Speaker 1 (00:00):

Let's start at the beginning. One person asked me the other day, they said, Kimberly, what is it that you have seen with your work with couples that are the healthiest things that couples can do to have a great relationship? Now hear me. I know you're thinking my marriage isn't healthy right now. I don't need to hear this information you do. And here's why I believe that the best thing that a couple can do and the best thing a single person in a relationship can do in order to have a better relationship and a stronger relationship going forward is to really focus on communication, relationships, die, or live based on how well the people inside of that relationship communicate with each other. And you know this to be true. You've seen people, maybe it's been friends that you've had, or maybe even your own parents, maybe your spouses, parents, where you have seen them, stop communicating, stop sharing things with each other, no longer sharing life together.

Speaker 1 (01:05):

And they begin to drift apart. That's only one part of it on top of that, once communication stops, or if communication goes South, then you start fighting with each other or these other people that you've seen it happen to start fighting with each other. They don't know how to get on the same page. They're constantly against each other. And when you begin to believe that your spouse is your enemy, then that is what we'll do lead to the breakdown of the relationship. But the joy of all of this new is that it can all be, he fixed nothing that I have said so far means that your marriage is too far gone to stop trying, or that it's absolutely impossible to get right. What you had back. No, exactly. The opposite is true. Now that we know what the problem is, we can begin to work towards implementing a solution that works to create healthy communication, because you see what you are probably thinking right now, since you are just doing everything you can to try and get your spouse back is you are wondering what is the problem?

Speaker 1 (02:15):

And when you don't know what the problem is, everything becomes a problem you latch onto. Maybe I did this wrong, or maybe it's because she's doing that. Or maybe it's because he found someone else. Everything automatically becomes a problem. And none of it you can control. We typically want to look for the things we can't control or assume things that aren't actually there. What I'm telling you is let's start with looking at the communication and what you're likely feeling here is the frustration that you cannot get your spouse to open up and talk with you. Now, part of this is probably because of the communication cycle that your relationship has been in for a while, where perhaps it's either been where you've stopped communicating. And now there's not that trust in your communication. You don't know how to get that trust back. Or perhaps you have had such a negative cycle of communication.

Speaker 1 (03:11):

That that is what both of you expect in psychology. It is sometimes called the dance where you react a certain way, your spouse reacts a certain way back to you. And it, you know, this, you know, more than likely. If I say this to my husband, or if I say this to my wife, I know how they're going to respond to me. That's typically how our communication starts to get off kilter. I'll come home and I'll say, I have got to tell my husband about this. I've got to tell him how I feel, but I know when I tell him how I feel about this, he's going to disconnect from me. He's going to tell me that it's my fault. And I'm already beginning to get angry at my husband before we've even had the conversation. Then when I do approach him about it, I'm more defensive.

Speaker 1 (03:59):

When I bring it up, I'm expecting him to act a certain way. So then when he does, it confirms that belief, I get more irritated. I attack back and this negative communication cycle continues and continues and continues and nothing positive ever comes of it until one day. And it never happens overnight. Although it may feel like that one spouse decides they're done. They don't want to hear it anymore. They don't want to be nagged anymore. They don't want to be attacked anymore. They just want peace. So either they emotionally disconnect or they physically disconnect. It may be that you're living in the same house with your spouse, but you can't get them to talk to you. Maybe you're living in different rooms or maybe you're sleeping in the same bed, but you've never felt more cold and lonely in your life. Or perhaps your spouse has finally left because they're seeking some kind of peace and solace that they didn't feel like they could get inside of the house.

Speaker 1 (05:05):

I am not telling you that you've done everything wrong. I am simply saying that this is a likely picture of what has occurred so far in your marriage to get you where you are now. But like I said before, there is hope in this because now that we know what one of the biggest problems is in your marriage, we know how we can begin fixing it. Here's what you have likely already tried to try and fix it. Maybe once your spouse has left or even if they're still living at home with you, you've tried calling them if they're at work or if they're gone, or if they have left you. And you're trying to call them just to see where they are, what they're doing. If they're ever going to come home, maybe you've been texting them nonstop. Maybe you've heard from other people on the internet or your friends or family, whoever it might be that you need to be in front of them every day.

Speaker 1 (05:59):

You need to remind them what they're missing. You need to be sending the text messages or the emails once every single day so that they won't forget you. Well, friends in a minute, I'll share why that is pushing your spouse further away. Or it may be that you have pleaded with them and begged them to try and open up to you to talk to you or to stay with you, to not leave you. And part of that is because we have a psychological need to not be abandoned. We're scared of losing love. We're scared, especially of losing the one that we love the most and that we have committed our life to. And when we fear that that person is going to walk out on us or disconnect from us, then these primal instincts that are in us from childhood. When we start dealing with separation anxiety at 18 months old, still kick in here, think about an 18 month old.

Speaker 1 (06:57):

If you have not had one, then I'm sure you have seen this happen. Whether it be at school or at church, wherever it might be, where a mother is trying to drop her child off. And the child, once they realize that their mother or father is about to leave them, they begin to panic. They begin to scream, cry, cling to the mother's leg because in the childhood, since they feel, if I can just get my mother to see how much this is hurting me, then she won't leave me. In some instances, as the children are doing this, they're kind of trying to get their mother to feel guilty so that the mother will stay. But there are some children that act the opposite way in this, where they get so fed up. So to say with their mothers, dropping them off, they feel like they're being ignored.

