

Should I Stay or "Leave" My Marriage?

<u>A Reflection Worksheet for</u> <u>Your Marriage</u>

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Introduction

Sometimes it's hard to know if you should stay or leave your marriage.

With a huge decision such as this one, it really behooves you to think of all of the details and parties involved that will be affected.

These worksheets are designed to help start you on the path of clarity and are in no way a replacement for effective therapy.

Our heart goes out to you and we are here if you'd like to gain more clarity by speaking with us over the <u>phone here</u>.

Wishing you success in all of your relationships,

Rabbi Shlomo Slatkin MS, LCPC The Marriage Restoration Project

Should I Save My Marriage?

Making the decision to save or end a marriage is one of the most significant choices you may face in life. It's a deeply personal decision that requires careful consideration and introspection. This worksheet is designed to help you explore your thoughts, feelings, and circumstances as you contemplate whether to salvage your marriage or pursue a different path.

REFLECTING ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP

• Take a moment to reflect on the history of your relationship with your spouse. Consider the moments of joy, challenges, and significant milestones you've shared together.

ASSESSING THE ISSUES

• Identify the specific issues or challenges that are impacting your marriage. These may include communication problems, financial struggles, trust issues, or conflicts over parenting styles, among others.

EXPLORING YOUR FEELINGS

 Take time to explore your own emotions regarding the prospect of saving your marriage. Are you still deeply invested in the relationship and willing to put in the work to rebuild it? Or do you feel emotionally drained and unsure if the relationship is worth salvaging?

CONSIDERING EXTERNAL FACTORS

 Think about any external factors that may be influencing your decision, such as societal expectations, cultural norms, religious beliefs, or the opinions of friends and family members.

SEEKING PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE

• If you're struggling to navigate these questions on your own, consider seeking guidance from a licensed therapist or counselor who specializes in couples therapy.

5 things to keep in mind when deciding, "Should I save my marriage?"

- 1. Make sure your choice is conscious and not reactive.
- 2. Don't leave blaming your spouse.
- 3. Get in touch with your inner truth.
- 4. Put yourself aside for the greater good.
- 5. The grass isn't always greener on the other side

Answer the following questions honestly to evaluate your feelings and circumstances regarding your marriage. Consider both the positives and negatives of staying or leaving the relationship.

Remember, this worksheet is designed to help you reflect on your situation and make an informed decision about your future.

RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION



RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION



RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

| Ar | e there any s | pecific are | eas where you | feel particular | ly satisfied or dissatisfied? |
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| | | | o your feelings | of satisfaction | on or dissatisfaction in |
| yo | ur relationshi | pr ——— | | | |
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| | | | ONFLICT RES | | 4 to F with 4 bairs Day |
| | | | | | 1 to 5, with 1 being Poor e effectiveness of |
| CO | mmunication | n and con | flict resolution | in your marri | age. |
| | | | | e how well it | aligns with your |
| ex | periences in | your rela | tionship. | | |
| 1 | We listen to | each oth | ner's perspect | ives without i | nterrupting. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 2 | We express | s our thou | ghts and feeli | ngs clearly aı | nd respectfully. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 3 | Our commu | inication is | s open and ho | nest. | |
| | Poor | ■ Fair | Average | Cood | - Eveellent |

COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

| 4 | When confli | icts arise, | we address th | iem calmly ar | nd rationally. | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------|
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 5 | We are able | e to find so | olutions that sa | atisfy both of | us during disagreen | nents |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 6 | We are willi | ng to com | promise and r | nake conces | sions when necessa | ry. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 7 | We give ead | ch other s | pace and time | to cool off d | uring heated discus | sions |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 8 | We apologi | ize and fo | give each oth | er after confl | icts. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 9 | We actively | / seek to ι | ınderstand ea | ch other's em | otions and motivation | ons. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 10 | We commu | ınicate reç | gularly about o | ur needs, de | sires, and concerns. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 4re | there any spe | ecific area | s where you fe | el communica | tion could be improve | ed? |
| | | | | | | |
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| How | / do you and y | your spous | se typically app | roach conflic | ts? | _ |
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EMOTIONAL CONNECTION AND INTIMACY

Please rate each statement below on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent. Use this scale to evaluate the level of emotional connection and intimacy in your marriage.

