

**11 MARRIAGE MISTAKES THAT
LEAD TO DIVORCE**



DR SUSAN KRIEGLER

11 MARRIAGE MISTAKES THAT LEAD TO DIVORCE

You can never really tell if a marriage has what it takes to last "till death do us part." Still, there are some people who have a slightly better sense of a married couple's chances - if only because they've seen first-hand what drives couples to divorce.

In this booklet, 11 divorce experts (marriage therapists, divorce attorneys, would literally no longer be afraid of it and it would evaporate.

THE SEX EXPERT

The Mistake: Putting Sex on The Back Burner

"Avoiding sex or giving up on it can start the slippery slope to infidelity or even divorce. Let's face it: Without a good sex life, it's easier to give up on a marriage.

The state of your erotic relationship is like the canary in the coal mine; if it's still alive, it's still worth saving.

Your sexual connection is a barometer for your intimate life. Having sex, whether you are 'in the mood' or not, is an important part of staying connected and feeling in love. Yes, you might be great companions or even best friends. And you can co-parent and pay the bills and run the business of your marriage or relationship together quite well. Some couples do that for years, and they tell all their friends and family about how well they manage their lives as a couple.

But without a sexual connection, without an erotic life, being good companions eventually will feel like just being roommates, and frankly, you could probably find a better roommate." - **Dr. Tammy Nelson, certified sex therapist.**

THE DIVORCE ATTORNEY

The Mistake: Having Unrealistic Expectations of Marriage

"I've practiced family law in Southern California for over 20 years. I've often been asked how I feel that divorcing couples got to the point when it was time to call it quits. There are obvious reasons: domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, extramarital affairs, but what ends most marriage is something less apparent: Failure to accept the person you are married to, yourself or the relationship for what it really is. So many couples meet, date, fall in love and marry. We are raised with the notion that love and respect are the most important factors in a marriage but actually acceptance may be the key to a long lasting union.

My firm has seen so many couples divorce and then remarry only to find that the same problems arise in the following relationship. I have said to more than one prospective client, 'Are you certain that you are done with this marriage? If it's not his/her shit, it will be someone else's.' There will not always be butterflies, the sex will not always be hot, familiarity does breed contempt and there will be fights and boredom and all kinds of challenges. That is marriage. But there is also love and family and stability and comfort. If couples can weather the storms, communicate and accept that marriage is not always wine and roses they are far more likely to stay together." -**Laura Wasser, celebrity divorce lawyer.**

THE MARRIAGE COUNCELLOR

The Mistake: Expecting a Partner to "Fix" Emotional Wounds From Your Past

"Make no mistake: Expecting your spouse to heal your childhood wounds will erode your marriage. Although most people don't consciously enter a relationship hoping the other person will give them the unconditional support they never got from their parents, many of us are on a subconscious quest for this kind of love and that puts an unfair burden on our partners.

Maybe you smother your spouse with neediness. When he fails to live up to your impossible expectations, you criticize him incessantly for letting you down. No matter what he does, your husband never seems to do or say the right thing. Confused and discouraged, he pulls away, which triggers a fear of abandonment in you.

You become more desperate for a love that no one could supply and more critical of your spouse's failure to provide it. Increasingly overwhelmed, he withdraws and stonewalls.

And the cycle continues, ad nauseam. If the couple can't change this toxic relationship dynamic, the marriage will eventually end, with either a bang or a whimper." -**Virginia Gilbert, licensed marriage and family therapist .**

THE DIVORCED GUY

The Mistake: Getting Too Comfortable

"I think most marriages are plagued by the termites of comfort. I know mine was. But it's just not enough to say that married people get 'comfortable' with each other after a while. Everyone knows that. Everyone knows that it's easy for two married people to get lazy with each other once that initial honeymoon period of hot sex and fresh discovery simmers down. What most people don't realize is that the **comfort turns to resentment** a lot of the time. The magic turns to work.

And then the work gets ignored.

Somewhere between the wedding day and the day one of you finally drags two bags of work clothes and bathroom essentials over to your mom's, there comes a time when you fail to even ask your spouse how their day went. We need to be more mindful in marriage. And anyone who tells you that marriage should never be hard work is lying. When smart people are dating, they're always on point, always asking good questions, listening attentively and checking their teeth for chives. Why does that go away with marriage? Why do people burn out so quickly on the effort to be someone worth spending a lifetime with? I have no idea. I just know it's the way things are." **-Serge Bielanko, writer at Thunder Pie.**

THE REVEREND

The Mistake: Inviting Mom & Dad Into the Marriage

"The marriage is between two spouses. Not two spouses, mom, dad and Aunt Sally. If a couple does not establish good boundaries and decisive communication at the start, believe me, that pattern of family members interfering can get worse and break up the marriage down the road.

Some couples can deal with family interference and protect each other, but other couples seem very vulnerable to disruptive forces – especially when one partner comes from a family culture where the members are enmeshed and in each other's business at every turn. As a couple, you have to make your union the priority and learn how to form a united front. Be strong enough to rise above the negativity and continue to decide for yourselves, even if the family does not agree.

As for meddling moms and dads? They need to show some respect and let their adult children grow and make their own decisions, like the capable adults they are." – **Rev. Laurie Sue Brockway, interfaith and non-denominational wedding officiant.**

THE MARRIAGE VET

The Mistake: Refusing to Give Each Other Space

"If you're going to make it last, you *need* time on your own. Marital bliss is possible if each partner is blissful without the other. In my marriage books, I write a lot about the value of separateness - even separate vacations. Absence does make the heart grow fonder. After days or even weeks apart from each other, removed from the grind of ordinary life, marriage seems way hotter than the tepid state in which you left each other in.

