

How to Save Your Marriage or Relationship from Collapse.

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DR GRACE ANDERSON

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HOW TO SAVE YOUR MARRIAGE OR RELATIONSHIP FROM COLLAPSE.

By Dr Grace Anderson.

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How to Save Your Marriage or Relationship from Collapse.

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Introduction

Our days are filled with meeting new challenges. Your job may require you to work closely with others for long hours. It's normal to get involved in your work, a hobby, or even a friendship outside your marriage.

Sometimes, situations surface that you're unable to predict or control. In essence, many factors exist which can overflow into your marriage. Unfortunately, those factors can wreak chaos on your love and relationship.

How do you manage the rough spots in your marriage? **If your marriage was to go on the rocks today, would you know what to do and how to go about fixing it?**

This guide will help you make it through the difficult times and come out closer and happier than ever before.

Let's look at some common challenges that can strain your relationship with your spouse and how to get past them with your love intact.

Chapter One.

Growing Apart

You're likely involved with several different activities in an average day: getting the kids off to school, keeping your home and yard in order, and ensuring your family eats well, to name just a few.

When there's a lot going on, the connections in your important relationships can suffer, especially the closeness of your marriage.

Let's explore what it might look like if you and your spouse begin to grow apart:

1. **You're spending less time together.** You used to be a real stickler about having dinner together 7 days a week. But you've noticed lately the number has dropped to only 3 or 4 times weekly.
2. **You realize you lack knowledge about what your spouse is currently interested in.** You used to know when your partner purchased new sports equipment, was reading a book by a new author, or had been getting acquainted with the new neighbours. But now, you're unsure about what your spouse has been doing.
3. **You find yourself not thinking much about your partner.** In the past, you couldn't wait to get home to spend some time cooking dinner together or chatting about the latest news story. You wondered off and on throughout your workday what your spouse was up to. But lately, you haven't been thinking much about your partner at all.

Now you know what happens when you grow apart. How can you get back on the same wavelength again?

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Put these strategies into action if you and your partner have been growing apart:

1. **Start now.** Begin today to make an effort to share your feelings about what's happening with you. Your partner will be interested in what you have to say.
2. **Mention you miss having dinner together each day.** Your partner will appreciate hearing it and hopefully you'll both make a point of eating together again.
3. **Be flexible.** Your partner's work schedule may be an issue. Still, make it clear you miss spending time together.
4. **Plan a specific "date" to just spend time together.** It can be an evening this week at home or actually leaving the house together on Saturday for lunch or a long walk.

There are many things you can do to avoid growing apart and staying apart for too long. When you decide you'll walk through life with someone, opening your mind to the many ways you can use to stay close will keep your bond strong.

Chapter Two.

"A good marriage is like a casserole. Only those responsible for it really know what goes into it." Anonymous.

Disagreement About Handling the Kids.

One of the top reasons loving couples experience some bumps in the road to marital bliss is because of the children. Although it's a wonderful blessing to raise children, this blessing is also accompanied by a great deal of stress and hard work.

Not only do children require a lot of your time, but they tend to cramp your social lives. **Unfortunately, your kids can sometimes cause a disconnection between you and your partner when it comes to decisions about raising and disciplining them.**

Noticing and managing changes in how you get along with your partner, early on after you have kids, will tell the tale of how your marriage will proceed.

Mend fences with your partner now and get on the same team when raising your children:

1. **Share your feelings.** Tell your partner you've noticed you're having some disagreements about the kids lately. Also state that you want to work them out because you're striving to be on the same page when it comes to raising the kids.
2. **Ask questions.** Talk with your partner and inquire about what methods he prefers to use when disciplining the kids. Then, listen carefully.

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3. **Discuss the issues.** Agree with your partner when you genuinely share his viewpoints. Next, you can discuss the points that you disagree about and why.
4. **Be truthful and ask for what you want.** Honestly state what you find upsetting about some of your partner's parenting techniques. Then, ask for what you want. See if you can come to a compromise about how to handle different issues with the children.

☞ **For example, say something like, "I'm not sure it's helpful to threaten Tommy with spankings because he's beginning to react as if he's afraid of you. Would you consider stopping the threats for a month or so, to see if his fear decreases?"**

5. **Agree to avoid disagreeing in front of the kids.** Explain you want to "present a united front" to the children so they see you as a loving team. Plus, you don't want the kids to try to "divide and conquer" their parents.
6. **Suggest attending a local parenting seminar together.** State you'd like to do it in the spirit of learning whatever you can about how to be a better parent to your children.

