

Healthy Marriage Tips from A to Z
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Selfless

Symbiotic relationships - Matt's Thoughts

Just a reminder in case you forgot: The universe does not revolve around you...It revolves around me. HaHa and Ouch because that's what I'm constantly fighting. I need the reminder found in Philippians 2:4, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

When the universe revolves around me, then the relationships I form are self-serving. I befriend someone who is an encourager in order to stroke my ego. I spend time with another so that it will make me look good. I get married for what I'm going to get out of it. God's design is best, where a relationship sharpens both people (Proverbs 27:17).

At our family trip to the Omaha Zoo this summer, I learned about the three different symbiotic relationships - parasitism, commensalism and mutualism. Symbiosis is "the living together in more or less intimate association or close union of two dissimilar organisms" (from merriam-webster.com). (It makes me laugh when I connect symbiosis to marriage as the "union of two dissimilar organisms.")

Let's each evaluate our role in our symbiotic marriage relationships while defining the three types. Does your role fall into the category of parasitism where you are living entirely for yourself to the detriment of your spouse? Maybe commensalism sounds more like the way you treat your spouse. You obtain benefits from the other organism in your more or less intimate association while you neither damage nor benefit them...even roommates should perform better. If you are, instead, selflessly laying your life down for your spouse and your spouse is doing the same, then you are practicing mutualism- a mutually beneficial relationship. Healthy marriages are mutualistic relationships where you serve and sharpen one another because you are selfless.

True Joy - Laura's Thoughts

I have found that when I am truly seeking to live selflessly, that is when I am most joyful. Ironic, isn't it? I would think that my happiness would overflow each time I am able to get my own way and do things exactly the way *I* want to do them, *thankyouverymuch*.

It is okay to allow yourself to be served, to be encouraged by others, to spend time with people who will make you a better person. But if your heart is focused on self - getting, doing and having things your way - and not on what you can give, do and share with others, you will never experience true joy.

It's a beautiful thing when a husband and wife both seek to serve one another selflessly. Needs are met, bitterness and anger fade away, and true peace and joy fill the home.

Selflessness begins with you. Who are you living for?

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