Speaker 1 (07:51):

And so therefore they start ignoring their mom. The mom might drop them off and they act like they don't care. And these are actually two different styles of what we call attachment theory. Now, here is

why it matters in your situation. Those are primal childlike instincts that we carry with us into adulthood. You are likely feeling one of these ways. Now, either you are terrified and scared to death that your spouse is going to shut themselves off from you. So you're putting yourself out there even more. You're pleading, you're begging, you're crying. You're doing anything you can to try and get them to see that this hurts you because you believe if they could just see the hurt and understand the pain that you're going through, that they would change their minds. And they would come back. There's a story of a woman that we worked with and we're talking with and she said, I wanted him to stay so bad that I followed him out the house into the driveway and started banging my head on the pavement.

Speaker 1 (08:57):

So hard that blood started running down my head and he still drove away and left. Now, I want you to put yourself in the situation of the husband in that moment and to see if you can understand why he would still make that decision. Because while her intention was to get him to feel sad or guilty or whatever, that might be his perception of it in that moment was she is trying to force me to do something I don't want to do. And now she's acting crazy in the middle of it. These are the things that we at marriage helper call push behaviors. But the other way that this can come out is by you. Since that your spouse is starting to disconnect with you. And so you start ignoring your spouse altogether because you think if I ignore them, if I see what they're missing, then it'll show them.

Speaker 1 (09:55):

I'll show him, I'll show her what they're missing. They can't have none of this anymore. I'm going to stop answering the calls, answering the text messages. I am going to make them see that they can't have their cake and eat it too well. Here's what typically happens in that scenario. So you shut your spouse off. What is your end goal with that? The stated end goal is to make them see well, for both of these instances, whether you're pushing or whether you're trying to pull away from them, no matter what it is, you can't make your spouse see, feel or do anything. And if you try and use your actions to evoke certain emotions within them, in order to get them to do what you want them to do, then that my friends is what is called manipulation. And it does not work longterm, but even more than that is, you will end up more frustrated and hopeless than ever before, because you will feel like you have put everything out there on the table.

Speaker 1 (10:56):

You have shown them how you felt, shown them, how much you love them and you can't comprehend why they could still do those same things. Leave you stop talking to you, pull away from you, disconnect from you. You won't understand how they could do that. Anyway, you've done all of this in an effort to get their attention to somehow some way, get them to open up and talk to you. And these things have not worked because push behaviors, as we call these things, push people away. We see this happen with people all of the time, but what has to happen is you have to begin to change your behavior in order to get a different result. We all know the quote you likely feel right now. Like no one understands you. And like you have nowhere to turn. And the people that you do turn to are not helping you.

Speaker 1 (11:54):

Maybe they're giving you advice that you try, but it doesn't feel right, but you do it anyway. And then things end up, end up getting worse. Or maybe you talk to them and tell them how much you want your marriage back. You want your spouse back and they tell you that you're crazy for wanting to try and make things work that you need to give up and move on and do what makes you happy. And I get it at

marriage helper. We have worked with literally tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of people where you are and you are not alone. So let me ask you this question. When you started to realize that your spouse was beginning to disconnect, what was it that you began to do? Did you plead wine? Did you beg, did you shut down and try and block them out so that they couldn't hurt you and they could see what they were missing in your relationship?

Speaker 1 (12:48):

Neither of those responses are the healthy response and neither are the responses that are actually going to bring your spouse back. They both fall under what we would call push behaviors. Here is what push stands for. Pleading begging whining. Like we have already talked about. The U stands for unengaged. Unengaged is when you begin to completely separate yourself, Stonewall ignore, but you're doing it in order to try and elicit a certain response from your spouse. The S stands for starting fights. When you use fights as a way to try and get your spouse to talk to you. So even though, you know, it's going to go badly, you say it anyway, because it's the only way you could even possibly get them to open up. Even though in reality, it's pushing them further away. And the H stands for hovering, tracking or controlling behavior where your either physically, literally, or theoretically standing over their shoulders, trying to see everything they're doing, trying to break into their Facebook or their phone or their email to see what they're doing.

Speaker 1 (14:04):

All of those things are push behaviors. And although you are doing these behaviors, because you're trying to save your relationship, you're pushing your spouse further away. So the first thing that you can start doing right now is look at your own behavior and identify where is it in your life with the communication with your spouse, that you are doing push behaviors and what do you need to stop? It's not enough, unfortunately, to just think about these things. You need to begin implementing changes in your behavior as well. So don't just ask yourself, what do I need to do, but say, when am I going to do it and make sure you begin to follow through. Now, here's the thing in the heat of the moment, when you were angry, frustrated, hurt, sad. All of those emotions, you can justify yourself into believing you need to act in these ways. Don't it never ever works. And the next video, I'm going to tell you the three likely reasons that your spouse doesn't want to talk to you. But first take time to really think about these things, write them down and make a plan for how you are going to start changing your behavior.