☞ **The bonus is that it's an afternoon or evening out together without the kids.**

Having kids together will be one of the greatest joys you'll ever experience. Apply these strategies to maintain a strong marital base while you raise your children in harmony.

"A happy marriage is a long conversation which always seems too short." ~ Andre Maurois

Chapter 3.

Different Ideas about Budgeting and Money.

Love and money are often a complicated mix. You've probably each lived alone at some point and managed money exactly like you wanted to.

Perhaps you feel you were doing okay when dealing with finances. So what if you miss a due date every so often or avoid calling back a creditor promptly? You want to enjoy life and you're willing to over-spend to do it.

But maybe you're on the other side of money management: You pay all your bills the day they arrive and you would never open a credit card with an interest rate over 15%. When it comes to money, you're all about saving and putting off gratification.

With the possibility of such different types of money management, you can begin to see how mixing the two styles in a marriage could make for some chaotic times and additional disagreements.

Luckily, there are some easy steps you can take to settle your differences regarding how you manage the family finances.

Apply these tips when discussing money matters:

- 1. State your concerns.** It's wise to avoid letting your feelings about money fester for too long. If you do, your emotions may start to seep into other areas of your life. Start out by sitting down with your partner and saying, **"I'd like to talk about two things related to our money situation. I'm concerned about ____."**

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2. **Avoid bringing up finances when you're frustrated or angry.** Attempting to state your case diplomatically can be difficult if you're experiencing negative emotions about the topic you wish to discuss.
 - **Allow yourself time to be calm before you broach the subject of money.**
3. **Keep an eye on your speech patterns.** Because money can be a sensitive subject, being aware of the volume and tone of your voice will help immensely.
4. **Find out your partner's viewpoint.** Your spouse may have a specific plan in mind for the future which drives his current money behaviours.
5. **Read a good book on personal finance.** If there's stress about money affecting your relationship, why not brush up on strategies for managing your cash?
 - **Another positive point about educating yourself is it shows your partner you're interested in doing what's best for your family.**
 - **Plus, if you leave the book lying around where it's easy to see, your partner might just pick it up and read it, too.**
6. **Mention your goals for the future.** During a money discussion, connect your family's goals for the future to how you're handling your money now. This could promote shared goals and a mutual understanding between you and your partner.
 - **When you look at the overall picture of your lives together and how it relates to your current money habits, something might "click" for you or your spouse.**
7. **Take responsibility for money mistakes you've made.** It's tough to admit certain mistakes. Yet, if you refrain from doing so, your partner is left wondering whether you truly see your errors.
 - **Your partner might feel apprehensive about living with someone who appears to lack understanding of how their past choices produced unsavory consequences for the family.**

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→ You could say something like, “I know I made a mistake two years ago when I opened a third credit card account with a high interest rate and ran up the balance. I learned from that experience and I won’t do it again.”

Even though there are those who say money is the root of all evil, if you just put your heads together, you might discover just the opposite.

You can create the wonderful life you want by working together to successfully manage your finances.

“In many instances, marriage vows would be more accurate if the phrase were changed to, ‘until debt do us part.’” ~ Sam Ewing.

Chapter 4.

There's a Workaholic In the Family.

The fast pace of living in the 21st century is exciting, interesting, and ever-changing. Yet it can also push you to work harder for longer periods of time. Sometimes, the work becomes personally rewarding, which is great.

Even still, you or your partner might be a workaholic. And if you are, your relationship can be in for a rough ride.

- These patterns can alert you to symptoms of your partner being a workaholic:**
- They're hardly ever home for dinner anymore.**
- When they're home or you're out together, they're constantly talking on the phone and texting with their supervisor or co-workers.**
- They seem to want to work overtime much too often.**
- They frequently say they're too tired to take part in family activities.**
- They justify all the work hours they're putting in by saying things like, "I'm earning money for us" or "I'm working toward that promotion."**

Did any of those points sound familiar? If so, it may be time to take action and pull your relationship back together.

If you're the one who's developing these workaholic symptoms, you can reverse some of the negative effects on your relationship with these tips:

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1. **Cap the number of hours you'll work in a day and stick to it.** Maybe a 10-hour stint is okay, but a 12-hour day is too long.
2. **Control the total number of hours worked weekly.** Set limits on the number of hours you'll work in a 7-day period.
3. **Limit calls and texts.** Establish a few evenings each week (and maybe the weekend, too) where you avoid answering phone calls and texts. Everyone deserves some time off!
4. **Apologize and explain yourself.** Tell your partner you're sorry for the extra hours you've been working and you were doing it because [the real reason]. Then state what your work plan is for the next 3 to 6 months.

If your partner is the culprit who's overworking, it might be a bit more challenging to confront the situation. However, you do have some options.

