

A DIFFICULT PARTNER

TOP TIPS TO COPE WITH A DIFFICULT PARTNER AND STILL REMAIN SANE AND HAPPY



MMA BKA

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DEALING WITH

All scripture quotations are derived from King James Version and New International Version.

A NOTE TO MY READERS

WELCOME, MY FRIEND

I am an advocate of self worth and a staunch believer in Personal Development. You know why? What you are, what you will be and what you are capable of achieving depends ONLY on YOU!

It doesn't matter what people think or believe about you. It doesn't matter either- what abilities or powers people think you possess. If you don't see and believe in those abilities by yourself, it doesn't count. You won't make any impact, until you say to yourself, 'I can do this, then you can!'

I started writing on social media just to correct some societal ills. My truth got so many pissed, as they would swear on my head, abuse me and my generation, funny right? Yet in all that, many saw my potential and gifts in writing.

Those who saw potential, slid into my inbox to tell me what great writer I would make if I put my mind to it. I would just laugh it off and continue my "pissing off" writing. I was just ok, enjoying myself with the reactions I was getting but the unavoidable truth remains that my writing was making impacts in many lives. I was touching

lives directly and indirectly, then I knew it wasn't just enough

I knew I needed to do more! Something in me was yearning for more, more impacts. Little did I know that the writer in me was crying out to be birthed. I needed to evolve, it was long overdue.

When I wrote an article that was published by many blogs across the globe, I said to myself, go girl! You can do it, you are a writer, write more. That was when I started believing more in myself and I started sharpening my pencil, ready to write professionally, ready to impact more lives.

It can't just end with one random post to the other, people have needs and they need solutions and I can be that solution.

How can I meet these needs from my little corner, I asked myself? It occurred to me that as a relationship counselor, the reason why people come to me, is to seek solutions to matters pertaining to their love lives and marriages.

When people consult me, they talk about the challenges and difficulties they face in their homes and lives. These problems don't just happen by itself, they are caused by individuals.

How can people live together in peace and harmony if they don't know how to cohabit and tolerate each other? How can a man love his wife as Christ loved the church, if he doesn't know how to deal with her in love and understanding? How can a wife also submit to her husband freely and wholeheartedly, if she can't find any reason to submit?

There! The answer was staring me in the face. People are faced with daily problems in their relationships and marriages. So they seek knowledge on how to live peacefully with their partners and enjoy the love and bliss that they desire.

Behold, this was the passion that birthed this book, "Dealing With A Difficult Partner."

I hope you practice the truths therein, only then can you achieve the desired result in your relationship and marriage.

My name is **Mma Eka**, the truth you know will make you free but it will first piss you off!

Cheers to a blissful love life, relationship and marriage.

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Foreword

I remembered when I first addressed her as a lady of progress and substance, I could see the bewildered look in her eyes, curious to know why she was addressed as such. I laughed inwardly because I knew what I saw.

I am not one to play around with words neither do I flatter people. As the President of an International Human Right organization, I deal with a lot of people and I have come across many people, quite enough to be quoted anywhere, if I say I understand human behaviors to a certain extent. Calling her a woman of progress and substance is a name she merits by reason of her integrity, honesty, bluntness and above all, passion to impact lives, not to mention her enthusiasm and dogged resilience to her calling and ministry-Love and Relationship Matters. This is why I always make out time to comment on her articles on social media whenever it pops up on my feed, despite my busy schedule.

Due to my experiences with people all through my life as a leader, both in school and also as the President of Global Peace Movement International, I understand better what it means to deal with people from all walks of life, from different backgrounds and beliefs and the need to be fully equipped with the right nuggets, in order to cope with everyone (character) and be able to carry them along, irrespective of their peculiarities.

As someone who speaks the language of peace and who strongly believes in the use of peace as a resolution tool in handling conflicts, be it among couples, colleagues, business partners, siblings and even church members, I'm persuaded that I am in the right position to highly recommend this book to everyone concerned.

No man is an island, we come into contact with people on different levels and platforms everyday and as such, need to know the right mannerisms and wisdom to coexist peacefully and happily. This is exactly what this book offers. This book provides everyday simple tips on how to relate with your fellow human beings, especially your spouse, irrespective of their differences.

Going through the book, I smiled to myself and nodded my head in satisfaction, as the author covered almost everything anyone needs to know in human relation, a clear pointer of a well-researched work. Kudos!

Given her years of experience in direct dealings with people as a relationship consultant and also as a family woman who has been married for years with children, who else would be more qualified or in a better position than her to put down her experiences on paper, in order to guide couples and everyone in general on how to cope with their difficult partners, without losing their sanity and happiness?

Having read through the book, I see why she was able to conquer a lot of challenges in life, career and family. She had the right tool all along and she has exposed generously.

Why do you have to read this book?

If you had ever complained about your spouse's attitude at any time in your marriage, you need this book. If you have ever wondered why someone behaves the way he or she does, you need this book. If you have ever had even the slightest doubt whether or not you are with the right person or if you are the right person, you need this book. If you have ever been accused of being the problem in your relationship, either directly or indirectly, then you need to read this book.

Basically, almost everyone needs to read this book, as it will help you-the reader, to x-ray your life and that of your partner through the use of empathy and a little compromise to keep the flame of love alive in your relationships and marriages.

Dr Mike Uvi

President General Global Peace Movement International Uk. +44 (0)207 3586 770 Page intentionally left blank



INTRODUCTION

Ever known a man or woman who's always right? Who constantly blames you for everything? Who thinks it must be your fault that things aren't working out well?

Difficult partners can be annoying and equally stressful. According to them, nothing is ever their fault. They always keep you uncertain, never sure of anything and they will keep it up until you are worn down and worn out. Difficult partners can dismantle your self-esteem and shatter your world. They do it slowly, adding insult to injury over time. Just when they've stolen your heart and garnered your trust, they whip the rug out and send you tumbling

Dealing with them can be frustrating as well as mentally and emotionally draining.

Whether it's a boss, spouse or colleagues at work, one thing is certain, such people can affect your productivity and their attitude can drive you crazy

if you are not well equipped with the right nuggets to help you cope with them.

You should however, understand that life is always a work in progress and so are the best marriages and relationships.

A great relationship rests on the ability to tactfully deal with differences.

Therefore, in as much as it is difficult and almost impossible to change a difficult partner, it's also quite easy to live with one and still enjoy a happy marriage and relationship if you apply the right nuggets.

Real-life is challenging and life without challenge is, by definition, "Life-less." So, if your partner is not forthcoming or behaving right, you both can work on it.

You don't need to fidget or throw tantrums alongside your partner, all you need to do is to get a hold of yourself and take charge of the entire situation. This could be quite a difficult experience, but with a bit more maturity and understanding, you can handle it.

Developing tools of honest communication and little adjustments here and there can lead to a

healthy compromise that will put you back to the road of happiness in no distant time.

This book provides you with that right information and wisdom to cope with the tantrums and negativity that comes with difficult partners, without having to lose yourself, peace or happiness.

Don't let a difficult partner destroy your selfesteem and shatter your world.

I congratulate you for getting a copy of this book!!!



CHAPTER ONE

Be Sure You Are Not The Problem

"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself"

-Leo Tolstoy

CHAPTER 1

Changing how you behave to your partner can be the fastest way to deal with a difficult partner. When you are willing to be the change you imagined, you have already opened the gate for positive change in your partner.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." This means that you must set an example and implement the right kind of changes you want to see in your partner. In other words, if you want to see a change in your partner, it should start with you.

The truth is, most people would rather tell people what to do rather than follow their own advice. My message to people has always been 'practice what you preach'. The reason it's of vital importance to do so isn't just because it makes you more authentic, it's because you can't change your partner if you can't change yourself.

In my years of counselling young people, I have found out that most people play the blame card.

They are always quick to apportion blames on their partners, forgetting that it takes two to tango.

In dealing with a difficult partner, you must be sure that you are not the major problem. You need to be willing to look in the mirror and learn from your reflection.

Here is how you can examine and appraise yourself to be sure you are not the problem:

WHO IS AT FAULT?

Relationship expert, Susan Winter previously told Elite Daily, "Once you're able to be honest with yourself and admit your shortcomings, then you're one step closer to your recovery of wholeness and emotional health." It is possible to change your bad relationship habits, but first, you have to recognize them.

Accepting the responsibility for your actions is always a timely intervention of what would have been a war. Not apportioning blames, but taking full responsibility for every action, can change a very difficult partner.

