

6.4 Future Honesty

Reveal your thoughts and plans regarding future activities and objectives.

After having made such a big issue of revealing past indiscretions, you can imagine how I feel about revealing future plans. They're much easier to discuss with your spouse, yet many couples make plans independently of each other.

Some couples don't explain their plans because they don't want to change them, even if their spouses express negative reactions. They feel that explaining a future plan may prepare the evening for war, and their spouses will successfully scuttle the plan.

Some don't explain their future plans because they don't think their spouses would be interested. There's nothing upsetting about the plan, so there'd be no point in revealing it.

But even if your plans are innocent, when you fail to tell your spouse your future plans, you're being dishonest. You don't really know what your spouse's reaction will be, and by failing to give advance notice, you may create a problem for the future. Besides, if you and your spouse are partners in life, your plans are important to both of you, whether your spouse feels that way or not.

You may feel your plans are best for both you and your spouse. Once your spouse sees the plan succeed, he or she will be grateful that you went ahead with it. Or, you may feel that if you wait for your spouse's approval, you will never accomplish anything. Perhaps your spouse is so conservative that if you wait for his or her approval, you think you'll miss every opportunity that comes your way.

Regardless of how you feel about revealing your plans, failure to do so will leave your spouse in the dark. While no love units are withdrawn at the time you're deceitful, they're almost sure to be withdrawn when your spouse realizes you've held back information. It also sets up the loss of more love units if your plans fails to take your spouse's feelings into account.

How many hours of waking time to you have at your disposal? Do you schedule any or all of that time? Do you and your spouse share your weekly schedules with each other before you commit yourselves to that time?

Since your schedule each week is part of your future plans, every hour you schedule should be discussed with your spouse before you firm them up. I suggest that every Sunday afternoon at 3:30, you and your spouse set aside one-half hour to go over your schedules for the coming week. That way you will not only know what each of you is doing that week, but you will have an opportunity to change any part of the schedule.

Of course, it would make sense for you to discuss your schedule on a daily basis, so that each new item could be reviewed as it comes along. But the reason that I suggest a final review on

Sunday afternoon, is to get you into the habit of giving each other a chance to veto anything in either of your schedules that does not have your enthusiastic agreement. Get used to the idea that you simply cannot do something that your spouse does not like. And give your spouse an opportunity to react to whatever it is you are planning to do.

Now we will switch gears. So far, I have introduced Basic Concepts that help you make Love Bank deposits (Emotional Needs) and help you avoid making Love Bank withdrawals (Love Busters). But there is another topic that no couple should ever ignore, and that's how to resolve conflicts in a way that makes Love Bank deposits into both of your accounts. You already know that you can't make demands to get what you want. And you can't be disrespectful or angry. What's left?

What's left is thoughtful and respectful negotiation. Once you become skilled negotiators, you will not only find solutions that make you both happy, but the very process of finding those solutions will also be enjoyable.