

6.3 Current Honesty

Reveal information about the events of your day. Provide your spouse with a calendar of your activities, with special emphasis on those that may affect your spouse.

After six years of marriage, Ed discovered that it was easier to have a sexual relationship with a woman at the office than with his wife, Jennifer. As a result, he found Peggy a welcome solution to his sexual frustration. He spent time alone with her several times a week, and their sexual relationships was as fulfilling as he could have ever imagined.

Ed justified this infidelity by assuming he was doing Jennifer a favor by not imposing his sexual requirements upon her. Whenever Jennifer wanted to make love to him, he happily accommodated her, but she didn't feel a sexual need more than once or twice a month.

Ed didn't want to share information about his daily activities with Jennifer, since honesty would have ruined any hope of continuing this very satisfying solution. Moreover, the announcement of this relationship would have upset her. He still loved her very much and would not have wanted to put her through the grief of such a disclosure. So to preserve a temporary solution to his problem and to keep Jennifer from experiencing intense emotional pain, he felt that dishonesty was justified.

In good marriages, couples become so interdependent that sharing a daily schedule is essential to their coordination of activities. But in weak marriages, couples are reluctant to provide their schedules, because they are often engaged in an assortment of Love Busters. They may know that their spouses would object to their activities, so they tell themselves, What they don't know won't hurt them. They have what I call a "secret second life."

But there are many who really have nothing to hide; yet they feel the need for privacy. They are offended when their spouse asks where they've been or what they've done. They feel that their spouse should trust them, and not assume the worst.

I'm dead-set against privacy in marriage, because it creates an unnecessary barrier to problem solving. When you and your spouse married, two became one. That means that prior to marriage, you had no one but yourself to consider when you made choices, and now you have each other to consider. There should be no part of your life that is off limits to your spouse, because literally everything that either of you do will ultimately affect each other. Privacy breeds incompatibility because it represents a part of your life that is off limits to accommodation.

Even when activities are innocent, it's extremely important for your spouse to understand what you do with your time. Be easy to check up on and find in an emergency. Give each other your daily schedules so you can communicate about how you spend your time. Since almost every thing you do will affect your spouse, it is important to explain what it is you do.

If Jennifer and Ed had established a habit of exchanging daily information early in their marriage, his affair would have been almost impossible to arrange. And if they had negotiated with the Policy of Joint Agreement, his sexual problem would have been addressed and resolved.

Honesty is a terrific way to protect your spouse from potentially damaging activities. By knowing that you'll be telling your spouse what you've been up to, you're far less likely to get either of you into trouble.