If you use "the fault-finding approach" then you might not be doing anything different from what

your partner is doing and that is sad because both of you will end up frustrating each other to death. If you aren't the type to take responsibility for your own actions, you are likely a chronic difficult person too.

Marlena Cole, a professional relationship expert and life coach, told Bustle, "It will make it very difficult to connect on a deeper level with your partner, if you're a fault-finding individual". Being responsible is to accept your role in being frustrated by a difficult partner while reflecting on those actions that may trigger their anger.

It also means understanding what triggers you to behave the way you do. The more aware you become, the less reactive and more constructive you may become. The result may be a greater wellbeing for you, your partner, and your relationship.

If you realize you played a role in escalating an argument, be responsible and acknowledge your part. Your acknowledgement may reduce tension and encourage your partner to take responsibility as well.

The story of Mr and Mrs Martins is a perfect illustration of what one will achieve if we own up to our actions or inactions and leave our partners out of it.

Mr Martins had always believed that his wife was the difficult one, they quarrelled and fought over every little thing. Their marriage was about hitting the rocks until he discovered and learnt a valuable lesson from his neighbour across the street.

There was a couple across the street he so much admired. He kept wondering why they always appeared so peaceful and happy, until one day he decided to go closer and spy on them.

Peeping through the window, Mr Martins saw the man in the study room while his wife was busy in the kitchen. After some time, he saw the man got up and walked towards the kitchen. As he was walking by, he stumbled into a flower vase which fell down and broke.

The loud sound of the broken vase attracted the attention of the busy wife who came running to know what happened. On getting close, she saw her husband packing the broken pieces of the vase, she immediately rushed to assist him.

"oh! Sorry dear, it's all my fault, I shouldn't have kept that vase there" she apologized.

"Oh no! Darling, it's not your fault, it's mine. If I had been a little more careful, this wouldn't have happened" the husband replied.

Mr Martins watched as the couple joined hands together to pack the broken pieces and dispose of them. Each taking the blame of what happened and retiring back to their duties with no grudges or anger but happily.

This is it! Mr Martins said aloud to himself as he hurried back home.

"Now I know the secret formula", he said to his wife as he got home.

Mtchewwwwww! His wife hissed. What are you talking about?

The couple across the road, he replied.

So what about them? She asked carelessly.

"They are always wrong". He said calmly, putting his head down.

You see, my lovely wife, he went ahead to explain further. Here, we fight all the time because "we are always right", nobody ever accepts being wrong. I'm sorry for all the times, I pointed accusing fingers instead of looking inwardly. I have been the problem too but I took it out on you alone.

We are often told that two wrongs don't make a right but the above story is a logical example of "two wrongs can make a right".

When you accept your mistake (wrong) without apportioning or claiming rights, it could go a long way to calm a difficult partner. Saying I was wrong and I'm sorry is not a sign of weakness but of great strength.

Learn to let go of some things, so that peace may reign. Don't always live to score all the points or win all the fights. Deliberately allow your partner win-you will win him over.

WHAT AM I NOT DOING RIGHT?

Was your partner always like this? If the answer is negative, the next question is; At what point did he or she change? Could the change be as a result of what I am doing or not doing?

Have you ever asked yourself; What am I not doing right?

Self-evaluation is very essential because we are trying to eliminate any possibility that you could directly or indirectly be the problem. Unless you ignored the warning signs at the beginning, that means something must have happened along the way because people do not just change suddenly. Someone or something must have triggered the change.

The change must have begun as a gradual unnoticeable reaction to things, to the unbearable outburst at the slightest occasion or total emotional shutdown. Irrespective of the level it is, it's advisable to do an inward check, to rule out possibilities of being the problem.

AM I OVERREACTING?

Don't Blow Things Out of Proportion!!!

Just because your husband does not brush his teeth before bedtime or your wife doesn't agree to your idea of buying a car before a house, doesn't mean he or she wants to hurt you. Just because your husband throws his towel on the bed after bathing without remembering to put it away, does not mean he wants to get on your nerves. That your wife didn't do the dishes before bedtime, is no reason to start a fight the following morning.

Don't perceive every situation as a plot against you. Your partner could just be exhibiting his uniqueness based on his background or understanding of that particular issue. To him,

it could be his best approach to that matter. Your understanding of this uniqueness and difference in upbringing will help you not to take things to heart or be easily offended.

Learn take things to lightly. Constantly reassure yourself that he or she doesn't want to hurt you, this is just who he/she is or this is how best he/she handle knows to this situation. Ask yourself,

"Don't perceive every situation as a plot against you. Your partner could just be exhibiting his uniqueness based on his background or understanding of that particular issue."

does brushing teeth worth ending my marriage? Is it even a valid reason to start a huge fight? Are you just overreacting because it ruins your image of a 'perfect family'? Learn to put things into perspective.

In the grander scheme of things, a happy family includes little annoying peeves. If it's nothing

beyond that, everything should be fine. In most cases, when couples think that they are dealing with a difficult partner, it is just something that any normal couple under the stress of a demanding career or economic situation can do. Don't make a mountain out of a molehill!



CHAPTER TWO

SIGNS YOU ARE DEALING WITH A DIFFICULT PARTNER

"Some wounds never show on the body; they are deeper and more hurtful than anything that bleeds."

- Laurell K. Hamilton

CHAPTER 2

When you've fully evaluated yourself and eliminated the possibility of being the problem, if your partner exhibits some certain traits that we would be discussing in this chapter, it's a sign that you are dealing with a difficult partner. It is true that everyone could be difficult at some point depending on the mood and event, but there's a difference between being difficult when you're under pressure and being difficult all the time.

Someone who is difficult may be much harder to please than someone who is more easy-

going. According to Holmgren, "those who are called difficult are often the individuals that know what they dislike and won't do something that they don't want to do." To be fair, there's nothing wrong with knowing what you like and don't like. But it can be

Don't be an uncompromising partner, knowing what you don't like and standing by it is ok, but when you cannot bend or compromise a little to accommodate someone else, then that makes you a difficult partner.

harmful to a relationship when it becomes a source

of stress for one or both partners. Don't be an uncompromising partner, knowing what you don't like and standing by it is ok, but when you cannot bend or compromise a little to accommodate someone else, then that makes you a difficult partner.

The following are signs that you're dealing with a difficult partner:

1- They Keep Bringing Up The Same Issues Over And Over Again:

"When you're dating or married to someone who's chronically difficult, they may not let old problems die."

-Ashley Batz/Bustle

Even if you're arguing about something totally unrelated, they will somehow find a way to bring things back to that one issue you can't seem to resolve.

If you realize that you're dating a chronically difficult person and you've made the choice to work things out, it is very possible to do so. "Although it can be exhausting, the best way to turn the relationship around is to ensure that you are

acknowledging and validating your partner's emotions," Cole says.

If you choose to continue with the relationship, it's super important to keep bringing the positive energy in. According to Cole, you can do this by encouraging your partner to see a different side of things by asking empowering questions when they're being uncooperative.

Allowing your partner to discover the solution on their 'own' will be the key to changed behaviour. It will take a lot of patience on your part. But if you truly believe that your partner is worth it, you can do it.

2- When He/She Gets Irritated Over Certain Conversations Or Doesn't Just Want To Talk:

When you can't comfortably talk about certain subjects because you know your partner is going to react in a negative way, you may be dealing with a difficult person.

As a licensed clinical social worker, Meg Josephson tells Bustle, "This can be a major challenge to keeping an open line of communication, which is critical to building a healthy relationship."

It is true that certain lines of conversation can be uncomfortable for some people, and it's quite understandable If your partner doesn't want to talk about it. But if they're unwilling to talk about every single thing that makes them feel uncomfortable, that can prevent you from solving relationship issues. At some point, you will likely feel like your partner doesn't trust you, which can then create distance. Once you grow distant from each other, the strength of that relationship is hanging on a thin wire. These kinds of people become easily irritated when they're asked to show indulgence.

A young woman once came for counselling and she had this to say about her partner:

"How do I cope with my husband because anytime we have misunderstandings, he doesn't join in the family morning or night devotions, he goes out anytime he likes without informing me. He never gives me cash for my upkeep and the worst part is that he doesn't apologise at all even when he knows I'm deeply hurt, instead he will ignore me all through. What do I do? He prefers seating out with his friends at the bar than spending time with me, and his two kids. He keeps late nights too."

Now, this is a difficult partner in every sense of the word. What got me very concerned in her story is

the last sentence. Why would a partner prefer to stay out late with friends, instead of coming back to the comfort of his home? It could only point to a few things, of which, one is that, he is consciously avoiding having any kind of conversation with his wife. This is dangerous as it has put a very big strain on their marriage.

