



ESBA

DEALING WITH MARRIAGE
IN BUSINESS

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MARRIED... WITH BUSINESS

Counselors say that most marriages dissolve for 3 reasons: finances, communication and unmet expectations - not unlike the dissolution of a business.

This is a section of the program was almost excluded. But when you are married, whether you're partners in business or not, marriage has *everything* to do with your business and business has *everything* to do with your marriage. Most challenges and wins come simultaneously between the two.

There is something about entrepreneurship that brings things in marriage to the surface more quickly - if you're willing to let it¹.

This world, full of comparisons, will tell you constantly that you should be happy. You should be made happy. That how your spouse looks or caters to you helps define that happiness.

Happiness is a choice - including in your marriage. And - your vision becomes filled with whatever it is you focus on.

That's not to say that you shouldn't take care of yourself and your health and your appearance, but these are secondary to how you nurture the marriage. By now you should know that relationships and servanthood will do more for your success than anything else.

¹ The principle of multiplication: when you learn from my life mistakes and wins and apply them to your own to shortcut the learning time.



THE M WORD

When you begin a life together there are so many areas you should discuss and many you don't even know are a thing to discuss - like how toilet paper should be rolled or toothpaste should be squeezed.

But finances are something you should always discuss.

Sadly most divorces occur over Money.

But before money is **the lack of communication about money.**

That's right.

Poor communication is the number one source of divorce according to relationship experts.

[Consider these top 10 reasons people get divorced²](#) - the same principles apply to your business.

If you're married, divorced or remarried, consider your current stress factors. Do any of them involve finances? What someone is spending or unwilling to spend money on? If you're divorced, what were some of the factors were in your decision to get divorced?

DON'T GAMBLE

Remember the story of the couple who lost everything, including the husband's life, over a hidden gambling habit in hers? This type of money-related tragedy happens all too often, only the outcomes aren't always as violent or obvious. But the effects are the same - and you should want better than that!

Most fear surrounding the topics that affect marriages, such as money, is based on a lie.

Common lies surrounding fear:

²This is a further analysis of the top 2 reasons cited by clinical counselors and licensed therapists, well-documented in literature.

- They'll never forgive you.
- You'll never be free (of debt, family patterns, bad decisions).
- You don't have what it takes.
- You can't recover from this.
- You're not worthy / beautiful / enough.
- If they only knew...

Fear is a liar³!

Even if you're like the woman who gambled everything away, communication can fix a lot of issues. And if you're the one who's been cheated, communication can help you too.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP REQUIRES A DIFFERENT CONVERSATION

Regardless if you're partners in life or business or both, entrepreneurship generates a different conversation around income.

Consider this scenario:

You're a saver. You're spouse is a spender. Your spouse can see the tens of thousands of dollars sitting in your business account. Their perspective is that you have thousands of dollars at your disposal while they live on a budget of several thousand a month.

If you do not address how you both view money and its purposes, you can end up with resentment between the two of you because you think your spouse just likes to spend money and doesn't understand business and they may think you're just cheap and selfish.

It may sound funny - but it's quite the opposite.

³Read the words as you listen.



IT'S NOT WHAT YOU MAKE

If it's not what you make, is it what you spend or what you save?

How you deal with finances in your personal life affects how you deal with them in your professional life; dealing with finances in your marriage is no different. Sometimes it's just the time of the day, emotions tied to finances from your childhood or the way you say something that varies and can cause confusion in the communication.

It takes both of you to address finances. Use these questions, with a copy for each of you, to begin talking about financial stewardship in your marriage:

How did you grow up? How were finances discussed in your home? _____

Was money plenty or little? _____

Was money a topic of fighting? _____

How did money shape your perspective of love? _____

Does money shape your perspective of value? Is it one of your love languages?

Do you believe in a budget? Do you stick to the budget?

Who sets the budget?

How will you determine the money you 'pay' yourself and your spouse each month or week or biweekly?

What are your spending habits?

Do you check in with one another on what you're buying?

**Do you know your long-term financial goals for the business? _____
As a couple? For your family? For your rich lifestyle? For your retirement?**

How does money work with your business, family, holiday times? _____

Who makes decisions on what to spend on the kids for gifts / sports / holidays / birthday parties, etc.? What do you think is okay for spending on your kid's birthday? On their friend's birthday?

Is this sustainable? Why or why not? _____

Will your spouse have access to business account? _____

Have you read [ProfitFirst?](#) _____

Don't let small things affect your marriage. Set goals together and *communicate* about them frequently, regularly and with one of you naked in the bathtub (don't ask - it just helps).

DEALING WITH THE BIG STUFF (ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S ALL BIG STUFF)

How you deal with finances is just one area where marriage and business intersect.

Hurt feelings, betrayals, abuse or infidelity - these areas cannot simply be 'talked away' but require safety and counseling, at a minimum. If you've experienced these in the past or now, everything you've worked toward is meaningless if it means you're hurting someone or you've been hurt.

This is more than a foundational issue - it's a core component of everything you do and are.

- If you need someone to talk to about these things, do it now. Don't wait.
- If you're not safe, you need to get help immediately.
- If you need professional counseling, get started right away.

Betrayal of trust can happen when we're small, through let-downs and hurts or through physical or sexual or emotional abuse. You may not have dealt with these things in a majorly impactful way - but has your spouse? Take the time *right* now to ask them.



DEALING WITH THE SMALL STUFF

Someone once said, “it’s all small stuff.” The sentiment was that nothing is a big deal in the grand scheme of things and to take life and it’s frustrations with more ease. But it’s the small things (again, like the toilet tissue - no issues here, I’m just sayin’) that can spoil the marriage more quickly than really big life events.

Hopefully you’ll never have a child in the ICU or a parent with cancer, but what about the spouse who never reaches for you or never encourages you?

Take the time to define together what staying connected looks like for each of you & then work to create a plan that addresses both of your needs.

Define the following in descriptive words and specific examples along with time frames:

What defines quality time for me? _____

What does quality time look like for my spouse? _____

What are we committed to in our marriage? _____

What are we working toward together? _____

What is my ideal schedule⁴? How does my spouse define our ideal schedule?

What does intimacy look like for me? For my spouse? Date nights⁵? Romance?

⁴ Think: coffee together in the morning, not vacations to the Canary Islands.

⁵ Chip & Joanna Gaines, of the HGTV Fixer Upper series, state they've never missed a date night once a week in marriage. It's their sacred time. Ours is either when kids are at school or around a firepit once they're in bed.

PERKS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Stop doing it the wrong way!

Marriage in entrepreneurship has many perks. This includes when you're physically intimate, when you have date 'nights' and when you have quality family time.

Areas to consider rearranging as an entrepreneur for maximum benefit:

- Time for sex (assuming you're mature enough for this conversation, sex does not have to happen in the dark or on the weekends; when kids are at school is also a great time).
- Time for dates (lunch dates taste as good as dinner dates and may be tax deductible)
- Work space (separate spaces)
- Agenda meetings (over coffee in the morning)
- Flexible work hours (think: around ballet recitals and soccer games)

Don't forget while you're busy running your new empire who it is that supports you the most. Don't schedule life around your business but business around your life. Place these 'appointments' on your calendar - and DO NOT take phone calls during them!



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