Reflect on each statement and indicate how well it resonates with your experiences in your relationship.

| 1 | We share or | ur deepes | st thoughts an | d feelings wit | h each other. |
|----------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 2 | I feel emotion | onally sup | ported by my | spouse. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 3 | We regularl | y express | affection tow | ards each oth | ner. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 4 | I feel unders | stood and | accepted by | my spouse. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 5 | We make tir | me to con | nect on an en | notional level. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 6 | Physical inti | macy is a | n important as | spect of our re | elationship. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 7 | We prioritize | e spendin | g quality time | together. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 8 | We enjoy er | ngaging in | meaningful c | onversations | with each other. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 9 | I feel a stror | ng sense | of closeness a | and bond with | n my spouse. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 10 | We are attu | ned to ea | ch other's em | otional needs | and cues. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |
| 11 | Our relation | ship is ch | aracterized by | / trust and vul | nerability. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent |

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION AND INTIMACY

| 12 V | Ve are con | nfortable s | sharing our hop | oes and drea | ms with each other. | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|--|
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 13 | feel secur | e in expres | ssing my vulne | erabilities to r | my spouse. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 14 ∨ | We actively | work on c | deepening our | emotional co | onnection. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 15 ∨ | We express | s apprecia | tion and gratit | ude towards | each other regularly. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 16 | feel valued | d and cher | ished by my s | pouse. | | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 17 ∨ | Ve create | opportunit | ies for intimac | y and connec | ction in our daily lives. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 18 ۷ | We support | t each othe | er through bot | h joyful and o | challenging moments. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 19 | feel a dee | p sense of | love and con | nection with | my spouse. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| Are t | there any si | oecific area | as where you fe | eel your emot | ional connection could | |
| | eepened? | | | • | | |
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| How | do you and | l your spou | se nurture inti | macy in your r | elationship? | |
| How | do you and | l your spou | se nurture inti | macy in your r | elationship? | |
| How | do you and | l your spou | se nurture intii | nacy in your r | elationship? | |
| How | do you and | l your spou | se nurture inti | macy in your r | elationship? | |

PHYSICAL INTIMACY

Please rate each statement below on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent. Use this scale to evaluate the level of physical intimacy in your relationship.

Reflect on each statement and indicate how well it resonates with your experiences in your relationship. Consider factors such as frequency, quality, and satisfaction with physical intimacy.

| 1 | We regular and cuddlin | | in physical aff | fection, such | as hugging, kissin | g, |
|---|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------|
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 2 | Our physica | ıl intimacy | brings us clos | ser together | emotionally. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 3 | We prioritiz | e intimacy | and make tim | e for it in our | busy schedules. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 4 | Our sexual i | relationsh | ip is fulfilling a | nd satisfying | for both of us. | |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 5 | We openly bedroom. | communi | cate about our | desires and | preferences in the |) |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 6 | We feel corphysical inti | | expressing ou | r needs and | boundaries regard | ing |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 7 | Physical inti | macy is a | n essential par | t of our relat | ionship satisfactio | n. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 8 | Our physica | | ion deepens o | ur emotional | bond and strength | nens |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |
| 9 | We enjoy ex | xploring n | ew ways to co | nnect physic | ally with each othe | er. |
| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Excellent | |

PHYSICAL INTIMACY 10 Our physical relationship is characterized by mutual respect and consent. Poor Fair Average Good Excellent 11 We are attentive to each other's physical needs and desires. Poor Fair Average Good Excellent 12 Physical intimacy is an enjoyable and pleasurable aspect of our relationship. Poor Fair Average Good Excellent 13 We feel emotionally safe and secure when being intimate with each other. Poor Fair Average Good **Excellent** 14 Our physical connection enhances our overall sense of well-being and happiness. **Poor** Fair Average Good **Excellent 15** We make efforts to keep our physical relationship exciting and fulfilling. **Poor** Fair Average Good **Excellent 16** We are open to trying new things and experimenting in the bedroom. Fair **Poor Average** Good **Excellent** Are there any specific factors contributing to or hindering physical intimacy? What barriers, if any, exist in your physical relationship, and how can they be addressed?

Compatibility Assessment

Assess the compatibility between you and your partner in terms of lifestyle, values, and long-term goals. Reflect on areas of alignment and potential conflicts.

Evaluate the compatibility between you and your partner by considering various aspects of your relationship, including lifestyle choices, core values, and future aspirations. Reflect on areas where you align well and potential areas of conflict. Write down your thoughts and reflections in the spaces provided.