Initiate these steps to successfully address your workaholic partner:

1. **Openly acknowledge how you feel about all the extra work hours.** Use "I" statements. Review these examples to help you conceptualize this point:
 - "I'm feeling frustrated because you're gone all the time."
 - "I miss you—it seems like you're working an awful lot."
 - "I'm worried because the kids are starting to ask questions about why you're gone so much."
 - It's perfectly appropriate to express concerns like, "I'm disappointed you're missing a lot of the kids' important activities." Or you could say, "I'd really like you to be more involved with the kids. What can I do to help you be more involved?"
2. **Give your partner advanced notice about special occasions.** Notify them in plenty of time when there's a big event coming up and you want them to attend.
 - Mention you realize their work schedule is crammed, but you'd really like them to go to the Family Reunion Barbecue next month.
 - Remind them one or two weeks in advance about your daughter's dance recital or your son's baseball tournament.

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3. **Ask how your partner feels about their work schedule.** You may discover they're upset, disappointed, or frustrated about their workload too. At least now you are both acknowledging it.

➡ **If possible, steer the conversation toward problem-solving. Encourage them to consider what can realistically be done to reduce their work hours.**

Although there's nothing shameful about wanting to work hard during certain periods of your life, recognize how being a workaholic can negatively affect your marriage.

When you follow these suggestions, you can rest assured you're doing everything you can to stay close and happy. Hopefully, this will promote a marriage which is healthy and enduring.

"After about 20 years of marriage, I'm finally starting to scratch the surface of that one [what women want]. And I think the answer lies somewhere between conversation and chocolate." ~ Mel Gibson.

Chapter Five.

Arguing Has Become A Common Way of Relating.

Everyone has different communication styles. Think about how well you've communicated with your partner since the beginning of your relationship.

In most relationships, your verbal exchanges evolve over time. Unfortunately, communication styles sometimes deteriorate to the point where it seems like all you're doing is arguing with your spouse.

Put these suggestions into action and quickly put a stop to the arguing:

1. **Use a calm and quiet voice.** Concentrate on keeping your voice down and your tone pleasant. Nothing can trigger an argument more like a loud voice or a defensive tone.

→ **Even if you feel you have good reason to be upset, it's rarely effective to speak loudly or with an angry tone in your voice.**

2. **Do something to disrupt the pattern of arguing.** It's up to you to take action and interrupt the destructive cycle of arguing.

→ **If your partner says something to you in a loud voice or using highly inflammatory words, make the conscious decision to avoid responding.**

→ **This is difficult to do because of the nature of arguing. Your partner uses negative language with an "enticingly" argumentative tone of voice and you tend to respond likewise.**

→ **So, how do you change this response? You do so by changing your behaviour to disrupt the pattern.**

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3. **Decide to be the one who “gives in.”** Keep in mind your primary goal is to promote harmony in your marriage. So, it’s important to be willing to do whatever’s necessary. If the issue you’re debating about is relatively minor, give in and move on, if at all possible.
4. **Apologize when necessary.** It’s inconceivable you would do something to upset or emotionally harm your partner (whether you intended to or not) without apologizing for it.
 - **If you were the one who’d been wronged, surely you would want your partner to recognize what they did.**
 - **Likewise, if you have hurt your partner in some way, be mature enough to admit it and say you’re sorry.**
5. **Forgive.** Learn to be generous about forgiving. The reality is we’re all human and most of us make plenty of mistakes each day. Don’t you want someone to forgive you when you mess up? Since nobody’s perfect, forgiving others is important.
 - **Even the healthiest of marriages contain episodes of one partner inadvertently hurting the other, apologizing, and then being forgiven by the other.**
6. **Avoid holding grudges.** Let’s say your spouse uses sharp words with you or does something to upset you and they’ve apologized.
 - **Once you accept their apology and forgive them, let go of any hurt and anger you feel.**
 - **Holding a grudge is a huge block to having a loving relationship. Besides, nothing positive will come from a grudge.**
7. **Diplomatically discuss long-term wounds you’ve been distressed about.** Perhaps your spouse did something three years ago which hurt you deeply, but you never talked about it. It’s quite possible you take every chance to argue because you’re struggling to expel the hurt you suffered from that wound.

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- **Maybe you should thoroughly discuss the old matter with them, state how you felt at the time, how you've handled those feelings, and then listen to what they have to say about the situation. Take the lead now to work it out!**
- **When you communicate openly and honestly, free of negativity, your partner will usually listen. Resolving old wounds, once and for all, will aid you in letting go of your hurt and hopefully tapering your own argumentative behaviour.**

Once you're conscious of the fact that your words can hurt the ones you love, you can take these steps to change what you've been doing.

