

Have You Ever Thought Your Spouse Has Become a



Porcupine?

There will be many times in your marriage when you will think to yourself you are married to a porcupine. When a porcupine is scared or angry it will inflict pain on anyone nearby with its sharp quills. This very effectively encourages everyone in the nearby vicinity to get as far away from the porcupine as possible. The same is true at times with our spouses. If this pain involves physical abuse it should never be tolerated and you should immediately seek professional help. However for the majority of couples it does not involve physical abuse, but it can still be very painful emotionally.

The question is, what should you do when your spouse is more like a porcupine than a teddy bear?

1. Remind yourself “This too shall pass”. The reality for almost everyone is that their spouse will not be in a porcupine mood forever. Most of the time your spouse is a very pleasant person to live with. This can be hard to remember though when the porcupine comes out, especially if it stays that way for days, weeks or months.

2. Dismiss any thoughts of leaving your spouse. The truth is that EVERYONE is a porcupine at times and all you will be doing is trading in one porcupine for another porcupine. In addition you have to carry all the baggage with you from your first marriage into your second marriage. It is far easier to learn to live with your current spouse than starting all over again with another one.

3. Give your spouse the space he or she needs, but not too much space. The problem with giving your spouse too much space is it creates distance between the two of you. Too much distance for too long can be difficult to overcome. On the other hand getting too close to a porcupine is not a good idea either. The key is to find the right balance. What makes this difficult is that unlike the porcupine animal which has a predictable distance in which you are always safe this same area with your spouse is constantly changing. This just means you will need to be flexible and aware so you can keep the right balance.

4. Don't ever strike back emotionally. Occasionally, no matter how careful you are, when your spouse is more like a porcupine, he or she will do or say something that will inflict emotional pain. The natural tendency is to “strike back” emotionally. Don't do it!! This is often easier said than done. But if you can develop the self discipline to do so it will significantly decrease the amount of time your spouse seems like a porcupine. The problem is when we give in to our natural desire to “strike back” it reinforces the perceived need on the part of our spouse to protect him or herself by taking on the role of a porcupine. It also ultimately creates a vicious cycle that many couples find difficult to break out of. The easiest way to break out of this cycle is to never get into it in the first place.

5. Patient love will eventually help transform almost any porcupine back into the type of spouse you want to be married to. Love really is the answer. It has an amazing healing quality that overtime is highly effective. The key though is patience. Too many people give up too soon and think that the love they are giving to this porcupine is never going to be returned. All too often they are just days or weeks away from witnessing the transformation of the porcupine.

So how can you unlock the power of love?

1. Look for opportunities to serve your spouse. Simple acts of service is a great way to show your love.

2. When you have the opportunity to have physical contact with your spouse take it. Hold hands, give hugs, kiss often, etc. Most importantly, when you do have physical contact try to think about and feel the love you have for your spouse.

3. Tell your spouse you love him or her. This should be done frequently both verbally and in writing. It is often very difficult for a porcupine to believe they are lovable. It is important to remind your spouse that your love for him or her was developed during the vast majority of the time when he or she was pleasant to be around.

It's not much fun living with a porcupine. In the end we can either do and say things that will help our spouse remain like a porcupine or help him or her transform back into the person we want to spend the rest of our lives with.