3- They Never Believe They Are Wrong:

"Difficult people are very rigid in thinking and judgement. They are quick to trade blames and condemn people" Cole says. In other words, their opinions are always "right."

Trying to make such people see reasoning will be very difficult because they only believe what they choose to believe. Don't ever expect apologies from such partners because you won't get it. Why would they apologize when they are always right? They don't take corrections both because they always insist and stand on what they believe.

This makes it difficult to adapt to changes that are imperative in the course of managing the relationship. I was counselling a couple, who were going through a difficult situation. When it seems they still couldn't reach a compromise, I decided to counsel them individually. When it got to the turn

of the husband, he said, "how can we ever get along when it's only her decisions and opinions that count?"

It can be frustrating to have a partner who will never see reasons with you. It often results in doing things in their own way (decision) without minding if it goes down well with you or not. They hardly listen to advice and someone who doesn't listen to advice can barely take corrections even when the truth is staring at them. In one of my researches, I asked a young woman, what habits would make you say your partner is difficult? She had this to say,

"When I noticed you're a narcissist, unforgiving, unwilling to learn, unwilling to change and uncomfortable to be with. You are just so difficult

for me"

According to Grace Airende Ediete, "A difficult partner shows high insensitivity to the feelings of their partners and always wants to have their way, without caring to take the other person's opinion into consideration. it's a partnership not a one person's squad"

Patricia Ashanda said "You are difficult if you are selfish, authoritative, all-knowing, does not take correction and also proud." Amy Lucia Uju further

concurred to the same notion as she had this to say "Once he claims to be right all the time, not being able to apologise when he wrongs me and lastly, takes decisions on certain things without my consent, he's difficult."

One thing is clear, from the research, everyone seems to be in agreement that a difficult partner never compromises.

4- Nothing Seems To Please Them:

You find it difficult to figure out what really pleases them, as they are often expressionless. Every comical vibe proves abortive on them. Someone once said that "A NO for a difficult person shouldn't be interpreted otherwise". It goes prove their rigidity

No matter how hard you try to please them, they are never satisfied.

A friend once told me that his difficult partner is very

passive in romance and doesn't like it much longer. Of course, she would never initiate one. Such an attitude could be very preposterous and frustrating, he lamented.

Edom Vorda also added that "You just can't understand the person, he or she complains virtually about everything." When a person always argues and makes a mountain out of a molehill, then such a person can be termed as a 'difficult person.'

No matter how hard you try to please them, they are never satisfied.

5- They will try to change you:

A considerate and understanding partner will try to adjust you to their own habit and taste and will provoke changes in your appearance or lifestyle in every possible way, whereas a difficult one will try to change you outrightly.

Have you ever been faced with a situation where your partner suddenly wakes up one day and tells you what to wear? Consider how hard it is to change yourself and you'll understand what little chance anyone has in trying to change others.

Anyone who goes into any relationship with the mindset of changing his or her partner is on a mission of total futility.

6- When They criticize All You Do:

Being critical about inconsequential things shows insecurity, not love. In every relationship, each partner has at least one habit that ticks the other off, although it's normal not to see everything eye to eye. If your partner gets annoyed about everything you say or do, it could mean he/she is difficult.

"Wanting to control your partner's identity, actions, and thoughts is the opposite of love," Winter told Elite Daily." It's about safety. It's a one-sided obsession to guarantee conformity, which equals safety. It has nothing to do with love or intimacy.

Masking their criticisms as "jokes" can also be a sign that they are resentful, not helpful.

7- They shut You Out of Their Lives:

"Bottling up your emotions won't end well."

-Roman Kosolapov

While constantly criticizing you over inconsequential issues like cucumber-slicing technique, so do they also keep mute about things that really matter, like their emotions, when you do or say something that upsets them. You don't know what goes on in their mind or life. They totally shut you out!

Bottling up emotions, likely means the problem will happen again, creating pent-up negative feelings and even resentment. "Even if you think you know your partner well enough to pick up on how he/she is feeling, it's not your job to play psychic medium." Relationship coach David Bennett of Double Trust Dating previously told INSIDER.

Your partner should be able to speak up and let you know the next time he doesn't feel quite right about something in the relationship, rather than waiting for you to come to him.

Furthermore, as soon as you get too close they do something to break the connection. Yet, strangely, they tell you that you are the one who is emotionally distant. People with these traits fear closeness.

Communication with them is vague. Nothing ever seems permanently pinned down. Everything is in flux. Decisions you think you made together get changed, negated, or twisted. That leaves you in a confusing state.

8- They constantly overreact:

Because they live in fear of not winning or of ever being wrong, chronically difficult people over-react at the slightest hint that things are not going in their direction. This leads to BIG emotions being spilt; emotions completely out of proportion to the issue or incident.

Resorting to yelling, screaming, or crying in order to manage a situation and turn it to their favour is a frequent occurrence.

Mabel Umondia said "Difficult people are always hot-tempered, always complaining, authoritative, nagging, like to keep malice and they don't consider the other person's feelings."

CHAPTER THREE

TRY TO UNDERSTAND THEIR PECULIARITIES

"Everything that lives is unique. It is unimaginable that two people, or two briarroses, should be identical... If you attempt to erase the peculiarities and individuality of life by violence, then life itself must suffocate."

-Vasily Grossman

CHAPTER 3

We started by making sure you eliminated the doubt that you are not the problem and moved on to how you can identify the traits of a chronically difficult person. Now you have established by reasons of their fruits(character) that you are dealing with a difficult partner, how then do you handle the situation so you don't go insane?

Firstly, understand that no two humans are the same, therefore no two humans are expected to behave the same either, whether difficult or not.

Having this knowledge will aid you in making room and adjustments for individual peculiarities, rather than expecting your partner or forcing him/her to behave the way you want.

The whole essence of this book is to bring you to the awareness that you could still live with your differences and still be happy, with your sanity intact. There's no shortcut to achieving this because it is not something you beat out of someone, neither is it something you force or demand. You just have to make up your mind that this will work.

It is a situation everyone can relate in one way or the other. We have all at one point or the other been compared to someone else or expected to act like someone else. This is very common among parents, that moment when you ask a child to behave in a certain way because his siblings behave that way. For example, when a parent says to her 8 years old daughter, "Hey! Why do you like football, don't you see that your brothers like basketball? Or why do you ask a lot of questions, can't you see how quiet your younger brother is?

This is her, trying to program or pattern the behaviour of that child according to the behaviour of the siblings without taking into consideration of her own uniqueness. When we understand that everyone is peculiar in a unique way, only then can we accept them the way they are.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had 12 apostles, they didn't behave alike, they all had their peculiarities yet He was able to work with them all. In fact, He knew their behaviour so well that He was able to predict what they could do at any point in time. Take, for instance, when He told Peter, "before the cock crows, you'll deny me 3 times.

Christ never had a fight with His disciples because He had a large heart to accept them the way they were.

What Is Peculiarity?

The word 'peculiarity' means a strange or unusual habit or characteristic, that is a distinguishing trait. Biologically, men and women differ and this difference is the reason each gender acts or responds to issues the way they do.

Let's Look At Certain Characteristics That Differentiate The Males And Females:

GENDER DIFFERENCES

They are variations between males and females based on biological adaptations. Understanding these biological contrasts will help you realise that your partner isn't trying to annoy you on purpose, just that his/her brain is wired differently from yours. So basically, men and women think differently, their approach or reactions to things also differ.

However, it is pertinent to note that neither of these approaches is RIGHT or WRONG but they are just different. Differences are good, that is why we want to have both men and women on teams to leverage each other's strengths.

All this is the doings or functions of the brain. A man's brain is 8-13% larger than that of the woman.

This accounts for their differences in feelings, reasoning etc.

-AREAS OF THE DIFFERENCES

1.Talking: Women tend to talk more than men. When men talk, they like to get to the point but women like to talk for the sake of talking itself.

Take, for instance, a typical day in the life of an average couple. Ask a man how was your day after a hard day's work, he may likely summarize it in just one sentence "fine."

By fine, he has covered everything that took place in his life from start to end of that day. Now that's a man's nature(few exceptions exist though). So, if you as his wife, do not understand this peculiarity in men, you might feel offended. You may probably think, he's snubbing you or keeping something away from you. You could also conclude that he doesn't like talking to you and finally, you may tag him 'difficult.'