These strategies can help make the difference between a struggling, argumentative relationship and a loving, peaceful one.

Chapter 6.

Substance Abuse Is Getting In The Way Of Family Harmony.

"The formula for a happy marriage? It's the same as the one for living in California: when you find a fault, don't dwell on it." ~ Jay Trachman.

Substance abuse is rampant in our society. It's imperative to keep your eyes and ears open. Keep this destructive behavior out of your marriage.

Take action and confront the substance abuse by applying these strategies:

1. **Look honestly at your own use of substances.** If you're the one using illicit drugs, consider making different choices. If you're taking prescription medication, review the side effects with your doctor to determine whether any of your potential, relationship-disrupting behaviors could be a result of your prescribed medicines.
 - ☞ **Consider your nicotine habits, alcohol use, and anything else you're ingesting that could affect your emotional state.**
2. **Speak to your spouse about their use.** In the event it's your spouse who misuses substances, you must tactfully and factually state your concerns when they're not under the influence.
 - ☞ **Using tact and being factual means you'll have your emotions under control, speak with appropriate voice tone using "I" statements, and factually cite one or two recent situations when their behavior was hurtful, upsetting, or embarrassing to you. Then, express your concern.**

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3. **Seek drug or alcohol treatment and recovery.** If you believe you're caught in an unhealthy cycle of substance use, get professional help immediately.

→ **If you think it's your partner facing such a challenge, at the end of your conversation about the issue, state something like, "I'm very concerned and I believe you and I should go for professional help to make our marriage stronger."**

Recognize substance abuse is very serious and it can damage or even destroy relationships. However, there are many pathways to recovery.

Supportive people, who are already in recovery, can be found in every community. They want to help. Seek them out if you want guidance, regardless of whether it's you or your spouse who's struggling with substance abuse.

"Marriage is like pi-natural, irrational, and very important."

~ Lisa Hoffman.

Chapter 7.

Lack of Interest in Your Sexual Relationship.

Every marriage will eventually experience a period of time during which the sexual relationship seems to be put on hold. Occasionally, you may be on different wave lengths carnally. Your sexual appetite may be increased while your partner's appears to be waning or vice versa.

Take care of your feelings as a couple by employing these strategies:

1. **Recognize the importance of the sexual connection between you.** It's simply a fact: the sexual relationship holds a special place in every marriage.
2. **Acknowledge sexual appetites vary.** Even if you lack interest in lovemaking now, remind yourself that your partner may be very interested. If it's the other way around, it's certainly acceptable to let your partner know of your desires.
3. **Talk about it.** Interestingly, many couples report they don't speak about their sexual relationship, which means there can be considerable misunderstandings about the topic. As a couple, it's imperative you're able to discuss sex.

→ **Specifically, explore how you feel about your lovemaking: what you like and what your partner prefers. Talking about your own sexual relationship can draw you closer and help you understand each other better.**

→ **Think about what you'd like to share with and know about your partner related to your sexual relationship. Then, find the time to discuss these things with them.**

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4. **Plan ahead to prime your sexual appetite.** It can be titillating for you to think about how you have a "date" on Saturday evening. You'll take the kids to Grandma's to spend the night, go to dinner, and then catch a movie. But returning home alone will be the best part.
5. **Be spontaneous sometimes.** Take the lead to initiate sex at times when your partner least expects it.
6. **Develop awareness into your partner's everyday life.** Take notice of what your life is like and what your partner's life is like.

→ **For example, maybe you're not working overtime and you have all your projects done around the house. You have plenty of energy and time to relax.**

→ **Now, look at your spouse's situation. Maybe they're working harder than ever to get the kids to all their practices and dance lessons. The house is clean and your partner's doing some volunteer work. When they come in the door, you can see they're exhausted.**

→ **Increasing your awareness of how your lives and the demands on each of you fluctuate will increase your understanding of the differences in your carnal desires.**

Reviving interest in your sexual relationship can be adventurous and fun. Have an open mind and be willing to experiment with your partner. Cherish the sexual bond you have. Re-discovering the passion you feel for one another can be something you do together all your lives.

"Three Ages of Marriage: Twenty is when you watch the TV after. Forty is when you watch the TV during. Sixty is when you watch the TV instead."

~Unknown.

Chapter Eight.

Other Difficult Times That Happen Occasionally.

Because marriages occur in "real time," other unexpected situations, like the death of a loved one or job loss, tax our stress levels, patience, and emotions. This sometimes negatively impacts our relationships without warning.

