

# GOING THE DISTANCE, MARRIAGE FOR KEEPS?

## Five Stages of Marriage

### 1. Passion (Stage 1)

This is the honeymoon stage when romance and intense attraction bond a couple together and that leads to commitment.

### 2. Realization (Stage 2)

This is when a real vision of your relationship begins.

### 3. Rebellion (Stage 3)

This is a time when self-interest often overtakes the interest of the marriage.

### 4. Cooperation (Stage 4)

As marriages progress over time, they inevitably become more complicated.

### 5. Declining Years/Reunion Years (Stage 5)

These years are either the **happiest** or the **most tragic period** in the family structure.

## SIGNS OF WHEN A MARRIAGE IS IN TROUBLE

**Fighting more often** than having pleasant times; having no or **little sex**; **preferring to spend time** with **friends, family, or alone**; dreading **weekends**; **fantasizing** about other partners.

## HOW TO RESOLVE SOME OF THESE ISSUES

**Humility:** This is extremely important in order to recognize your mistakes and make accommodations and allowances with your spouse.

To be humble is to remind yourself that your marriage and family are the most important things.

**Improve your communication skills:** We cannot address issues in our marriages and find solutions unless we can openly talk about the relationship. You and your spouse will need to create an environment where you can talk about feelings and your issues without arguments and without judging each other.

**Conflict resolution skills:** This is crucial for a healthy marriage. You need to be more **flexible** and **open to change** with one another. This becomes important especially when you **don't have the same views**. When you do not have good conflict resolution skills, **you risk falling into the same patterns** that put your marriage in a difficult situation in the first place.

- **Core conflict resolution skills:** Listening, emotional intelligence, patience, being positive, open communication, don't point the finger, know when to apologize, and forgive.

**Kindness:** Look for small things you can do to show kindness and affection (kind **words, small gifts, affection**)

**Do things together:** Spending time alone, time with **children and grands**, time with **friends** and **relatives, vacation time together**. In other words, figure out what makes your partner feel loved.

**Know yourself:** Self evaluation (strengths, weaknesses, and abilities in your role as husband and wife)

**Ask your spouse:** What would you change?

**Know your partner:** Allow them to be who they are, not who you would like them to be

**Do not try to win every argument** and learn to apologize properly and forgive.

**Steadfast:** Seeking to overcome any series of crises, whether psychological, physiological, economical, or spiritual.