

4 Stages of Marriage

There are 4 Stages of Marriage: (1) Romance, (2) Disillusionment, (3) Misery, and (4) Awakening. Due to the high divorce rate many couples never make it to the 4th Stage of Awakening.

Romance

Most are familiar with the 1st Stage of Romance. Life was so wonderful we couldn't stand to live without the other. Our thoughts often turned to the other when we were not with them. We had fallen in love and knew that this was the person we wanted to spend the rest of our life with. Little differences between us were cute and endearing.

Disillusionment

At some point those little differences started to annoy us. We felt bothered by some of those same things that may have been cute a short time earlier. The self-talk in the back of our mind started wondering why our spouse couldn't be more like us. We had entered into the 2nd Stage of Marriage, the Disillusionment Stage. During the Disillusionment Stage we start to realize that our spouse is not the perfect person that we had envisioned him or her to be. Sometimes, especially if our Romance Stage had been particularly intense, we are hurt deeply by this Disillusionment. We realize that the expectations we had of the perfect marriage were not going to happen. For some this realization is too heart wrenching and they give up on the marriage and divorce during this 2nd Stage of Disillusionment.

Misery

Many people stick with and try to work through their problems during Disillusionment. They seek the counsel of family, friends, clergy and marriage family counselors. Some of these people find the key they are looking for from these resources. Many others continue to struggle and their troubles worsen. Often the marriage deteriorates more deeply due to drug, alcohol or other addictions. Sometimes a third party relationship in the form of extramarital affairs result. As the couple finds themselves in this 3rd Stage of Marriage they know they have entered the Misery Stage.

The Misery Stage is where many couples find themselves considering a marriage separation or divorce. When children are involved this 3rd Stage of Misery is particularly difficult on them. Regardless of whether the couple stays together in misery or divorce the children often believe it is their fault regardless of assurances to the contrary. The effects of divorce on a child cannot be over emphasized. The pain is so intense during the Misery Stage that it is common to only want it to STOP. Much like the pain of a toothache that consumes your whole being you cannot seem to think of anything else besides stopping the pain. One spouse may be pushing hard for the divorce while the other wants to stop divorce.

If the couple ends the marriage at this point and remarry other partners they are more likely to experience the effects of divorce with their second or third spouse.

Awakening

Most people whose marriages end in divorce are not bad people. Rather, they are often people who never learned the proper tools for a happy marriage. This is where Retrouvaille (pronounced

re-tro-vi with a long i.) can help. Teams of couples who have experienced all 4 Stages of Marriage present the Retrouvaille program. Instead of giving up they found solutions. In Retrouvaille they learned the tools they needed to live a happy marriage. They learned that marriage does not follow the Romance and Happily Ever After formula portrayed in literature and media. Rather, they learn that there are certain learnable skills, attitudes and tools that they can use to deal with the inevitable problems of the real world.

These skills, attitudes and tools give them what they need to move from the 3rd Stage of Misery into the 4th Stage of Awakening.

Whether you are in the Disillusionment Stage grieving the loss of that magical Romance or if you have moved firmly into the Misery Stage Retrouvaille can give you the marriage help you need to rebuild your marriage. Many tens of thousands of couples have turned their marriages around by giving this program a chance.

Can you save your marriage by attending and working the Retrouvaille program? You will never know until you try. Call the phone number or send an email to the caring Retrouvaille volunteers in your area. Ask them those tough questions that keep nagging at you in the back of your mind. The people answering the phone or responding to your email are people just like you who have been there and pushed through to the 4th Stage of Awakening. They will be able to relate to your feelings of hopelessness and loss. They will do their best to give you the answers you need about this program.

Be assured that all contacts are held in the strictest confidence.

Visit www.retrouvaille.org.