

## Is My Marriage Worth It?

*I wrote this about a year ago as a blog and occasionally I pull it out for a counselling session as a kind of questionnaire. It strikes me as helpful as it has for my clients. Read on!*

Conflict and relationships go together. A conflict-free marriage is an oxymoron.

Why? People mature at different rates; they have different values (some they don't even know they have); and people see and experience the world differently. And all of this leads to tension that can result in conflict. And sometimes we wonder if marriage is worth it.

These are the kinds of issues my clients bring to couple therapy. Think about these questions for you and your marriage.

- If you had to create a short list of people you could spend the day with, would your spouse be on that list? Do you genuinely enjoy each other's company? Do you laugh when you're together?
- Do you have the same or similar values, goals and interests? Do you and your spouse enjoy doing some or lots of things together? Do the two of you want the same things out of life?
- Do you express a lot of affection and appreciation for each other? Or is there mostly indifference, negativity and hostility in your relationship?
- Do you feel understood when you are talking with your partner? Does your spouse try to see your point of view? When discussing things, does your husband or wife listen to what you have to say?
- Is your relationship usually based on fairness? Does your spouse see you as an equal? Do you feel you are treated with respect? Or do you feel used, exploited, or taken for granted?
- Do you feel that your spouse will be there for you in a time of need? Can you count on your spouse for help when the going gets tough?
- Do you feel comfortable sharing your private thoughts with your spouse? How easy is it for you to talk to your spouse about sensitive issues?
- When you disagree with each other, do the two of you work together and try to resolve your differences? Or is there a lot of hostility, disregard and contempt when disagreements arise?
- Does your spouse care for you sexually? Do you make love pretty regularly? Or are you disappointed or frustrated with your affection?

The pain can be huge. This happens when conflict spikes and shared pleasures plummet. And even at these times, working on your marriage is always worth it.