Also, men rarely talk about their problems, except they are seeking an expert opinion (to avoid being seen as weak). When this happens, a gap in communication is created, which is the root of most problems. In the same vein, let's try throwing the same question to the woman and you will see how she gives a very detailed explanation of how her day went. She'd pick all the tiny details from start to finish. Now, if you as the husband do not understand this talkative nature of women, you may walk out on her while she's still talking or get irritated.

2. A man feels undermined when offered unsolicited assistance but feels gratified when left to sort things out by himself: If you walk in on your husband trying to fix the light bulb or the door handle, except he asks for your assistance, stay away but if you decide to risk it by going to show him how to handle the hammer, you might not get the reaction (appreciation) you expect, automatically you may see him as difficult.

Thank goodness! Now you know this peculiarity.

The reverse is the case for women, women get gratified by being offered support. As a matter of fact, for a woman to qualify you as "a good and caring man" you must have offered her help, assistance or support that she didn't have to spell out to you.

3. Men take a fact-based approach to handling situations: Men most likely use logic and facts

whereas a woman takes an intuitive approach. A woman works through feelings and emotions. So, the next time you tell your husband that the child is down with a fever and he queries you on how you know about that, don't get angry with him. He is just asking for logical facts to know why you came to that conclusion. Also when you share a story with your wife and she breaks down to tears, don't get irritated, it's her nature.

MEMORY DIFFERENCES

Women have better memory power than men, by reason of having a larger 'Hippocampus' (that's part of the brain thought to be the centre of emotions and memory). That is why a woman can recall every single word of argument from 5years ago. Have you been wondering why, each time you have a misunderstanding, your wife will bring up a similar thing you did while you both were still dating 23years ago? Now you know!

Women can remember dates and tiny details far better than men, that is why, when your husband is able to remember your special dates, it means he has made a conscious effort to do so, appreciate him for that.

SEXUAL DIFFERENCES

Study after study shows that men's sex drives are not only stronger than women's, but much more straightforward. The sources of women's libidos, by contrast, are much harder to pin down.

Please always exercise patience. Change does not come easy for some people, your partner has a difficult challenge ahead, especially if he hasn't been aware of his behaviours or what triggers them.

Women's attitudes toward (and willingness to perform) various sexual practices are more likely than men's to change over time.

Women need a combination of things to be aroused, men need just visuals. A man produces 20X more testosterone, this makes him concentrate on the physical aspect of sex. Women need mood, ambience, sound, emotions, etc. So, the next time

you come back from work and expect your wife to just jump into bed with you because you want her that very moment, without first putting her in the mood when she turns you down, you know the reason already. She's not difficult, it is her nature. Same as when your husband mistakes your half nude attire as a signal for sex, you should know the reason already.

Knowing the above peculiarities as it concerns different gender as a whole and relating it to your partner's peculiarities as an individual, will help you tolerate and accommodate them better.

Also, adjusting to these peculiarities will make you accept and appreciate your partner's personality, bearing in mind that those peculiarities does not define them in totality. Of course, God still loves them like that. I hope you know that it doesn't matter how you see or what you think of your partner, he or she is still loved dearly by God?

While understanding their peculiarities, it is also advisable to understand their true nature, temperament, and life story, then apply patience.

The importance of patience can not be overemphasized, patience is a great virtue you must imbibe if you truly want the best from your relationship.

Please always exercise patience. Change does not come easy for some people, your partner has a difficult challenge ahead, especially if he hasn't been aware of his behaviours or what triggers them. Patience is the key to a successful relationship. Convince yourself that although this is an extremely challenging time, peace and happiness can still be achieved.

Things will improve if you remain focused on your goals. If things aren't going well, don't give up. Discuss the matter and agree to move forward making adjustments if necessary.



CHAPTER FOUR

Adjust And Accommodate: Understand You Can't Change Them.

"No matter what winds others may create against you, you can adjust your sails to navigate and continue your travels."

-Jeffrey G. Duarte

CHAPTER 4

Now you have understood your partner's peculiarities, it will be easy to open your heart to adjust so as to accommodate their peculiarities.

Not all spouses are willing to be accommodating, but those who are, will help their partner in any way they can.

Here are a few tips to help you:

a. LET THEM TALK

Be a good listener. This practice of yours will make them feel acknowledged and when they feel acknowledged, the friction in communication will be reduced. Eventually, you'll be able to deal with them easily.

Prateek Panda, Co-founder & CMO at Appknox opined, "Whether it's a corporate meeting or a casual conversation with a difficult person, make sure you offer an ear. Spend 80% of your time listening so that 20% of the time you spend talking becomes extremely impactful."

There were times in my marriage I felt suffocated, this was because I felt I wasn't heard. I knew I had a lot on my mind that needed to be cleared up and as long as I wasn't given the listening ear by my partner to vent them out, it became a burden that weighed me down and made me react negatively to issues that weren't even related. It kept eating me up and making me unhappy until I made that call of "We have to talk."

When we finally talked, it did me a lot of good, as I poured out my heart and felt relieved. It was like a heavyweight had been lifted off my shoulders. Your partner could be behaving the way he does because there's a lot going on in his or her mind. Giving him or her a listening ear and allowing them to express themselves uninterrupted, might just be the healing they need.

Also, giving your partner the opportunity to talk, helps you know more about your partner and their true intentions. Most times, couples fight because they misunderstand the true motives behind their actions or words and this can lead to a terrible fight. But when you allow them to talk and you hear them out with an open and unbiased mind, you give room for an expression of true love, at the same time accommodating their peculiarities.

b. BE PATIENT

Beneath the anger and tantrums, typically lies deeper and more vulnerable emotions such as fear, sadness, or pain, which may be less accessible for your partner to address. For a short period, anger serves as a protective shield and makes you feel powerful and in control. Yet, in the long run, it hurts your partner from within. This is why it is important to have compassion towards your partner and move away from blame and accusation.

Patience can serve as the antidote to anger within yourself as well as your partner. Even the Bible says "Love is patient and kind" (1Corinthians 13 vs 4).

Patience entails being wise at the moment anger arises. It is about waiting—not speaking or doing anything that may be disastrous or reactive. Patience and compassion are the foundations of positive energy and cooperation among people.

Patience is the key that solves most of the problems. Exercising patience will help you tolerate and accommodate a difficult partner and get them to collaborate with you.

As difficult as it may be, if you can maintain your composure while dealing with a difficult partner,

that will be half the battle won. Keep your reaction level low; don't react to everything they do or say. Consciously make an effort to let something go, just for the sake of peace. Letting some things go, entails, giving up on some rights. Happiness can be achieved if we all learn to be patient.

Anindita Bose, founder of KARMA apparel & design, shared "Escaping difficult people is not possible - they are part of our everyday routine." Bose has an innovative way of calming the mind while dealing with difficult people at work - "Whenever I feel upset with such people, before saying something that I might later regret, I take a deep breath and give myself a few seconds of time. When I feel I am completely calm, then I visit the problem and figure out the best way to deal with that".

Keep your cool when they start throwing tantrums.

Keeping your cool when they lose theirs will help calm
them down no matter how insane they are.

A young woman went to a counsellor to seek advice on how to handle her nagging and very

difficult husband. After narrating her ordeal and how they are often involved in a war of words, the counsellor who was listening carefully finally spoke up, "I have a solution to your problem but whether it will work or not depends on you."

Are you ready to do what I say? the counsellor asked.

Very well, anything that will restore calmness and peace in my home. I'm so tired of the fight, she cried.

Any time your husband starts throwing tantrums or once an argument is about to break out, go into the kitchen and drink some water. Don't swallow the whole water, carry some in your mouth. Make sure you don't spit out the water from your mouth, no matter the urge you have to do so. You can only spit out the water when your husband is calm.

Can you do this? He asked.

Just that? The woman replied. Of course, I will. She affirmed!

On her way back from the counsellor's office, she kept pondering over the counselor's instruction. It sounded foolish to her because she wondered how having water in her mouth will change a chronic nag like her husband but because she had promised to do anything it takes to have her sanity in that marriage, she concluded she'll do it. After all, a little trial will not hurt, she soliloquized.

On getting home, her husband was already having one of those episodes. He was fuming red hot. In a couple of minutes, he was already shouting and demanding to know where she went. She calmly replied to him and headed straight to the kitchen to drink water and have some in her mouth, as instructed, leaving her husband shouting on top of his voice.

It was as though her husband was relentless. He said things she wanted to react to but because she was warned not to spit out the water in her mouth until her husband had calmed down, she held her peace and allowed him to talk. Of course, there's no way she'll be able to talk with water in her mouth.

