

# Example of the gray side of marriage essay

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



## **The Gray Side of Marriage**

Humans are creatures of great relationships. Everyone has his/her family, and none of us could say that life can be lived without any close friends. However, among all the relationships people have - that is whether in family, in the office, in school, or in the neighborhood - there is nothing more intimate than the relationship between married couples. Besides, the marriage union is the beginning of human life. If God would have only created Adam, without any consideration of Eve, then we would not think that human generations really exist. In order to form life, marriage is the starting point; procreation can only be attained in marriage. Nevertheless, just like any other human relationships, marriage can grow cold. Needless to say, the common reason why this happens is lack of intimacy between the couple. This can be manifested in conflicts and arguments, less communication, less time for one another, lack of physical and emotional attachment, and other related signs. In such cases, the relationship can either be slow in progress and development, or at worst, stop progressing at all. This particular paper will discuss the effects of unresolved conflicts in a married life, as well as the result of less marital satisfaction and longevity.

It must be realized, first and foremost, that conflicts - such as arguments on choices, and other family matters - are common to every relationships even those other than marriage. The fact that everyone is different from each other, relationship without any dispute is a doubting reality. In fact, if one would look at it carefully, disputes can even suggest whether a relationship is healthy or not. If both persons argue for something, for instance, it could

mean that they wanted to consider both sides. They trust each other's ideas, and are both making efforts in finding the better/best idea. However, in marriage, if there should only be one who decides on any matter, without having the other one contribute his/her ideas and/or positions, then it only points out that they are not practicing healthy communication. It could be rooted to the fact that they do not trust each other's ideas, or that they are both selfish - each one having his/her own way without any consideration of the other person. However, conflicts are not only associated with communication, it also includes the following issues: financial status, marriage commitment and accountability, core beliefs and views, forgiveness, physical and emotional intimacy, etc. Sadly, if such conditions - the conflicts - in marriage worsen into being unresolved issues, then the familiar phrases "in sickness and health," "in sorrow and joy," "forsaking all others," "till death do us part" (Huron, 1984) will all be meaningless. In countless research studies, the most important factors in marital longevity are love, companionship, commitment, compatibility, spouse's characteristics, and financial security (Cooper, 1998). Deficiency in one of these will surely lead to a bad marriage. Now let us turn to the effects of conflicts, happening through those aforementioned issues, when they are left unresolved.

First, it affects the daily activities of both individuals. If both of them are working, commonly in two different workplaces, their performances are more likely to diminish. For instance, if a couple had a conflict and failed to extend forgiveness to one another, negative feelings could be retained in them. Forgiveness is associated with self-esteem and positive feeling upon the

transgressor; it reduces levels of negative emotions such as anger, resentment, grief, revenge, and depression (Strong, DeVault, & Cohen, 2011). And such negative emotions affect the individual in communicating with their boss, taking details of the job, relating to co-workers, communicating to clients, and more. It is a must that one should be high-esteemed, energetic, and joyful at work - and these would not be attained through having negative psychological and emotional conditions. When it comes to physical intimacy between the couple, for instance, sex is important. Men are seen to have a biological need for sexual satisfaction (Marshall Cavendish, 2009). And it is attested that this need also affect the emotional conditions of men. Professor Donnelly, in one interview, says that most of the couples who have sex are reported to be happier than those who have sexless marriage (Pope, 2009). Of course, sex is just a form of intimacy; intimacy doesn't only depend on sex. Nevertheless, couples who do not have such intimacy are more tend to be emotionally 'incomplete', and to have more conflicts - which would also result to greater emotional distress. So for this particular result of unhealthy marital satisfaction and longevity, it is clear than when couples have unresolved conflicts and fail to be emotionally and physically intimate, performance in any activity in everyday situations.

