

## *Managing Differences In Marriage*

Differences refer to how different you and your spouse are in terms of personality, temperament, preferences, likes and dislikes, views, opinions etc.

If this major challenge is not addressed correctly, it may cause offence, arguments and fights between spouses. You have heard of the old adage that 'opposites attract'. Well, that's only half true.

The complete truth is that over time, whatever trait that initially attracted a couple to one another may eventually become something that annoys each of them. In other words, when you were dating, you saw the differences in your spouse as something interesting, intriguing or attractive.

Also, the fact that you were more patient and forgiving in those days caused you to overlook whatever faults those traits may have contained. The question is how do you handle these different traits between you and your spouse that now drives you up the wall?

Conflicts, challenges, disagreements, and difficulties: they are inevitable in every marriage. As a matter of fact, most marriages have at least three irreconcilable differences.

There are two issues couples most frequently argue about:  
Money and children

There are a number of other common clashing differences, including:

- In-Laws & Extended Family Involvement
- Balance Between Home & Work
- Communication Patterns
- Sexual Intimacy
- Personal Habits
- Sharing Household Responsibilities
- Outside Friendships
- Political Views
- Debt Difficulties
- Disciplining Children

So how can we make these differences work FOR us?

It's not all about resolving our differences that make the difference; it's how we manage them that determine marital success! Learning how to manage differences respectfully is part of making a good marriage even better.

Just a few things to remember while we attempt to MANAGE our differences:

### **Differences are Not Deficiencies**

Let's embrace them not try to eliminate them!

Have you ever heard the saying that you cannot raise a grown person all over again. Or, when I marry him/her, I'll change them.

The goal here is not to change your spouse, but to embrace the differences and find a way to work with those differences.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made by God himself. While you may think God made a mistake when making your spouse, He did not!!

### Prevent & Eliminate the Negative

Not every issue needs to be raised. Simply loving and caring deeply for our spouse may prevent many things from ever becoming issues.

For example, maybe we could let go of the dishes left in the sink----- at least they made it to the sink! This is one example of something that probably doesn't need to be addressed if it is not a constant problem.

Let me offer some more tips on managing the differences between you and your spouse:

1. Look at annoying differences as opportunities to practice patience and see things from another point of view and in so doing, learn something new.
2. Look at your spouse's habits as traits that make him or her unique and adjust yourself to suit him or her as far as possible.

I know a husband who loves to be outdoors and whose wife is a homemaker--- she loves being inside. She is not terribly interested in anything that is going on outside. He much rather be outside doing something----anything but staying in the house. **HOW CAN THEY MANAGE THIS DIFFERENCE?**

3. Compromise without insisting that you understand each other.

You may never fully understand why your spouse is the way he or she is. You just need to accept it. So how can you compromise with your spouse?

**Compromising with your spouse can come in many ways. It may be doing things one spouse's way at certain times and the other spouse's way at other times.**

**It may be doing something neutral that is neither spouse's preference. Whatever form it takes, do it to be fair to both of you. This also becomes a good example to your children in how to create win-win situations when individuals disagree.**

### **Conclusion**

**No two human beings are completely alike in every way, not even identical twins. Differences between you and your spouse need not drive a wedge into your relationship. If you are broad-minded and willing to make compromises, these differences can strengthen your marriage instead of breaking it up. Be mature in your attitude towards differences you have with your spouse. This will ensure a sound and happier marriage for you and your spouse.**

*Remember: When you know better, Do better.*

*Bro. and Sis. Nelson*