



Marriage Rules[©]

“RING A BELL”

By: Larry B. Gelman, Psy. D.

People rarely forget anything, especially if the experience was meaningful, relevant or otherwise significant. So if someone important to you performs even a teeny, tiny kindness, it is very likely you will remember.

Alternatively, if harm is committed by another, even accidentally or without deliberate intent, it is ever more likely you will never forget.

People rarely forget anything, especially if the experience was really experienced. If you don't believe me, then just try not to listen to the sound of thunder during a severe storm. Or the roar of jet engines high in the sky. Or the gentle patter of little feet walking across an uncarpeted floor.

Some experience is almost impossible to ignore. And trying to pretend it away makes it even more impossible to ignore. For example, try not to think of the big toe on your right foot. Or the beating of your heart. Or the color purple.

Every action we make, rings a bell. If the bell is negative, the sound is noxious and the result is painful. If the bell is positive, the sound is stimulating and the result is pleasurable.

Interestingly, you can't unring a rung bell! Once rung, it's rung. Before it's rung, it's unring. For each and every interaction we have with another, whether by design or default, either we ring a bell or we don't.

If the bell we ring is threatening, unpredictable, accusatory, demeaning, hostile, disrespectful, critical, irresponsible or reactive, then we've rung one bell. Again, if the bell we ring is inviting, predictable, laudatory, encouraging, friendly, respectful, complimentary, responsible or responsive, then we've rung a different bell.

Over the life of a marriage, there will be lots of bells rung, some positive and some negative.

Most we will remember, few we will forget. Consequently, it will be very important to choose wisely and well, how we “ring a bell”, to increase the likelihood of what particular rung bell we will want remembered.

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