When her husband saw that she wasn't responding or shouting back like before, he stopped talking but not before asking her, why she left him talking to himself like a mad man. "Am I not talking to you? Are you dumb?" Were the questions he repeatedly asked before he gave up.

After what seems like an eternity of waiting for her husband to cool down, the woman now spat out the water and heaved a sigh of relief!

This continued for days, weeks, and months. The woman kept having water in her mouth each time her husband started nagging. She noticed that the duration of his tantrums kept reducing as he will just keep quiet once she doesn't reply back. It continued like that until he learned to communicate with the wife without shouting.

She didn't need another counsellor to fully understand the meaning of the water therapy.

Wow! She'd say to herself daily.

So I could actually have this peace and tranquillity in my home just for saying nothing? All the years I tried proving a point by talking back at him, didn't yield any result, so I could actually achieve tranquillity by letting go of points? She soliloquised. She came to the full understanding, that for peace to reign, both parties can't be mad at the same time. One must be sane and she has to be that one.

c. BE CONCISE IN YOUR COMMUNICATION AND AVOID ARGUMENTS

When you master the art of effective communication, dealing with a difficult partner becomes easier. Keep eye contact in a conversation

and speak with confidence. Be clear about what the problem is and what you think the solution may be.

Present your case and hold the position. Don't get into an unnecessary argument, in fact, avoid any kind of argument because this might Remember that you can't win them over by excessive words or debate.

lead to an exchange of words that will further escalate the whole situation and leave you mentally drained and physically exhausted.

Just make your point, make him see reasons why you came up with that, then let the matter be. You can't have a difficult partner and decide to be difficult at the same time. Having two difficult people in a relationship is a recipe for disaster. You just have to decide to be the easy and sane one in the relationship. If you keep doing the right things and treating your partner right, they can easily take a clue from you and do the same.

Michelle Joy, MA, MFT, a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist said, "If you want to start a conversation about a sensitive topic, wait until your husband isn't stressed or distracted so he'll be more likely to have an open mind. Then gently let him know you have something sensitive you want to talk about. Make it clear that you'd like to hear his opinion on it, which will make him feel more valued."

d. TACKLE THE ISSUE AT HAND, NOT YOUR PARTNER

One of the hardest things to do in a relationship is to be nice to your partner when you're upset with them. It's also one of the most important moments to be kind. Dr Gottman's research shows that couples who start arguments gently are more likely to manage conflict effectively, without harming the relationship. In fact, it is in these moments that Dr Gottman can predict the success or failure of the relationship with over 90% accuracy. In a popular

Atlantic Magazine interview, Dr Julie Gottman explains that "Kindness doesn't mean that we don't express our anger, but the kindness informs how we choose to express the anger. You can throw spears at your partner or you can explain why you're hurt and angry and that's the kinder path."

Whenever an issue that may lead to a misunderstanding comes up, focus on the issue and not your partner. Seek out what the bone of contention is and find ways to tackle it squarely and get it fixed. Keep an observing eye on the actual problem and generate possibilities for settling it. Don't attack your partner. Don't say, he's at it again. Just focus on the subject matter and how well to handle it. Also, try to see the entire situation from their point of view as well. Show respect to them, and as I mentioned earlier, don't lose your calm or use hostile words that can inflame the issues.

e. DON'T LET YOUR HUMOUR DRY

A good sense of humour can be a powerful communication tool, neutralizing conflicts, disarming difficult behaviour and showing how wonderfully composed you are. Even when the difficult people at work are driving you up the wall, using humour is a sure shot way to lighten up a relatively stressful conversation.

Raghav, Deputy Manager Saumya at Policybazaar.com, also believes that humour at a effectively workplace can improve communication, decrease work stress, boost creativity, increase productivity, and reduce the distance managers social between and subordinates.

If a good sense of humour can calm situations in the workplace, why can't it work in relationships? Learn to laugh away from some things. Some things are not even as serious as we perceive them to be. We sometimes overheat situations and blow them out of proportion, thereby getting unnecessarily entangled in a web of argument that one would have dismissed with a wave of the hand.

Life is already difficult as it is, we should try to ease off stress by having a loud laugh

f. DON'T BE DEFENSIVE

Not being defensive can be a good tactic when confronted with a difficult partner. Being defensive is not synonymous to being passive - you can still maintain your personal opinion and perspective in a situation, you don't have to agree with the other person's point of view - but rather than intending to make the other person wrong, you should choose not to be an adversary. Practising defenselessness creates space that allows for a more compassionate and peaceful interaction.

Prateek Panda formed the habit of being defenceless at corporate meetings with CIOs and CISOs of large corporations when he started his company a few years back.

"Sometimes these meetings can be intimidating, especially if you are a small startup and not a lot of experience behind you. To ease things out, I got rid of the habit of being defensive. Being defensive makes you lose the ability to hear the person in front and also is a sheer waste of energy. The best solution is to take a deep breath, calm down, listen some more, and then speak." Prateek shared his own experience

In the face of extreme provocation, call upon your "best self."

Think about the person you are when you're at your most compassionate and ask yourself what that

"best self" would say about the situation at hand. This helps you tap from your own past experiences while handling stressful situations.

In the face of
extreme
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Julie Gottman explains that

"Kindness doesn't mean that we don't express our anger, but the kindness informs how we choose to express the anger."

CHAPTER FIVE

COMMUNICATE WITH UNDERSTANDING

"Change begins with understanding and understanding begins by identifying oneself with another person: in a word, empathy. The arts enable us to put ourselves in the minds, eyes, ears and hearts of other human beings."

Richard Eyre

CHAPTER 5

Communication in relationships is essential to having a happy, healthy partnership. And it isn't about making small talk. Asking your partner how their day went is nice, but if you want an extraordinary relationship, you must dig deeper with understanding. Learning how to communicate in a relationship is about fulfilling your partner's needs. To improve communication in your relationship, you must discover how to listen, and talk.

Communication is the key to any relationship. It sounds cliché but it's the truth. I think it's really easy to tell people that communication is important in a healthy relationship but it's not as easy to explain how to communicate. And if we're never taught how to use this key, then we'll never be able to open the door to healthy communication.

Below are 3 tips to help you communicate better with understanding:

-Communicate With Kindness:

It doesn't really matter what the act of kindness might be, the most important thing is that your spouse knows they are valued and you are ready to go extra miles for them.

The effort to understand and willingness to give is key to a good marriage and partnership, and ultimately, to have your own needs met.

Communicating with understanding, steered by a little kindness can heal so many wounds and further foster peace and tranquillity among couples.

Sanaa Hyder, M.S ED (November 10, 2016), wrote extensively on how the role of kindness in conflict resolution among couples. She said,

"Kindness is not just important in the heat of an argument, rather, it is about your mindful and considerate behaviour throughout your relationship.

When we enter into a committed relationship, most of us make some sort of declaration – a promise or

a vow — that we will uphold our partner and care for them. We also make a secondary promise: that we will be our best selves, full of integrity and hope for a successful future.

The act of not choosing kindness is therefore doubly hurtful – to our partners and to ourselves – because it undercuts our efforts for growth and the potential for greater intimacy."

A relationship is the concerted effort of two people who mindfully and enthusiastically work towards a shared vision. Despite the difficulties of daily life, partners are in charge of their own behaviour. While a couple grows together, they are not precluded from growing as individuals as well. In fact, they must evolve as individuals in order to continually bring their "best selves" to their partner.

Kindness Begets Kindness

Here are 3 powerful tips that you can put into action right now, regardless of where your partner is on their journey:

1. Think good thoughts: We are all wired to feel how we repeatedly think. Having positive thoughts about your partner will make it easier for you to think more positive thoughts, speak and behave positively towards them. In order to get into the habit of being kind, you must practice the thoughts as well as the actions.

Remind yourself of the nice things your partner has

done each day. For instance, did he come home early one night for dinner? However small the action, make it a habit of taking note of your partners acts of service and make a mental note of how happy it makes you feel.

2. Accept responsibility

Take responsibility for assessing your own feelings before presenting them to your partner. This puts you at choice and that allows you to choose how to respond to your partner. You move into the driver seat of your life's journey.

Also, being able to accurately pinpoint your feelings will help you to convey them in a kinder, gentler tone to your partner.

You might think it is more authentic to say exactly what's on your mind without filtering anything for your partner, but consider that once they are hurt, it is harder for them to connect with you empathically. Take a moment to process your feelings with a therapist or by yourself. Try keeping a journal or log of your day and how you were feeling. Processing your feelings through writing often helps to sort out and organize thoughts.

