



Marriage Rules[©]

“50-50 DOESN'T WORK”

By: Larry B. Gelman, Psy. D.

According to conventional wisdom, marital success requires both partners to meet each other half-way and give fifty percent. But, in my opinion, “50-50 doesn't work”! The faulty assumption is that two halves always make a whole.

Therefore, if half of one person combines with half of another person, the best that can ever be expected in the sum total is two half-people who only make one half of a marriage! However, if each partner meets the other partner all the way and gives one hundred percent of what they've got to give at any given moment, then, the outcome will be spectacular, at worst!

Consider the implication: Partner #1 makes a unilateral commitment to the relationship with Partner #2, and acts accordingly and consistently, to give 100% of what he's got, at any given moment, each moment, every moment. Partner #2 makes a unilateral commitment to the relationship with Partner #1, and acts accordingly and consistently, to give 100% of what she's got, at any given moment, each moment, every moment.

There are no invisible strings attached. There are no hidden agendas. There are no outs. There is no “50-50”. Two individuals, like early American colonies, in order to form a more perfect union, voluntarily agreeing to come together, “one nation, under God, indivisible, with justice and liberty for all”.

In this scenario, marriage is viewed as a “whole”, which is necessarily greater than the sum of its parts. To give one hundred percent of what you've got, each moment, every moment, is really the very best anyone can ever expect to do. If all you've got is 3% and you give 100% of that 3%, you can't do any better than that. If what you've got is 100% and you only give 3% of that 100%, clearly there is enormous room for improvement.

Then again, if you've got 100% and you only give 50% and your partner's got 100% and they only give 50%, the relationship is a loser. It cannot prosper. It cannot endure. It cannot survive.

“50-50 doesn't work!”

Dr. Larry B. Gelman is a licensed Clinical Psychologist at Northern Illinois Counseling Associates, P.C. (NICA) located in downtown Crystal Lake, Illinois.

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