1 <u>Lifestyle Compatibility</u> How do your daily routines and habits align with your partner's? Are there any significant differences in your spending habits and financial management styles? What leisure activities or interests do you and your partner share, and how do you engage in them together? Do you have compatible career aspirations and similar views on work-life balance? How do you navigate differences in lifestyle preferences within your relationship?

Compatibility Assessment

2 Values Compatibility What core values do you and your partner prioritize in your lives? How do your religious or spiritual beliefs influence your relationship dynamics? Are there any areas of moral or ethical alignment or conflict within your relationship? How do you and your partner approach family relationships and societal expectations? Have you discussed your political views and how they may impact your relationship?

Compatibility Assessment

3 Long-Term Goals Compatibility

| What are your individual life goals and aspirations, and how do they align with your partner's? |
|---|
| |
| Have you discussed your plans for the future, including career, family, and travel goals? |
| |
| How do you and your partner prioritize financial stability and savings for the future? |
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| Do you have similar preferences regarding housing and living arrangements? |
| |
| Have you explored potential compromises or adjustments to accommodate each other's long-term goals? |
| |

CHILD WELL BEING (IF APPLICABLE)

Reflect on how divorce might impact your children emotionally, socially, and academically. Consider their needs and how co-parenting arrangements could support their well-being.

Think about the potential effects of divorce on your children and how you, as parents, can prioritize their well-being during this challenging time. Consider each question carefully and jot down your thoughts and reflections.

EMOTIONAL IMPACT:

HOW MIGHT DIVORCE AFFECT YOUR CHILDREN'S **EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING?** What emotions do you think your children may experience during and after the divorce process? 1 2 HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN EMOTIONALLY DURING THIS TRANSITION?

CHILD WELL BEING (IF APPLICABLE)

Reflect on how divorce might impact your children emotionally, socially, and academically. Consider their needs and how co-parenting arrangements could support their well-being.

Think about the potential effects of divorce on your children and how you, as parents, can prioritize their well-being during this challenging time. Consider each question carefully and jot down your thoughts and reflections.

SOCIAL IMPACT

| | How might divorce influence your children's social interactions and |
|---|---|
| | relationships? |
| _ | |
| | |
| | |
| | WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO HELP |
| | YOUR CHILDREN MAINTAIN HEALTHY |
| | SOCIAL CONNECTIONS? |
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CHILD WELL BEING (IF APPLICABLE)

Reflect on how divorce might impact your children emotionally, socially, and academically. Consider their needs and how co-parenting arrangements could support their well-being.

Think about the potential effects of divorce on your children and how you, as parents, can prioritize their well-being during this challenging time. Consider each question carefully and jot down your thoughts and reflections.

ACADEMIC IMPACT

| v might divorce im | pact your children's academic performance motivation? |
|--------------------|---|
| | |
| | |
| HOW CA | AN YOU SUPPORT YOUR |
| CHILDREN | 'S ACADEMIC NEEDS AND |
| ENCOU | RAGE THEIR SUCCESS? |

CHILD WELL BEING (IF APPLICABLE)

Reflect on how divorce might impact your children emotionally, socially, and academically. Consider their needs and how co-parenting arrangements could support their well-being.

Think about the potential effects of divorce on your children and how you, as parents, can prioritize their well-being during this challenging time. Consider each question carefully and jot down your thoughts and reflections.

CO-PARENTING ARRANGEMENTS

| HOW DO YOU ENVISION CO-PARENTING ARRANGEMENTS |
|---|
| THAT PRIORITIZE YOUR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING? |
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| What communication strategies can you implement with your co- |
| parent to ensure consistency and stability for your children? |
| parent to ensure consistency and stability for your children: |
| 1 |
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| |
| 3 |
| |
| HOW CAN YOU AND YOUR CO-PARENT COLLABORATE TO |
| ADDRESS ANY CONCERNS OR ISSUES THAT MAY ARISE |
| REGARDING YOUR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING? |
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CHILD WELL BEING (IF APPLICABLE)

Reflect on how divorce might impact your children emotionally, socially, and academically. Consider their needs and how co-parenting arrangements could support their well-being.

Think about the potential effects of divorce on your children and how you, as parents, can prioritize their well-being during this challenging time. Consider each question carefully and jot down your thoughts and reflections.