3. Let hope win

Have faith in the relationship and in your commitment. Even though you will have ongoing arguments with your partner, focus on your friendship. I see couples in my office who want to "solve" their issues first before going out for ice cream or relaxing over dinner. It's not possible to solve problems with someone you don't want to collaborate with.

I often encourage couples to do an activity together to enjoy their love — despite their gripes! It is much easier to discuss problems with your best friend than with your "enemy." It may take effort to institute a date night, but being close and connected is a habit, and habits have to be practised consciously and regularly. Try going out of your way to being friendly to your partner.

For instance, pour milk in their cereal in the morning, or offer to walk the dog. Look up a movie they've been meaning to watch, or even send them a text message today (not about errands or scheduling) but about something you're looking forward to doing with them.

Finally, communicating with kindness is a decision and also an act. Just as you offer a smile and hold the door open for a stranger, you must remember to cultivate this habit in your relationship no matter how many months or years that might have passed.

The longer you try, the easier it gets to summon up a positive picture of your beloved. The more you practice kindness, the easier it is to recall that your partner is also human who is experiencing life too. It becomes easier to offer a smile and to extend an olive branch to the person who is in the struggle with you – not against you.

-Be The Understanding One:

The book of Romans 12:21 says "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Make a decision to always be the peacemaker in your relationship.

Don't return anger with anger, this often just adds fuel to the fire. Don't act defensively, it is easy to take things personally when you are dealing with a difficult person. Try to understand their side, and communicate as effectively as possible to make them hear your side. Acting defensively, raising your voice, or returning the expressed emotion will just make the other partner angrier and the solution to the problem further away.

Try to hear what they are really upset about. Listening is key when trying to de-escalate a situation quickly.

Aldo Civico, said "There is no skill more powerful and transformative in a negotiation than listening. Listening is opening the space that allows for an encounter with the other. Listening engenders the conditions that allow the other person to express his or her own needs and interests."

Moreover, listening doesn't only provide an opportunity for the other to express himself or

herself; it also offers a chance to gain insights into the experience and perception of the other.

You will not get to know the other party unless you listen authentically and deeply. This level of listening requires the capacity to put yourself in parentheses, at least momentarily, to make space for the other.

In listening (and not telling or talking down) rests the first powerful step towards change and transformation.

DEALING WITH

Barbara Markway further confirmed the efficacy of listening as she had this to say "Listening is the number one step in dealing with 'unreasonable' people. Everyone wants to feel heard. No progress can take place until the other person feels acknowledged." While you're listening, focus on what the other person is saying, not what you want to say next.

Also, saying, "I'm sorry," or, "I'm going to try to fix this," can go a long way toward defusing many situations. One response does not fit all, everyone reacts in a different way. Understand that you will

have to adapt to different situations when dealing with a difficult partner.

Trying to empathize with your partner can go a long way. This person is upset or angry because they don't feel heard, or might need something they do not know how to ask for. Saying you understand will often show the person you care about the outcome. Deflect negativity while communicating. People who have a problem with chronic negativity add a negative twist to every situation. Do not allow yourself to be influenced by your partner's negative and critical thinking.

If he continues to be negative, tell him, "I'm trying to focus on the positive so we can solve this problem. It's easy to be negative. Being positive is hard, but that's what I'm going to do." When your partner's emotional state is highly charged, their cognitive state may be impaired. There is little point in addressing your issue as long as the anger dominates. Allow time for the negative energy to settle to establish a more rational discussion.

When both of you are calm and collected, address the issue that led to your partner's angry behaviour. At this time, they may be more open to listening and understanding. Also, don't forget to apply this rule to yourself. When your emotional or angry parts are activated, take time to calm yourself. Anger fuels anger and calming promotes a calmer atmosphere.

-Look For The Hidden Need

Chances are if your partner is acting unreasonably, he or she is likely feeling some sort of vulnerability or fear. What is really going on with my partner? Can you figure out what they are really so upset about? Don't Judge, try not to judge your partner.

"Sometimes a person reacts with anger or is unreasonable when they are going through something and don't know how to express it."

Figure out what is really going on. If you know that you haven't been doing anything that would constitute your spouse's negative responses, then it's time to roll up your sleeves and get to work. This is the perfect opportunity to practice your problem-solving skills.

If a person is always complaining or being critical about most things in life, it may be due to something that happened to him/her earlier in life.

There could be an event or a tragedy in a person's life that makes him/her behave that way.

You may find out that he is very unhappy with his job or with an unrelated issue that has nothing to do with you. If he thinks his life is bad because of these things, he might be taking it out on you.

He may be resenting you for not being perfect. You need to remind him that you aren't perfect, you weren't when you met, probably never will be, and neither is he.

Insecurities about job performance, financial independence, and physical performance can all contribute to a person's constant complaining and negativity.

Depression may be the root of the problem and needs to be dealt with accordingly.

He might feel the world is against him and you are part of it. You need to separate yourself from that association and reassure him that you are on his side.

Your partner could be fighting to free himself/herself from the annoying behaviours they put up towards you. They could be fighting some undisclosed ailments. They could be dealing with stress and pressure at work. They could be under

intense financial problems. They could be facing some family crisis. Make sure you find out what is going on in their personal lives. There could be a reason why they are acting weird and difficult. This is more applicable if they start behaving in a way they have not been behaving before.

Once you notice a change in their behaviour, do your due diligence to find out what is eating him up. Perhaps, you can help him get through whatever difficulty he has been dealing with all silently. Maybe he needs is some encouragement and assurance that all will be well. Don't just assume he has decided to be difficult for no just reason. Show interest in whatever affects your partner. This is one way to get him to open up to you and stop being difficult.

A number of people grow into abusive adults because they had an abusive upbringing. If you grew up in a family where one of your parents was always abusing their partner verbally or physically, your chances of growing into an abusive adult are quite high. So, it is important to make sure your partner's difficult nature isn't due to the type of upbringing they had while growing up. Taking out time to study your partner's temperament and true

nature will enable you to understand them better and communication will flow easily.

Aldo Civico. Ph.D., threw more light on this when he explained in his article,

"Know The Other Side.

By this, I don't mean only to know what the goals of the other party are or what it is up to, nor do I mean only to collect information that will help you to bond with the other person in a more sincere and meaningful way. Of course, the more information you have, the better. But what I mean by "knowing the other side" is the importance of identifying what basic human needs the other party is trying to satisfy, even through behaviour that might even be harmful and destructive."

As Tony Robbins likes to emphasize, "There is always a positive intention behind someone's behaviour, that is, there is always the intention of satisfying a need. Recognizing that we are moved by positive intentions and learning how to identify the need someone satisfies with negative behaviour had a great impact on the quality of my work. In fact, whenever I am able to identify if an individual, by means of a particular behaviour, is looking for recognition, or a deeper connection, or is simply

scared and searching for security, I am in a better position to connect with the basic needs of that person and take care of them. In fact, once the need is identified, what needs to change is the strategy to achieve it. Knowing this, together with the other person, I can explore alternatives."

So, what's the positive intention behind the behaviour of your difficult Partner? Is it recognition? Security? A deeper connection? How can you help the other to meet his or her needs in a more constructive way? What alternatives exist?

DEALING WITH

Give up the need to be right.

Even before you ask to sit down for a talk, remind yourself that it's all about finding a solution to a problem. And that the solution will likely affect your whole family. So it doesn't matter who's right or wrong. What matters is that the two of you are working together to improve things. Also, remember that the best and most creative solutions come from embracing different points of view. When communicating with your partner, try not to bring up your relationship's ancient history or

other problems. Stick to the topic and keep things on track.

Apparently, being open is an effective key to making communications with difficult partner work, and that simply means hearing what your partner is saying Remember that difficult partners are quick to judge and trade blames you can't do the same if you want to remain sane.

when you're having a discussion. Try to stop yourself from interrupting. Don't start thinking about your next comment while your spouse is mid-sentence. Stay present and try to absorb your partner's comments before you start talking, and avoid making hasty judgments.

So, try using a different and opposite approach. Nothing kills productive communication faster than accusations, don't accuse your partner of causing the problem or avoiding the issue.

Try not to assign blame, and avoid statements like, "You always do this!", "Why?" If you don't fight fair, your partner is likely to feel defensive (which is one of their attributes). He may even counterattack, and that will probably shut down your conversation and halt whatever progress you two were making.