Luckily, my husband and I both realize that true happiness must spring from within and can never be expected to come from another person. Of course, you must have the fundamental quality of trust in your relationship. Trust allows us to liberate each other to explore our own interests and independence. And partners who keep growing as individuals during each phase of a marriage are the ones with the best chance of growing together and staying together." **-Iris Krasnow, author of *The Secret Lives of Wives and a wife of 27 years.***

THE FINANCIAL ADVISOR

The Mistake: Dodging Important Conversations About Money

"Money is emotional. When a couple gets married, they bring their personal attitude and approach to finances into the union. If an understanding and agreement about how money will be earned, used, saved, and spent isn't clear and agreed upon early on, you may be headed for trouble later on. The most contemptuous divorces I see are around the abuse and misuse of money. Undiscussed financial issues can become larger than life and tear even the most devoted couples apart.

To avoid financial conflict, don't keep money a mystery in your marriage. It's critical for a couple to build a realistic budget, create joint short- and -long term financial goals (and *stick* to them), consistently put money aside in case of an emergency (a job loss or illness) and review these things every so often."
-**Gabrielle M. Clemens, certified divorce financial analyst.**

THE RABBI

The Mistake: Over Sharing Negative Thoughts

"This obviously does not apply when you have something tender to say or a sincere apology. I'm talking about negative thoughts. Most negative thoughts can be captured by what I call the Forbidden Four C's: **criticizing, complaining, condemning** (including accusing, blaming, labelling, insulting, and so forth) and unproductive **conflict**.

Yes, you have the right to say what you are thinking, but that doesn't mean it is right to say hurtful things to anyone, especially a loved one. And yes, repression and holding back on what you're feeling is bad. I do believe we should communicate and be assertive, just not be angry and hurtful. It does take a few minutes to collect your thoughts and run them through the 'say it in a non-hurtful way' mill. But much less time than a divorce will take. When you start to get angry, recognize that while some part of you is truly angry and upset, another part of you -- the wiser and better part -- is truly in love and filled with admiration and respect. Find that part, and speak your truth from there."
-**Rabbi Mordecai Finley, co-founder of Ohr HaTorah Synagogue.**

THE CHILD OF DIVORCE

The Mistake: Treating Parenting As a Competitive Sport

"If there are a few things I learned from my parents in terms of parenthood, it's that there never has been and never will be a rule book for raising a kid. And that parenting is no competition.

My parents had the bad habit of playing the 'who do you like more/who's the better parent' game. If I ran to my father to be the superhero, there were times I could sense that it made my mother feel inadequate. If I depended on my mother to handle the more serious, life-or-death matters (which I did, often) my father would throw an 'I-am-the-man-of-the-house'-inspired fit.

My mother, in time, learned not to pit us against either one of them but it took my father a divorce and its aftermath to realize that no parent was 'better' than the other. They were both just good at different things. To this day, I wish they would have realized that sooner. It's a straw that can break the camel's back for some marriages." -**Jeaiza M. Quinones, writer at Mind of McShorty and college student.**

THE DIVORCED WOMAN

The Mistake: Being too Fearful to Share Your Feelings

"I started blogging to help me heal after a wretched divorce. And in the five years since, I've heard from thousands of people (women and men) about what went wrong in their marriages. The number-one mistake I know I made in my own marriage, and the one I see over and over again in my inbox and from comments on my blog is this:

Being scared.

Being too scared to tell your spouse how you're really feeling.

Being too scared to talk to your spouse when your spidey senses are tingling, telling you that something just isn't right.

Being too scared to roll your sleeves up and dig in and do the incredibly hard work of trying to save a flailing marriage.

Being too scared to do the right thing and end one relationship before beginning another one.

For most people, marriage takes work. It takes commitment and a sense of humour and it takes courage. It's OK to be scared. Hell, it's natural to feel that way. But it's what we do with that fear that can make or break a marriage." -**Jennifer Ball, writer at The Happy Hausfrau.**

THE ACADEMIC

The Mistake: Planning a Wedding, Not a Marriage

"Living as I do near the Mississippi River in St. Paul, Minnesota, I like to think of getting married as like putting a canoe into this great river. We launch with a big wedding send-off after a year or so of planning. Before that, we had the invigorating and life-changing experience of finding and choosing a mate. Few couples lack energy and intentionality during this time of their relationship. But we have a big cultural myth that love and compatibility are enough: the marriage will take care of itself. I've seen that dynamic play out for nearly 40 years a couple's therapist and academic and it simply doesn't work that way.

Once in the river in our little marriage canoe, we allow ourselves to become distracted by the surroundings and discover that the current is trickier than we had imagined.

We paddle but our boat moves gradually south, at first imperceptibly but then the current grows stronger after we get older and have kids. Eventually we realize we are heading for New Orleans, and some of us jump ship, feeling we've lost that original spark and connection. Some of us eventually climb into another boat at St. Paul and get pulled south again. We never learned to be mindful, intentional, and energetic about a marriage. My advice to avoid this route? Check in with each other as friends and confidants every day. Go on dates. Make anniversaries special. Plan time for sex even when energy is low. Be real, honest-to-goodness row-mates." -**William J. Doherty, Ph.D., professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota**

This booklet on Divorce is also available electronically on my website. To download this booklet as well as a collection of other booklets and CD's, please visit my website – **www.susankriegler.com** - or scan the QR Code below. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please contact my reception.

-Susan-

Dr Susan Kriegler
Educational Psychologist

181 Beckett Street
Arcadia
Pretoria
0083

Tel: 060 6215 398
Email: reception.smk@yebo.co.za

www.susankriegler.com
www.facebook.com/DrSusanKriegler
www.cribnotesSA.co.za

WEBSITE



FACEBOOK



**THE CRIBNOTES
PROGRAMME**

