

Reflections

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Rules for Married Dialog – I

For dialog to be enriching and fruitful, certain requirements must take place. Each couple, once they achieve their own identity, will have to find their special way. There are, nevertheless, certain basic rules. Which are these rules for married dialog? They can be summed up in this way: for married dialog to be effective and creative, it must be: humble, patient and pleasant.

1. Humble. The first quality for dialog is humility. One must not approach the other all puffed up with his/her own perfection, sure of the certainty of his/her reasons. The ideal spouse does not exist, and neither is anyone the owner of the whole truth. Such an attitude makes exchange impossible from the beginning.

The danger for all married dialog is that, frequently, it becomes an accusation: there is torture, attack, and mutual accusation. One leaves this situation further apart than ever. Therefore, it is better that the spouses, when they begin the dialog, have the prudence to exercise self-criticism.

It is something basic. One must be very careful – at the exchange of recriminations, criticisms, embarrassing questions – to examine oneself and verify to what point one can be the subject of censure. It is not so rare that one projects his/her failings and limitations in the other person. With an attitude of humility and self-criticism, the conversation will develop in an atmosphere of clarity, calm and understanding.

2. Patient. Understanding the spouse will not be achieved in only one day. As everything, the life of the two together requires a long period of learning, a permanent education.

All education rests upon patience. We know that it consists of, first of all, in untiring repetition, in beginning without ceasing all over again. That is how it occurs between husband and wife. Sometimes, it might be necessary to repeat the same observation throughout the entire life.....to pose the same petition.

It is not that the spouse has ill-will; it simply happens that he/she forgets or does not form the habit which only comes about through repetition. Important is knowing when to repeat patiently which, in addition, is an attribute of fortitude. In the case of married life, patience is even more important since most of the time only details are at play; but these unimportant petty things can multiply and become very irritating. Impatience grows and threatens to show up in moments of conversation. That is what has to be avoided. Patience will give the dialog a climate of calmness, serenity.....without tensions and irritation.

3. Pleasant. For married dialog to be a means for growing closer, it should not take place with aggressiveness, on the contrary, in the most pleasant way possible. Otherwise, the only thing they can do is defend themselves and attack anew.

At the moment in which the two meet face to face to begin an analysis of the married life situation, it is very important to feel loved.

The inevitable frictions of life in common create, as they multiply, a repressed antipathy which sooner or later will explode. If the antipathy triumphs over the affection, the climate for the dialog will become dense and may lead to suffocation. Then the spouses immediately close up, they become introverted or they become irritated. Conversation then becomes impossible, useless. In such conditions, a strange dialog for the hearing impaired takes place in which no one wants to listen to anyone. Only the affection present at each moment assures a fruitful exchange.

Questions for reflection

1. Do I answer before the other finishes speaking?
2. Do I become impatient when others are speaking?
3. With others, do I have a dialog for the hearing impaired?

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