Maintain a positive attitude while talking. Express your optimism about working together to find a solution, make it clear that you're interested in your spouse's opinion as well as your own. This is your chance to make a difference in your relationship. It is your time to speak and be heard. Don't let your spouse deter you from your goal of having a good, problem-solving conversation. You're on a mission to make it work so focus on what's important: creating a change for the better.

If his first response is negative, try to stop him by saying, "I want to talk about this peacefully because I'm concerned about it and if we need to live peacefully, then we need to listen to each other." Diffuse his response with calm, focused discussion.

If he can't respond without getting aggressive or agitated, then simply say, "Maybe we can talk about this later." If he is absolute in his demeanour then you have got a more serious problem on your hands. Don't put yourself in harm's way. Do what you can to get to a safe place.

He may respond with an open ear and show you his genuine concern. This is your opportunity to let him know how you feel about everything that's been happening. Don't be afraid to tell him that it hurts your feelings and makes you concerned about your relationship and its future.

Keep telling him that you love him and show your support for what he has to say.

Solicit a commitment to change, you both need to fully embrace the idea of reconciliation. It is crucial that at a minimum, you agree to try to make a change. That may be your starting point, and then you can build from there. The goal is to commit to the process fully, but you may need to start with small steps.

Compliment each other.

When you are pleased with how things are going, tell your spouse. If you see him catch himself being negative and then he corrects himself, acknowledge this as an accomplishment. Everyone needs to know that they are doing a good job, it will help both of you stay motivated.

Learn to laugh a lot, if you can both find a way to laugh about the situation, it would be a form of healing for both of you. A laughter is the shortest distance between two people. It is almost impossible to stay upset when you are

laughing. Try it, everyone needs a little coaching.

Remember, a tiny step is still a step in the right direction.

Let it go.

Whether your situation is more serious or you are dealing with a spouse who ignores your requests to do certain things, it's important to keep things in perspective. No one likes to feel

Don't criticize your spouse or yourself for making mistakes. Instead, focus on the efforts both vou are making to be better people.

small, diminished, ignored by a partner or by anyone for that matter. You will find that once you feel heard and respected you will be able to release your feelings of upset and shepherd in feelings of relief.

You can let it go.

If you try to let something go and it continues to eat at you, then you likely need to process more feelings about the situation. This may include additional chats with your spouse, prayers, and more physical activities together.

It can be upsetting if someone tells you to "just let it go" if you haven't reached a level of resolve about the matter. Take a deep breath and say, "I'm working on letting it go, but I'm not there yet." Once you settle into a feeling of a balanced perspective, you will see that some things are worth getting upset about, and some are not.

FORGIVE: You can't let go if you've not totally forgiven your partner or yourself

When we find ways to show mercy to even the person who has cost us sleep and love and even our well-being, something miraculous happens. "When we manage a flash of mercy for someone we don't like, especially a truly awful person, including ourselves," Anne Lamott writes, "we experience a great spiritual moment, a new point of view that can make us gasp."

Here's the real miracle: Our mercy boomerangs back to us. When we show radical kindness, forgiveness, and acceptance, and when we tell the truth in even the most difficult relationship, we start to show ourselves those things. We realize that we can love, forgive and accept even the most terrible aspects of our own being, even if it is only for a moment. We start to show ourselves the truth, and this makes us feel free.

Renew your commitment to the relationship.

Alot of people decide to renew their wedding or commitment vows for various reasons. This may be a wonderful opportunity to ceremonially show each other that you have not lost interest in your relationship and you are still in love.

Making it through tough times together can result in a deeper desire for commitment.

Your partner may realize the pain he has been causing and might feel guilty. He may want to show you that he is sorry for what he has put you through. LET HIM.

CHAPTER SIX AVOID TRIGGERS

Just like the first breath of life, any engine must be triggered in order to turn it on.

Toba Beta

CHAPTER 6

Triggers are external events or circumstances that may produce very uncomfortable emotional or psychiatric symptoms, such as anxiety, panic, discouragement, despair, or negative self-talk. Reacting to triggers is normal, but if you don't recognize them and respond to them appropriately, they may actually cause a downward spiral, making you feel worse and worse.

Working on understanding each other's triggers is one of the most important things that you can do to avoid hurting one another. Each person's triggers are unique. For some people, yelling at their partner is the direct result of stress. For others, it is the result of just being unhappy.

There are certain triggers that can cause us to experience bitterness and discouragement. While triggers may be different for everyone, there are some of the best techniques you can use to prevent or avoid bitterness.

-LEARN THE TRIGGERS

You can start by learning the triggers. This may sound obvious, but many times when you feel overly reactive or frustrated by your partner, you aren't entirely sure why he or she is so worked up. Moreover, you fail to ask yourself, "Why is he so reactive to that particular behaviour or thing? Why does that one thing bother him so much?" It's also valuable to notice the specific actions, tone, and words that set him off, so you can start to discern the roots of their reactions.

For example, Lisa Firestone, Ph. D, a relationship adviser narrated her experience in one of her sessions. She said:

"A man I spoke to described feeling shame whenever his wife offered him advice. He'd feel embarrassed and condescended to, and would usually react defensively. Another woman recently told me how infuriated she felt whenever her partner would bring up an unrelated topic in the middle of a conversation. She felt he wasn't paying attention, and that she didn't matter to him. In both cases, the painful feelings being triggered almost always led to tense interactions."

Noticing the kinds of things that trigger your partner offers you insight into yourself and your past. In order to explore this further, you can advise your partner to sit with his feelings when they get triggered and do what Dr Daniel Siegel calls SIFTing the mind for any Sensations, Images, Feelings, or Thoughts that arise. By doing this, he can get clues about the early childhood experiences that were the original source of his strong emotional reactions. Becoming aware of the source of his oversized reactions allows him to be more mindful and not take them out on you. You will be less critical of your partner and also feel more compassion for them.

If your partner is one who gets pissed off by every little thing, he or she could be suffering from an ANGER TRIGGER. There are many common triggers for anger, such as losing your patience, feeling as if your opinion or efforts aren't appreciated, and injustice. Other causes of anger include memories of traumatic or enraging events and worrying about personal problems.

You also have unique anger triggers, based on what you were taught to expect from yourself, others, and the world around you. Your personal history feeds your reactions to anger, too. For example, if you weren't taught how to express anger appropriately, your frustrations might simmer and make you miserable, or build up until you explode in an angry outburst.

Inherited tendencies, brain chemistry, or underlying medical conditions also play a role in your tendency toward angry outbursts.

When you identify this, as an issue for your difficult partner, you could take further steps by teaching him or her better ways to handle his anger issues.

Take a look at some of the ways to handle anger issues:

Expression: This is the act of conveying your anger. Expression ranges from a reasonable and rational discussion to a violent outburst.

Suppression: This is an attempt to hold in your anger and possibly convert it into more constructive behaviour. Suppressing anger, however, can cause you to turn your anger inward on yourself or express your anger through passive-aggressive behaviour.

Calming Down: This is when you control your outward behaviour and your internal responses by calming yourself and letting your feelings subside.

Ideally, he or she should choose constructive expression, stating his concerns and needs clearly

and directly, without hurting others or trying to control them.

-FIGURE OUT HOW TO MAKE IT BETTER NEXT TIME

Consider these questions:

- 1. How can my partner make it better the next time this kind of incident occurs?
- 2. How can I also make it better next time an unpleasant situation occurs?

We fully understand that these questions are not easy to answer. They require a great deal of introspection and emotional energy. To figure out what is happening within yourself is difficult, and explaining to your partner might make you feel scared and vulnerable. We all experience these emotions, but bear in mind that the preceding exercise can be of great benefit to your relationship.

When you and your partner consider these questions, it helps you both connect the feelings that trigger certain emotions.

It also helps you both understand each other. This understanding is priceless as you grow in your relationship together. As you learn the stories behind your partner's triggers, you begin to understand where they are coming from, their sudden attacking or defensive behaviours in conflict start to make complete sense!

As you learn the stories behind your partner's triggers, you begin to understand where they are coming from, their sudden attacking or defensive behaviours in conflict start to make complete sense!

My five years old son doesn't like anyone yelling or shouting at him. He automatically shuts down and feels unhappy each time anyone at home yells or shouts at him. It took me a very long time before I realised that shouting at my five years old son was his major trigger. He misbehaves and goes naughty each time I shout or yell at him at home, so I had to avoid shouting and yelling in order to impact, teach and guide him right.

