

Step 4

Examining Partnership and Marriage



Marriage

A general definition of marriage is that it is a social contract between two individuals that unites their lives legally, economically and emotionally. Being married also gives legitimacy to sexual relations within the marriage. When a betrayal of trust is broken between two people, and both have decided to give the relationship a second chance, it is important to understand and see clearly the process of the marriage framework.

The most common stages of the marriage process are:

- Just married
- Parenting
- Empty nest
- Midlife
- Grandparenting
- Retirement
- Widow/Widower
- Life alone

If you understand the process a marriage goes through, then you will be better equipped to address the necessary changes that you will both need to make in 'moving on' together after a betrayal has occurred.

So, what should this strategy contain?

- Your hopes and dreams (however large or small) for your new future life together
- Your new expectations of each other

- Whether you intend moving house or staying put (some people prefer to move house after a betrayal in order to have a completely fresh start)
- Mutual finances (how should they be proportioned?)
- Mutual families (do you tell them of the betrayal—do they already know? Your strategy should say how you intend to deal with this issue).
- Hobbies and interests (both mutual and individual hobbies and interests)
- Career and educational opportunities (for both of you)
- Health Insurance (for the family)

Successful Marriages and Partnerships

Marriage has traditionally been understood as a social contract between a man (husband) and a woman (wife).

Successful marriages and partnerships are based on a solid emotional foundation. The range of emotional and physical states that a long-term marriage/partnership experiences will be exactly the same when you are 'moving on' from a betrayal. They are as follows:

- You make a decision to love one another
- You identify and arrange suitable financial arrangements
- You decide how frequently you visit your respective families
- You decide how to address family planning
- You decide how you will raise your children
- You decide who will do what in respect of domestic chores
- You discuss your sexual preferences

- You devise a strategy on how to address stress and pressure when it is present
- You discuss career decisions
- You will discuss and decide how to respect each others friends and hobbies

Types of Marriage

In today's modern world there exist different styles of marriage:

- Love matches
- Arranged marriages
- Remarriages
- Second, third, or later marriages
- Cousin marriage
- Same sex marriages
- Prison marriages (death row marriages)

In the 'moving on' stage of your relationship when you both decide that you want to try again you are essentially, reforming a partnership. This new partnership should be equal, loving, and have healthy boundaries to allow for growth. To form a healthy partnership, you both need to share your innermost thoughts and feelings so that you can put together a mutually satisfying strategy that is based on the truth as both of you see it. It is essential that you both communicate to each other what exactly it is you want from your relationship after a betrayal has occurred.

Partnership

It is difficult to give a clear definition of a partnership, but the essential ingredients are:

- To achieve something you could not do alone
- To pool skills and other resources
- To have a shared vision of your goals

- To work together to reach your goals
- To devise a long-term formal structure
- To devise a short-term agreement

The benefits of a business partnership are as follows:

- To share ideas
- To share joint finances
- To be aware of joint ambitions
- To bring two sets of skills into the partnership
- To be supportive, loyal and committed
- To learn to see things through someone else's eyes

When both partners work toward the same objective, it can be achieved faster than doing it alone. The joining of the marriage criteria and the business partnership criteria make for a substantial foundation for your new future together. If it is possible to stick to the agreed points on both fronts, then you will both have planned for a future to look forward to.

On your journey through your life, you can, and probably already have, encountered major problems.

Here are some negative examples:

- The possibility of bankruptcy
- The possibility of infidelity/Betrayal
- The possibility of illness (parents or children)
- The possibility of losing your job
- The possibility of financial difficulties
- The possibility of sexual problems
- The possibility of irreconcilable opinions
- The possibility of extended family disputes
- The possibility of early death

I am sure you can think of many more. Why don't you both use this opportunity to go back in your memory and talk over some of the difficult experiences you have already sur-

vived together? See this step as an opportunity to reevaluate the decisions you both arrived at during those stressful times. Ask each other, 'if the same experience recurred now, would your answer be different?' Remember we are all wise in hindsight.

