

ALTERNATIVE REACTIONS TO AN UNHAPPY SPOUSE¹

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1. **LET** the husband or wife have some time and expense money for hobbies, continuing education classes, trips, or any relatively safe arena that allows for discovery of suppressed talents, skills, and enjoyments.
2. **BE** careful to not allow the husband or wife to be cast in a role of mama or papa. Remind them on occasion that you are not their mama or papa and you don't want them to be your mama or papa.
3. **WHATEVER** hobby or program your partner chooses for them self allow it to belong to them. Do NOT try to get too involved. Allow them the freedom away from you so they can become involved in their own activity. Ask enough questions to show interest, but do not become an inquisitor. It's OK to join in with them on occasion when they ask. Refrain from pressuring them to ask.
4. **LET** your husband or wife find a part-time-job or some other activity that propels them outside the home. This gives them a sense of freedom in spreading their wings.
5. **DATE!** Allow the sensible teenager inside the both of you to take over and go on some fun dates together. Kick-up your heels and try different activities that are appropriate. Let your fun be spontaneous and uninhibited within both of your moral and Biblical boundaries. At least one date night a week is recommended. If your partner is willing, have a romantic weekend out of town each month without the children.
6. **BE** sensitive to your mate when he or she is being flippant, sarcastic, or too serious. This behavior usually means they are upset about something else. On occasion, it is alright to say, "*It sounds like your upset. Would you like to talk about it?*" Try to not criticize or condemn the other when you do not agree with their comments or actions. There will be time for adjustments later.
7. **WHEN** the other becomes critical, identify your reactions. Are you feeling intense negative emotions, such as anger, betrayal, misunderstanding, unwanted, etc. In prayer, ask God to show you the sources of these feelings. A Christian Therapist can help you with identifying past strongholds that need to be torn down.
8. **TAKE** on some of the chores the partner may be dropping. This is within reason, because it is still important for each of you to continue being responsible to current obligations.
9. **REMEMBER** that God is able to keep your partner until they find their individual identity.
10. **INCREASE** your prayer and worship time. "*O LORD, I have come to you for protection; don't let me be put to shame. Rescue me, for you always do what is right.*" (Psalm 31:1 NLT)

Characteristics of a Good Marriage

- ⤴ Healthy expectations of marriage
- ⤴ A realistic concept of love
- ⤴ A positive attitude and outlook toward life
- ⤴ The ability to communicate their feelings
- ⤴ An understanding and acceptance of their gender differences
- ⤴ The ability to make decisions and settle arguments
- ⤴ A common spiritual foundation and goal²

¹Adapted from Sandford, John & Paula, *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, pp 346-7, Victory House, Inc., Tulsa, OK, 1982.

²Les and Leslie Parrott, "The SYMBIS Approach to Marriage Education," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 31 (2003): 208– 212. Parrott, Les; Leslie Parrott (2009-05-18). *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before---and After---You Marry* (Kindle Locations 2248-2249). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.