

How to move from ME to WE

Hi Linda,

As promised, here's part 4 of the report, "7 Secrets for Fixing Your Marriage."

SECRET 4: GET INVOLVED

Have you ever heard the phrase "You are what you eat"? This catchy slogan from the fitness industry reminds us that how we "spend" our calories determines our health. Want to be fat? Then eat lots of fat. Want to be healthy? Well, you get the idea.

When it comes to your marriage, I would say, "YOU ARE WHAT YOU DO." In other words, how you and your spouse SPEND YOUR TIME determines the strength of your marriage. Spend it together and you'll feel connected. Do your own thing too often and you might sleep in the same bed, but you'll feel worlds apart.

At the beginning of your relationship, you probably had no trouble spending lots of time together doing just about anything. And, in fact, SHARING TIME was exactly what CREATED THE CLOSENESS between the two of you. But as the years went by, you probably took up separate interests, and began to spend more and more time apart.

Many couples are very good at coordinating compatible lives. He's got his schedule. She's got her schedule. Some couples sleep under one roof, but they lead COMPLETELY separate lives. You can achieve compatibility like this (like you had with your college roommate), which is not a bad thing, but you won't have a good marriage. You might manage your family fine, but your relationship will NOT be fulfilling. And you'll be lonely. You might not be alone, but you'll be lonely.

Our culture today promotes independence. We even have something called the "Me Generation." But a strong marriage requires a "Move from Me to We." Love requires SPENDING TIME TOGETHER and being involved in each other's lives. It's not about being independent; it's about being successfully INTERdependent.

Do you remember when you used to visit each other at work? Meet each other's family and friends? Help solve each other's problems? Ask each

other's opinions? Learn about each other's interests? Linda, that's the ticket!

Of course, I know this doesn't sound appealing if your marriage is on the rocks. You may not feel like being together. But which comes first, a good marriage or involvement in each other's lives? Which is the cause and which is the effect? The answer is: involvement or interdependence is one of the primary ingredients for a successful marriage.

At the end of my public seminars, I'm always fascinated at the interaction between couples.

"Honey, should we get the Marriage Fitness Home-Flex or the Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System?" she asks.

"I don't care," he responds. "Get whatever you want."

I'm listening to this and thinking, "How could he miss this opportunity?" Not the opportunity to decide what to buy, but the opportunity to connect with her, to get involved with her. She didn't care what they bought. She didn't want an answer; she wanted company. She wanted his involvement.

As I write this report, there's a couple in the Marriage Fitness Tele Boot Camp whose names are Jon and Michelle (not their real names). Michelle and Jon agree that they've "grown apart" over the years. They used to do everything together. But then Michelle decided to open a shop downtown. And Jon took up golf, which, like everything else he does well, has become an obsession.

Jon and Michelle want to make their marriage work, but they don't share passions anymore and they're living separate lives. Most people think that's the kiss of death for a marriage. IT'S NOT. If you want to make your marriage work, you can USE EACH OTHER'S PASSIONS to create a connection.

I advised Michelle to find a way to include herself in Jon's golf game even though she wasn't interested in playing. Through our discussions, I discovered that Michelle hated golf because as a child her father never let her drive the golf cart when he played. So I asked her, "Michelle, how would you like to drive the golf cart now?" Michelle smiled and said, "I would love it." So now, every once in a while, Michelle's partner

works the store alone and Jon gets his own personal golf cart driver.

And we did the same with Jon. Jon spends all week immersed in his business. The thought of him going into his wife's shop on the weekend and dealing with more business was nauseating. In addition to golf, Jon liked to spend his weekends using his hands fixing things around the house. Jon is really a closet blue collar guy. So I turned to Michelle and I asked her, "Michelle, do you have handyman work at your shop?"

"Are you kidding," Michelle answered, "It never ends." Ta dah! The shop got a new handyman and Michelle and Jon moved "from me to we."

Linda, it's important to note that the reason this worked for Jon and Michelle is NOT because Jon got a driver and Michelle got a handyman. Even if Jon was a terrible handyman, this could have worked FOR THEIR MARRIAGE. It might have been bad for Michelle's business, but it would have been good for their marriage. The key is personal involvement not utility. It's not about improving anything except your marriage.

You may or may not be able to relate the Jon and Michelle's situation. In the Marriage Fitness Tele-Boot Camp, I work with you to find meaningful ways for you and your spouse to get involved in each other's lives. Once you find those ways (and we always do!), it's like magic. Think about it. How could you get more involved in your spouse's life?

Getting involved does not necessarily mean that you have to do the activity together. It could mean that you watch the activity, plan for it, pack for it, budget for it, buy supplies for it, or research it in preparation for discussion.

How you get involved depends on you, your spouse, and the interest. There are endless possibilities. The goal is to GET INVOLVED in some way so your spouse's interest becomes part of your life too.

And what if your spouse wants nothing to do with you? We deal with that in the Lone Ranger Track of the Marriage Fitness Tele Boot Camp. See below.

As you get involved with your spouse's interests, be cautious about how you involve yourself. Don't show up unexpectedly at your spouse's weekly card

game. Be intelligent and sensitive about it.

Then engage your spouse in discussion about the topic. Ask questions. Show your interest. Consider purchasing a thoughtful gift that relates to your spouse's interest. In time, explore with your spouse how you can get more involved. Be assertive, but make sure you involve yourself in ways that are agreeable to your spouse.

The chances are good that your spouse's interest doesn't interest you. If it did, you would probably already be involved. This exercise is challenging in that regard. It takes discipline. It's not an exercise in choosing compatibility; it's an exercise in CHOOSING LOVE. Your interest in your spouse's interest is irrelevant. Your interest in your marriage is the key.

Consider a father whose son developed a passion for baseball. One summer he took his son to see every major league team play one game. Their travels took the entire summer and cost a lot of money, but it did wonders for their relationship.

Upon their return the father was asked, "Do you like baseball that much?"

"No," he replied. "But I like my son that much."

If you want to get all of the report, "7 Secrets for Fixing Your Marriage," [click here](#).