

# How to *talk* to your Spouse About an Intensive



By the Hope Restored counseling team

## A Brief Introduction

Are you ready for a Hope Restored® intensive? Is your spouse? No matter what issues you're both facing or how desperate your relationship seems, this guide will help you think about how and when to approach your spouse, what to say, and what *NOT* to say.



## Before You Talk to Your Spouse

1. Evaluate yourself. How much pressure are you feeling to make your spouse attend a marriage intensive? Remember: Panic is your enemy. Peace is your ally.
2. Take care of yourself. Use healthy self-care practices to take care of your physical, emotional, mental spiritual health; find a support base.
3. Let the LORD go before you. You are not in control of how your spouse speaks or acts. You are only in control of yourself.

## Talking With Your Spouse

1. It is best not to use guilt or shame on your spouse. High-pressure tactics will make him or her feel backed into a corner. Allow them the time and safety to come to the decision in their own time.
2. Present an intensive experience as something you are interested in trying. Then ask if he or she would be willing to pray about it and consider trying it too.
3. We don't try to force or guilt anyone into staying in a miserable marriage. Instead, we want to partner with both individuals to move towards a marriage you both love. Ask your spouse if that interests them. It may help your spouse to see this as an opportunity to find healing for their own heart.
4. If your spouse is unsure how an intensive can help, encourage them to call us themselves and ask questions.
5. If your spouse won't call, encourage them to look at the website, especially the testimonials page.
6. Ask your spouse the miracle question. "If God offered us a miracle, would you be willing to accept it?"
7. If your spouse is unwilling to attend an intensive, we still want to help you walk this journey in a healthy way. We have a program for individuals to get to a healthy place personally and move toward positive relational changes. Ask for the 3-Day Spouse's Intensive.



## Mistakes in Approaching Your Spouse



1. Showing disrespect. You can't change a person by tearing him or her down. The most natural response for that kind of approach is negative. Showing disrespect will only discourage your spouse from seeking help.
2. Losing control. Anger is often a way of punishing your spouse when he or she does not give you what you want. It's ineffective in producing a long-term change in how your spouse behaves and destroys any threads of love or feelings that may still be evident.
3. Blaming your spouse. Don't accuse or point fingers. Don't resort to exaggerated or over-generalized language.
4. Failing to admit that you both have issues. The challenges you face ought to be addressed as a team. Don't say, "You need counseling." Say, "We need counseling."

## Here are some practice statements that may encourage your spouse to attend with you:

1. "I'm concerned that if we allow this problem to continue, it will only get worse. I can't go on like we have been. I need help more than anything. I know you are uncomfortable with this situation, but so am I. But I realize that if we keep doing the same things in our marriage, we'll get the same results."
2. "We need outside intervention and direction. A trained Christian therapist is capable of helping with issues and dangers that we can't deal with on our own."
3. "I know God wants us to do better in our marriage, and our children deserve a more stable home environment than this. If we don't get help, we're making the decision to continue in a painful marriage. I believe there's hope for us, and it is possible to have a healthy marriage like we used to have."
4. "I love you with all my heart, but I'm tired and need your help and support on this. If you won't go for yourself, would you go for me? Let's talk about it after dinner tonight."



When you're ready, we're here for you.



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