When these difficult times occur, you have to be ready to face the challenges and protect your marriage.

Use these suggestions to keep your marriage solid as a rock during these difficult times:

1. **The deaths of family members and close loved ones.** It seems uncanny that the death of someone close can actually drive a wedge between couples. Yet, it often happens. But, if you're aware of the relationship disruptions which can occur, you can intervene by applying these tips:

- **Recognize everyone deals with death differently. You may want to talk all the time about the one who passed away, but your partner may find it upsetting to discuss it.**
- **Give your partner some space. They may want time to be alone. Take some moments for yourself too, if you desire.**
- **Keep the lines of communication open. It might be tough, but it's necessary for you to be able to discuss your emotions with each other periodically through the tough times.**
- **Avoid getting angry. If your spouse expresses their grief in a different way than you do, it's okay. Ask for understanding from your spouse if you require some extra support.**

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- Spend time together as a couple regularly. Just being in the company of each other can be soothing during times of sadness.
 - Allow time to spend with family and friends. It's comforting to pull together as an extended family in order to support each other in your grief.
2. **One of you experiences a job loss.** A job loss can be a profound source of distress between partners. Practice these strategies to come out on the other side stronger and more bonded:
- Talk about it. If you're the one who lost your job, share your thoughts and feelings verbally. Let your partner know you want to talk about your anger and fears.
 - When your partner suffers a job loss. Go to them and state how you feel. Then, if they haven't yet told you, inquire about what they're thinking and how they're feeling about the situation.
 - Offer and accept support. Demonstrate you've got your spouse's back. Give verbal reassurance each day that you'll both rise to the occasion and get through this together. If your spouse reaches out to comfort you, be accepting and let them know you feel their support. This situation can actually draw you closer and strengthen your bond.
 - State that you are willing to help. Ask what you can do to ease your partner's stress. State you'll go back to work or increase your hours for a while. Mention you'd see doing these things as an adventure. Besides, you're a team.
 - Discover ways to still have fun together each week. It doesn't cost anything to take a walk, rake leaves, or watch a movie together at home. A job loss shouldn't mean having to sacrifice the fun parts of your relationship. Plus, a relaxing night will clear your mind.

By using these strategies, you can navigate the difficult times together and deepen the love you feel for one another. It's wonderful to know you'll always be there for your partner and they'll always be there for you.

"The great secret of a successful marriage is to treat all disasters as incidents and none of the incidents as disasters." ~ Harold Nicolson.

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Summary.

Your marriage is likely to be one of the most important relationships you'll have in your lifetime. Experiencing the adventure of a marriage is not for the faint-hearted. When you devote your time and energy to your marriage, you'll enjoy some of the most positive experiences ever.

Cherish your marriage and consider it the source of your life, love, and happiness. Why? Because it is.

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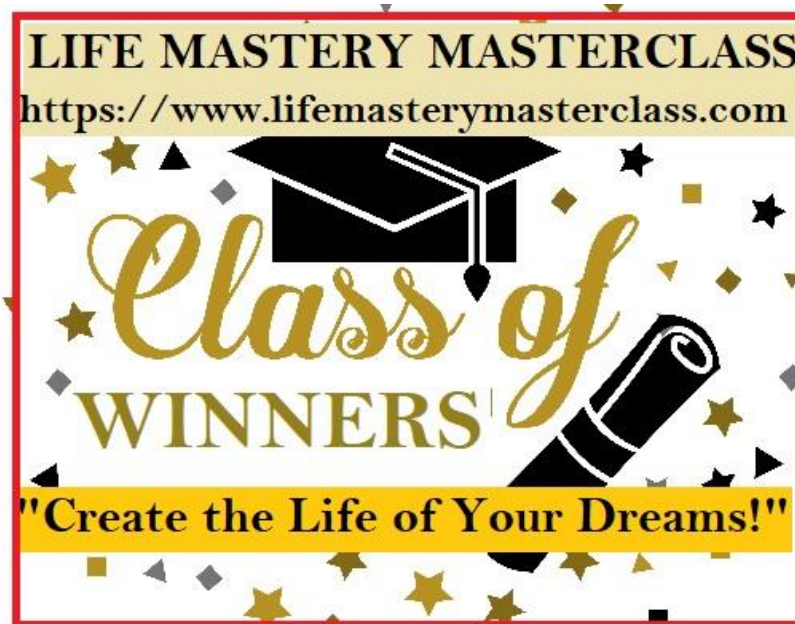
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ABOUT DR GRACE ANDERSON.



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**Dr Grace Anderson, Success Coach & NLP Practitioner.
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**Wishing You Great Success!!
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