuff whatever is bothering me.

B) spew all over you in the moment.

C) wait for a good time for us to have a conversation about the issue.

2. When you're getting on each other's nerves, especially at this moment in time, **list three things you think would really help you** to process the situation and move forward as a couple.

(Note: It might be helpful to watch the video again or to refer to the notes at the beginning of this guide.)

3. Being able to talk about ways we annoy each other can be challenging. **My biggest barrier to us** having a great conversation is that if I'm not careful I will...

A) blame you.

B) shut down and go silent because I hate conflict.

C) pursue you to talk about whatever the issue is even if you aren't ready to talk about it because I want a resolution as quickly as possible.

D) take responsibility for something that isn't mine just so we don't have to talk about it anymore.

E) say, "What's the point." Then stuff the issue, start keeping score and become really sarcastic with you.

F) not say a word. I will be angry on the inside and every time we are in the same room together, I will only see the negative in you.

4. In the video, Chris & Gena talked about the importance of being on the same team as a couple. The goal is to be respectful to each other, even when your spouse is getting on your last nerve. **Discuss some ground rules you would like to live by when it comes to engaging in difficult conversations with each other.**

5. What does it look like to show "**empathy and grace**" in your marriage?

If you're feeling really brave... take turns answering this question: "What do I do that annoys you or bothers you?"