



DATING AND RELATING

LIFE COACH FLÉCHELLE MORIN OFFERS RELATIONSHIP ADVICE ON MAKING TIME FOR YOUR SPOUSE; COPING WITH A PARTNER'S MID-LIFE CRISIS

Q. I love my wife and would do anything for her. We've been married for 12 years and most of them have been pretty incredible. However, lately I've been feeling extremely frustrated about the lack of one-on-one time we spend together. I'm really starting to resent my wife for always putting our six-year-old daughter and four-year old son ahead of our marriage. She's a great mother and I appreciate all she does to create a beautiful home for our family, but the fun and intimacy we once shared before the kids is all but gone. Don't get me wrong; I love our children, too, but the two of us never spend any time alone together anymore, and when we do, all she wants to do is talk about the kids. I've tried to explain to her how I feel, but she either just brushes me off, or worse, says nothing at all. How can I get my wife back?



A. Yours is a common dilemma. I counsel many male clients who feel their marriage has taken a backseat to their children. The key to approaching this issue—and any relationship issue, really—is looking at things from a synergetic, or “collaborative” point of view. In other words, what can you do to affect the outcome you want?

Much like the domino effect, getting more intimacy in a relationship more often than not starts with us. I discovered a long time ago the more people want intimacy from their partner, the less they get it. (Likewise, the less they want it, the more they get it!)

The reason is biological. Both men and women share masculine and feminine principals—the masculine energy is giving, protecting and cherishing, and the feminine energy is receptive, available and respecting. Both energies complement each other.



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Q. My husband of 24 years has suddenly changed his haircut, bought a sports car and started to run five times a week. My friends say he is having a mid-life crisis but I can't shake the feeling there might be a woman behind all of this. I finally got up the courage to confront my husband and he acted like I was crazy. He said he simply wants to enjoy life before it's too late and take care of his own needs for a change. My husband has always been a great provider, a loving husband, and a wonderful father. I want to believe these changes have nothing to do with another woman, but I feel sad and left out. Am I silly to be feeling this way?

A. After 24 years of marriage, your relationship has weathered many ups and downs, no doubt, and probably everything in the between. The two of you will soon celebrate your 25th wedding—anniversary, a huge milestone you should both be proud of. However, it is often on the cusp of such a milestone, that some men begin to think about their mortality and that can be a very scary feeling. According to Robert A. Johnson,

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For example, a woman needs to feel safe in order to allow herself to become receptive and allow a man to protect her. The movie *Kate & Leopold* is a good example of this. The character Leopold gives and gives to Kate, a masculine energy woman, until she becomes available and receptive to him. Once she gets into her feminine energy, she then allows herself to be the complementary partner to Leopold.

So, how can you apply these principals to getting more intimacy from your wife?

Step One: First, give to her your time, affection and love. Send the kids to a friend or family member's house for a sleep over and prepare a candlelight dinner just for the two of you. Put on your wife's favorite relaxing music in the background and during dinner, sit and really listen to her. DO NOT OFFER ADVICE. Just listen. Afterwards, move to the couch and share a cup of coffee or bottle of wine. Continue to talk and create an intimate space between the two of you. If she's had a hard day, rub her feet or give her a neck massage. But just focus on her. You are not to have any thoughts of your own needs at this point. Just stay in a giving mode until she becomes available, receptive and accepting of what you are giving her.

Step Two: Help your wife feel protected and



safe by showing her your intention is to give to her, not take from her. A woman needs to feel safe before she can totally let go and truly enjoy intimacy. According to the *Scientific American Mind* magazine (April/May 2008), a woman can not truly let her guard down until she feels completely safe because her brain's "center of vigilance" shuts down and a widespread neural power failure occurs when she surrenders. Can you imagine? A widespread neural power failure in her brain! It's easy to see why a woman needs to feel completely safe before she can let go enough to achieve total intimacy.

Step Three: Be her hero. Be as good a man as you can be. Make your wife want to respect you. When you feel respected, you'll feel loved, and in return, you'll be able to give her the cherishing she so desperately needs. When she is finally ready to be intimate, really focus on *her*. There will be plenty of nights in the future where she will want to reciprocate!

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the world-renowned Jungian analyst and author of the bestseller "He: Understanding Masculine Psychology," it can be tempting for a woman to react negatively when her man has fallen into 'a mood,' but her own natural femininity is never more creative when she can be an anchor for a man caught in a whirlwind.

Why not give your husband the benefit of the doubt and trust the reasons he gave you for his sudden transformation? Give him some time to work through his feelings. Be receptive and appreciative.

And while you're at it, try following his lead!

What's stopping you from joining a gym and getting your body—and spirit—in shape? Health experts agree exercise is the number one antidote to depression. So along with getting fit, you can lessen your own feelings of sadness and abandonment.

Seemingly, your husband has been a source of solid support for you and your children throughout the years, so be patient with him during this new phase of his life. When he sees his virility is not coming to an end, he will relax into this new life of his, with you, and once again be the life companion you've appreciated all these years. UTS

Fléchelle Morin, Certified ASR Coach, Dating to Marriage Coach & Motivational Speaker, is the author of the book, "Kissing or No Kissing; Whom Will you Save Your Kisses For? A Dating Guide to Creating Your Dreams." Have a question or comment for Fléchelle? E-mail her at fléchelle@nokissing.com or visit nokissing.com for more information about Fléchelle's book, dating philosophy or scheduling her as a speaker at your next event. Copyrighted 2009 by Fléchelle Morin