With this knowledge, you can identify which behaviours to avoid, so that the two of you don't accidentally set each other off. If you use these tools to help you process fights, you will not only learn to have more constructive conversations when conflicts come up, but you will learn more about each other, and grow closer than ever

-DON'T BE THE TRIGGER

In relationships, it's easier to notice the flaws in your partners and want them to change. However, the only person you have the full ability to influence is yourself. You have 100 per cent of the power to change half of the dynamic.

CHANGE BEGINS WITH YOU!

When something your partner does triggers you, you should ask yourself, "What did I do right or wrong before he/she reacted?" Sometimes the answer will be nothing. However, most of the time, there may be a pattern of behaviour you engaged in that was triggering the other person.

Looking at yourself doesn't mean you should take all the blame in your relationship or that you are solely responsible for how the other person feels, but this exercise of self-reflection allows you to know yourself better and helps you change those behaviours that are causing pain in your relationship. It could also prevent unnecessary distance in your relationship.

Avoid conflicts at all costs. Once you know the type of partner you have, it is your duty to make sure you avoid anything that can lead to a breakdown of peace and order in your marriage or relationship. If visiting a particular friend or welcoming them into your home will not go down well with your partner, avoid such friends. If staying out late with friends will lead to a quarrel, do your best to come back home early. If putting on a certain attire gets on their nerves, wear something else. If they want to be left alone at any particular time, leave them alone and find something else to occupy yourself with. Some people get triggered when they see their partners with the opposite sex, whether colleagues or church members. You could do well by avoiding this.

This doesn't mean you have to cut off everyone from your life, just to please your partner but wisdom is profitable to direct. If getting involved with certain people will cause problems in your home, what should you do about that? The ball is in your court. Play it well. Remember that your happiness and peace of mind supersedes every other thing



CHAPTER SEVEN

DON'T EXPECT TOO MUCH: BE YOUR OWN HAPPINESS

You are responsible for your own happiness. If you expect others to make you happy, you will always be disappointed.

-Mma Eka

CHAPTER 7

When we have an expectation that a husband or wife will satisfy us, we set ourselves up for disappointment because no human being can satisfy another human being," says Mark Altrogge, a pastor at an Indiana church, and creator of the relationship website the Blazing Center.

Happiness isn't something that someone gives us, neither is it something that we have to seek permission for. Happiness is a state of mind that is created from within.

"Don't look at where your spouse needs to change," Altrogge says. Take a look at where you need to change, don't have expectations of your spouse. If you have expectations, place them on yourself.

Having high expectations or personal imaginary guide books on how one's partner should behave and respond to issues, is the main reason for dissatisfaction and complaints.

Reno omokri twitted, "Stop expecting things from people. That is how heartbreak and depression creeps into your life. You say, 'I never expected

that from you'. Why? God never put anyone on earth to live up to your expectations, it is selfish."

In life, we tend to judge and criticize people who don't behave the way we want them to. At times we hate them outrightly, this stereotypic mentality should be corrected.

You can't force people to behave like you because everyone is unique with the right to either like or dislike a thing. When you want your partner to perform some kind of action to magically meet your needs, you are really asking for them to change, says Barton Goldsmith, a psychotherapist and syndicated columnist for Psychology Today, and that's a nearly impossible request.

As long as what or how one chooses to live, is not "MORALLY" affecting anyone's happiness, let them be.

Know that no one is without fault, there's no perfect person anyway. You are not perfect, the same as your partner. You can't compel your partner to like the things you like, the same way you can't make him believe or act like you. Besides, your approach might not be the best, what you see as number 6 from your own standpoint, might not be the same from your partner's standpoint. It all depends on the

individual's point of view. Give room for individual peculiarities to play out.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN HAPPINESS

You may feel that your spouse is not meeting your emotional needs. But, marriage counsellors and psychology experts generally agree that only you can satisfy those needs.

You should not consider yourself an empty emotional vessel to be filled by your spouse. You need to take responsibility for your own fulfilment.

Understand that you are in a relationship to bond with your spouse, to share events; big or small, and to build a life together.

It is in our nature to blame others for our mistakes, failures, unfulfilled plans and unhappiness because we expect so much from them and when they are not forthcoming, we get disappointed and label them several names.

Remember that the aim of this book is to teach you ways to remain sane and happy in your marriage even while having a difficult partner. **One of those ways is to be your own happiness.**

Happiness is an inside job and you are responsible for creating it. You know what makes you happy, so participate in activities outside your relationship that will build a reservoir of positive feelings. It is easier to face negative and difficult people if you are filled with good vibes. A happier YOU will always make any relationship better.

It's not your partner's job to make you happy, your happiness lies in your hands. Of course, it's easy to feel good when your partner is acting in a way that you want —but needing them to be a certain way in order for you to feel good —that's bondage. Thinking that they're always going to be in a good mood and directing their affectionate attention towards you— while that may be possible during the initial stage of a relationship, is impossible to sustain long-term. Your partner is responsible for his/her own happiness.

We deliberately focus on things to feel good in our lives and for things to appreciate in one another. To achieve this happiness in the midst of a difficult partner means that you have to love yourself so much to the point that your energy and aura rejects the negative energy from your impossible partner or anyone at all who doesn't know your worth.

Find a positive source of energy. Dealing with people who are always negative can be very tiring and stressful. Making a change takes time so you will need support and encouragement to face the struggles, find a friend or person you trust and who can be a source of encouragement.

Remember, a difficult partner drains you of your energy so it needs to be replenished. Activities such as exercise, dancing, yoga, and golf are only a few ways to recharge your batteries.



CHAPTER EIGHT SEEK HELP/COUNSEL

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. I do that every day. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength. It shows you have the courage to admit when you don't know something, and to learn something new.

-Barack Obama

CHAPTER 8

If you've done all of the above but feel you cannot manage the situation, there are professional counsellors, therapists, and mediators who can help. You are human and there are times when you reach the end of your rope and need help. Although it will be difficult, a temporary separation may be the only answer to your problem.

A temporary separation might actually save your relationship. This might provide the right amount of distance that allows you both time to determine if the relationship is worth saving.

A mediator will serve as a neutral party and attempt to facilitate a resolution for both of you. You can talk to your parents too if you trust their unbiased opinion. Your Pastor is another person who can mediate with the word of God. So he can assist you in prayers, while also counselling you at the same time.

CONCLUSION

In this book, we have looked at how to manage your emotions so that you can enjoy a blissful relationship with your partners

I believe you also had a swell time reading this book. It is my desire that you put to practice all that has been taught in this book.

Each chapter floods you with insights and practical tips on how to deal with a difficult partner. You are better off making judicious use of them all.

It is my impassioned cry that beyond the wordings in this book, the Lord gives us more wisdom on how to live and enjoy a blissful love life with your partner.

Take every tip written in this book and create an action point for your life. The rewards of managing

your emotions are great, apply what you have read in this book and learn to enjoy everything you do.

Please feel free to reach out to me, I can assure you of utmost confidentiality.

Cheers to a blissful love life.



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The success of this book is not magical nor accidental. It is attributed to the direct and indirect involvement of some very important people I have been blessed with.

Posterity won't forgive me if I fail to acknowledge the following individuals.

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Finally to you my awesome reader and everyone I couldn't mention, I appreciate and celebrate you. Thank you for believing in what I have to offer, thank you for buying and taking your time to read this, it means a lot to me and I don't take it for granted. God bless you all.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mrs Praise Chibueze who is popularly known as Mma Eka on social media is a relationship consultant, inspirational writer, verified content creator, and a mentor to several young people.

Her desire to see marriages and relationships stand the test of time and scale through the norms in the society gave birth to her mentoring academy. An academy geared towards providing workable tips to give relationships and marriages a heavenly bliss.

She is the founder of Love and Marriage, a community that helps young people and married individuals gain clarity and understand the purpose of marriage.

She has spoken on several platforms and has helped young people redirect their focus with proven results and testimonies in the lives of several individuals.

She is happily married to her heartthrob and their marriage is blessed with beautiful children. She also has a B.Sc certification in Applied Chemistry from the prestigious University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Mrs Praise is an advocate for the youths and guides them towards self-realization and self-value.



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ABOUT THE BOOK

ifficult Partners can be annoying and equally stressful. You cannot do enough for them, they constantly blame you for everything and if you're not careful, your self-esteem and world would be shattered.

Developing tools for honest communication and little adjustments here and there can lead to a healthy compromise that will put you back to the road of happiness, blissful love life, relationship and marriage.

This book provides you with the right information and wisdom to cope with the tantrums and negativity that comes with difficult partners without having to lose yourself, peace or happiness.

Dealing with a Difficult Partner also provides you with nuggets and top tips to cope with difficult people generally.