

Faulty Belief: Marriage is the End of My Fun and Freedom

**Groundhog
Process**



Step #1

Identify the Problem

Take a couple minutes to reflect on or write out your responses to these questions:

1. To what degree do you believe your fun and freedom ends with your marriage?

We must						Not that important
<input type="checkbox"/>						

2. What images or thoughts come to mind when you think of the fun and freedom ending when married?

3. What type of feeling do you get when you think of your fun and freedom ending with your marriage?

4. What does it mean for you that your fun and freedom ends with your marriage?

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5. What is your level of comfort when you think of the fun and freedom ending with your marriage?

Comfortable					Uncomfortable
<input type="checkbox"/>					

Introduction

Have you ever reflected on the purpose of Bachelor or Bachelorette parties? In the USA it is a common tradition that friends of the male and female respectively throw a party for each person before the wedding. The party often involves raucous behavior where those in attendance “let loose” in a variety of ways. It’s like the last hurrah before the marriage.

It would appear the underlying message is: This is your last chance; your last chance to have some “fun” to be “free.” After all, once you are married, responsibilities kick in and you will have little chance to “let go” again. You are getting married and tying the knot – a very interesting choice of words!

Although a couple often anticipates the marriage with positive expectations and celebrates the wedding, the underlying thought is; my life will be much much different. It’s time to grow up and enter the world of responsibility whether it is children, vocation or meeting the needs of another.

There is a sense in which a person often believes that s/he must put aside the carefree and unrestrained single life.

For some, I believe it is carried a little further. One may subtly think that his/her life not only loses its freedom and capacity for spontaneity, but it must be subjugated to the wishes of another. My very self will be shoved away and aside.

Of course, most do not entertain these thoughts before the marriage. (Although my experience in premarital counseling tells me that more have these thoughts than most know.) However, as the “demands” of married life are assumed these fears of loss of self emerge, whether it is 5, 10, 20 or 25 years down the marital road.

Another dilemma for the newly married couple is observing the married people around them.

They often observe married couples who struggle. They have friends who recently married describe the frustration and conflict they encounter. The marriages that struggle and endure with pain far outnumber those they observe that offer life and health to the couple. Reality indicates to them that just perhaps marriage will be difficult.

Or, the recently married couple will observe the “perfect married couple.” Everything about this couple seems ideal. They do perfectly what married couples are to do. By looking at them interact; you would never know they have problems.

However, intuitively such a couple often seems fairly plastic and contrived. They play the roles of a happily married couple, but each person seems to lack the spark which comes from being accepted as a fully unique person in that marriage. They play the roles, but their “selves” are submerged under the perfect roles they play. They seem to have lost their humanity.

Good sex and intimacy will die the longer we are married is another latent belief. It is expected, especially if they talk to other married couples, that the marriage will grow “cold.” The passion will fade. The advent of children, the pressures of vocation and intrusion of a number of factors will dull the senses.

At some point we will be too tired, too overwhelmed, too busy to have good sex.

I will lose my passion, my excitement and my spontaneity as I give to my spouse, my children, my work and my community.

The underlying fear seeps through one’s self; I will lose more in this marital process than I personally will gain.



Step #2

Seek out new information

Imagine the difference you would experience living out these beliefs about marriage:

- ✓ I can fearlessly express myself fully in the marriage (I’m not talking about rage here.)
- ✓ I have full confidence my spouse will value me; my warts, my idiosyncrasies, and me in my bad moments.
- ✓ Marriage is a great catalyst for me to be more productive and effective in my vocation, as a parent, as a friend and in all arenas I choose to enter.
- ✓ I can feel free to express my needs directly and work out ways to get them met, without feeling needy or without resentment arising.
- ✓ Marriage is a place that can free us from our neediness and patterns that debilitate and push others away.
- ✓ Marriage will enable us to explore more deeply and with complete trust our sexual needs and desires and to feel more erotic and passionate with each other. My sexual life will be more fulfilling.
- ✓ We will feel like a team in our marriage, enabling us to create and do more together than either of us ever could alone.
- ✓ Marriage gives me the freedom to experiment and try out new behaviors and express different aspects of myself in a safe and loving environment.
- ✓ Marriage enables me to laugh and smile more.

The exercise in the ebook is intended to move you in that direction.

Reflection:

Which of the above distinctions speaks most powerfully about marriage limiting your fun and freedom?

What has this been like for you?



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Step #3

Shifts to Implement

In the next step of the Ground Hog Process you begin to make the mental shifts that you will place you on a more productive and effective path to marriage and love construction or reconstruction.

The constructive belief may not make full sense to you at this point. However as you proceed through the rebuilding steps you will see and experience the validity and power of each constructive belief.

Take a couple moments to place a checkmark in the box that most closely fit where you are now relative to the two opposing beliefs.

Destructive Belief	Check what you believe now			Constructive Belief	
I must walk on eggshells.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I fear rejection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex is a chore.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We always fight.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We are a team.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am so needy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Been there, done that with my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm worn out.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a great deal of energy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you want to take this a little further:

List other shifts you would like to make:

	→	
	→	
	→	
	→	
	→	
	→	



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Step #4

Engage Self

I do not want you at this point to share your findings and thoughts with your spouse or partner.

You engage you. You don't engage the other.

Engage yourself means spending some time in the next day or two consciously and intentionally thinking about the above exercise; specifically the distinctions and shifts you desire.

Shift your focal point away from him/her to a degree. This, in itself, may be a significant shift. (Be aware that s/he will probably notice and may react. If able, plan your response if s/he reacts.)

Choose one shift and give that shift your full attention. What would that shift feel like? What would you be doing as you make that shift? What would that shift bring to you?

Reflect on and Answer these questions:

I will be most aware of these new distinctions and/or shifts at this time and place during the next day.

I will use this trigger (mantra: I will do this, word: power, feel good, etc., rubber band around wrist, etc.) to keep me on track.



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Step #5

**How did I enhance my personal
power and/or voice?**

Reflect on and Answer these Questions:

Evaluate what it was like to spend a day or two focusing on your desired shift and the distinctions you are beginning to make.

Notice any changes you experience in terms of your personal power, feelings and thoughts about yourself.

Remember, you are just beginning. Don't be upset or alarmed if you find it difficult to pinpoint change and shifts.

Employing the Ground Hog Process for most takes a number of attempts. It gradually will become part of you. And, when it becomes part of you, you will have it for life.

These questions will help you evaluate your experience:

On a scale of 1-10 (10 being as bad as it can get) I now rate my bad feelings as _____.

I notice this new thought coming to mind after the engagement.

I notice this new image coming to mind after the engagement.

I notice this feeling _____ located in this part of my body
_____ emerging after the engagement.

I now think this of myself after the engagement.