Another result of unresolved conflicts in marriage is upon the whole family - particularly the children. Research studies suggest that conflicts and arguments between parents do not necessarily affect the children psychologically. Nevertheless, what matters is whether the parents argue intensely in front of the children or not (Liberating Lives Christian Counselling & Psychological Services [LLCC&PS], 2011). When children are always

witnessing manifestations of anger, pride, and unforgiveness, they will eventually adopt to it. As they grow up to be stronger individuals, they will eventually become hot-tempered - if not violent - people. Such things that are unhealthy in marriage could also be extended to generations and in other kinds of relationships as well. It is even evident today that spouses who often fight each other are more likely the ones who have seen it in their parents. Although children can be hurt by the outward display of anger or violence, 'healthy conflict management' may be good for them to witness (Strong, DeVault, & Cohen, 2011). For instance, unless parents show forgiveness towards each other in front of the children, it is clear that each fight, quarrel, and argument will negatively affect the beliefs and the lives of other people. This is even applicable in the church setting. In a Christian [or any religious] community, couples are esteemed so high that people would say that they glamorously reflecting the gift [of marriage] given by God. Such union gives great amount of encouragement to the believers - especially those who are also desiring and pursuing marriage. Alas, when couples manifest their unresolved conflicts publicly - that is through their outward expressions towards one another (e. g. being hesitant to hold hands or lean over the shoulder) or the way they speak to one another - it negatively affects not just the emotional condition of the people (the other church members/believers) but the spiritual views as well. The greater susceptibility of couples to marital instability will it also affect morality (Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001). Unresolved conflicts, when worsened, are manifested in the public - which affects other [important] people as well.

Other effects of unresolved conflict in marital relationships are violence, apathy, and alienation. When couples are fighting relentlessly, violence can eventually spring up. First, it could be in communication. Anger and resentment, when aroused, will lead to hurtful words. Arguments could lead to the point when one says to the other harsh words like “ You are not worthy of living,” “ You foolish man,” and/or “ I wish I have not married you”. Also, such cases could also lead to proliferation of issues - even those in the past - called “ kitchen sinking” (as cited in LLCC&PS, 2011). Funny as it may seem to be, conversation becomes ‘ poisoned’ in every way. Second, violence can be done through physical means. One book records that during the 1990s, among the interviewed couples there were 3 incidents of violence against children and 2 instances of violence between the couples reported (Cooper, 1998). It is particularly the husbands [and fathers] who takes advantage of their strength to force their wives to either submit to them or to put these women into great fear. Sadly, it only brings great emotional and physical distress upon the wives, and it even involves those who are not directly responsible for the conflict - that is the children. Added to violence is the issue of apathy. This, on the other hand, is the result when the spouse has already given up in resolving conflicts. It hits the family when both spouses feel that it’s not worth trying anymore (Carter, 2002). Apathy deadens any emotional sense, making the feeling “ almost completely impossible to break through” (Balswick & Balswick, 2006). Moreover, unresolved conflicts lead to alienation. A couple might still be sleeping in the same room, but they may not sleep at the same time. One could feel spending time until midnight reading books rather than to be with his/her

spouse in bed. Such cases - violence, apathy, and alienation - sadly lead to less communication, attraction, interaction, and eventually, ruined intimacy.

Of course there are still more effects of unresolved conflicts in marriages. As life still goes on, there will be more causes and effects of it. However, in light of all the aforementioned effects, there are two drastic and unpleasant effects. That is divorce and/or adultery. The previous effects show that unresolved conflicts lead to less intimacy. Less communication, less physical and emotional attachment, less friendly interaction, less attraction, greater problem involving the children; all these are manifestation of "ruined intimacy". And such condition brings about greater temptation for both the husband and the wife to find someone else who can cater to their own desires and satisfactions. They will be more likely to spend their lives with another person (probably the next friend close to them) than to spend each day fighting in his/her own household. Why drastic and unpleasant? It is because divorce and adultery are such an extreme change from having a wedding ceremony, taking vows and signing up of commitments. It is even unpleasant to realize that such a wonderful gift from God has been discarded and destroyed. The design that God has intended for marriage is 'two becoming united as one', and not 'two getting against one another'. Thus, unresolved conflicts in marital satisfaction and longevity lead to great ruin. No one should ever let marriages lead up to this point. It is a must.

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