

But I Don't Want A Divorce!
**What To Do Right Now To Keep Your Spouse From Leaving You and To Build A
Better Life Together.**

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

What if you were called into your boss's office and told that s/he was thinking about letting you go, that you were not fulfilling your job responsibilities, and that you were holding the company back rather than helping the company grow and prosper?

Yes, you might be shocked or stunned. You might also already realize that you have not been working any where near your potential, that you have been somewhat disengaged from the company and just "putting in time" until retirement.

How would you react? You might say, "fine, I can find a new job at age 63". Or you might start the negotiations to save your job. After really considering it, you might really want to save your job, even when you haven't been that invested in it for years. Let's say that for whatever reason, you decide that you want to save your job. What would you do to accomplish that? What would you be willing to do? If you think you might be willing to do anything to save your job, how would you go about doing that?

You might try to identify the areas where you are dropping the ball. The boss has probably already spoken to you about these "issues" on more than one occasion. You might think back to remember the feedback s/he has given you. What does your boss want you to change about how you represent the business or how you conduct business? Once you identify all the issues at hand, would you begin to change your behavior to fit the expectations of the company and/or the boss? Would you change a little, just to get him/her off your back? Or would you seek to really change?

What if you had some skill deficits? Would you make excuses about not being able to change because of your discomfort with not being competent in some area? Would you approach learning those skills as cramming for a test in school, where whatever was learned will immediately be abandoned as soon as it is no longer "needed". Or would you learn what you needed to know in order to get the immediate job done, and have a new skill set to improve your life overall?

If you have indicated that you would go the extra mile on all these questions, what would you do if the same event was occurring in your marriage? What if you spouse told you that s/he is not happy and is considering divorce? You might go through some of the same processes and face some of the same issues. Perhaps, the two of you have a history of getting to this point, negotiating and winning a reprieve from abandonment, then briefly changing (and not much change, at that). If you find yourself in this position, the phrase, "too little, too late", is one that is all too familiar to you.

I see articles on the internet all the time with titles like, "What To Say Right Now, To Keep Your Spouse From Leaving You," and I think, "they just don't get it". You can't

continue to talk your way out of divorce or to fake it long enough to get your spouse off your back. To continue to try to do so is like rearranging the deck chairs to convince the captain that the Titanic is not sinking. And denial is not helpful at this point. Chalking the divorce talk up to your spouse's latest tangent, might just get you divorced. Wake up. Pay attention. Evolve. Perhaps a better article to read would be "What To Do Right Now To Keep Your Spouse From Leaving You and To Build A Better Life Together or even "How to Change So That You Both Are Happy In Your Marriage".



Restoring marital happiness starts with restoring communication and making spending time together a priority. If you need help opening up the lines of communication with your partner, setting aside a "Sacred time" (i.e. selecting a time that will take precedence over all conflicting demands), sets up a routine that encourages follow through.



Structured or semistructured communication exercises such as "Couples Feelings Meetings" and "The Honey Jar" enable you to get started in a neutral way. It also increases the probability of following through. The "Honey Jar" is a conversation starter for couples, that assists in opening up those lines of communication and restoring the sense of "Us" that may have gotten lost along the way. "The Honey Jar" helps you start talking again, about yourself and the relationship in a way that is non-threatening.

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