CHILD-CENTERED DECISION-MAKING

| | - | = = | - | cess to help na ır children's we | _ |
|-----|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| HOW | CAN YOU | INVOLV | E YOUR | CHILDREN | I N |
| D | | MAKING ECT THE | | SES THAT S? | |
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PROS AND CONS

List the potential advantages and disadvantages of staying in the relationship versus divorcing. Consider short-term and long-term implications for both options. Reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of each option and jot down your thoughts in the spaces provided.

| 1 | Staying in the Relationship |
|---|-----------------------------|
| | ADVANTAGES |
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| | DISADVANTAGES |
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PROS AND CONS

List the potential advantages and disadvantages of staying in the relationship versus divorcing. Consider short-term and long-term implications for both options. Reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of each option and jot down your thoughts in the spaces provided.

| 1 | Divorcing | |
|---|--------------|---|
| | ADVANTAGES | |
| | | |
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| | DISADVANTAGE | S |
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PROS AND CONS

Reflection questions:

| How do the potential advantages and disadvantages of staying in the relationship versus divorcing align with your personal values and priorities? |
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| Which option seems to offer the most benefits for your overall well-being and happiness, both in the short-term and long-term? |
| Are there any specific factors or considerations that heavily influence your decision-making process? |
| How might your decision impact other aspects of your life, such as your children, finances, and social support network? |
| What steps can you take to address any concerns or challenges associated with your chosen path forward? |
| |

PROS AND CONS

Envision what your ideal future looks like, both within and outside the current relationship. Reflect on how each scenario aligns with your values and aspirations.

Instructions: Imagine two potential futures for yourself: one within your current relationship and one outside of it. Consider what your ideal life would look like in each scenario and how it aligns with your values, goals, and aspirations. Write down your reflections in the spaces provided.

1 Future Within the Current Relationship:

Describe your ideal future within your current relationship. Consider aspects such as:

- Your relationship dynamics
- Family life
- Career and personal goals

| Overall happiness and fulfillment | |
|---|--|
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2 Future Outside of the Current Relationship:

Envision your ideal future if you were to pursue divorce and move forward on your own. Consider aspects such as:

- Personal growth and development
- Independence and autonomy
- · Social connections and support network
- Career and life goals

3 Relationship Stages

Are you and your spouse struggling to see eye-to-eye, hoping to revive your relationship?

Relationships occur in stages, and the ups and downs we experience are normal. However unpleasant these points of contention serve a higher purpose; making a marriage change for the better. Understanding relationship cycles and stage helps couples normalize their situation and provide hope that their marriage can thrive once again.

STAGE 1: ROMANTIC LOVE

The **Romantic Love** stage begins when you first fall in love with your spouse. You may feel a sense of oneness or completion. Most couples in this relationship stage are convinced that it will last forever.

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Intense attraction and passion.
- Little conflict, as differences are often overlooked or minimized.
- Strong emotional connection and mutual admiration.

The Honeymoon is Over & Relationship Problems Begin

The luster of the romantic stage has worn off and we have forgotten why we truly picked each other in the first place. After the romantic stage comes the inevitable power struggle stage.

STAGE 2: THE POWER STRUGGLE

The **Power Struggle** begins after commitment. There is an intense feeling of disillusionment in this stage, almost as if we were duped into marrying the wrong partner.

In order to get back to the connection we experienced in the beginning of our relationship and give it permanence, we must work on our relationship. Marriage is the perfect opportunity for self-growth. More than just a positive spin on dealing with conflict, it is the reason the two of you were brought together. The very challenges and frustrations you experience in your relationship are necessary to elicit growth.

CHARACTERISTICS:

- · Increased tension and disagreements.
- Communication breakdowns and misunderstandings become more frequent.
- Feelings of frustration, disappointment, and resentment may emerge.

STAGE 3: REAL LOVE OR THE CONSCIOUS MARRIAGE

Most couples in the Power struggle are not aware of what they are experiencing. They wind up getting divorced or living as roommates instead of soulmates. Couples that wake up and become conscious begin the journey to the third stage of relationships which is called **Real Love or the Conscious Marriage.**

In this stage, you and your partner may find yourselves questioning the viability of the relationship. You're faced with important decisions about the future and whether to stay together or pursue separation.

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Intense introspection and soul-searching regarding the relationship's future.
- Evaluating the pros and cons of staying together versus separating.
- Seeking clarity and guidance from trusted friends, family, or professionals.

In order to get back to the connection we experienced in the beginning of our relationship and give it permanence, we must work on our relationship. Marriage is the perfect opportunity for *self-growth*. More than just a positive spin on dealing with conflict, it is the reason the two of you were brought together. The very challenges and frustrations you experience in your relationship are necessary to elicit growth.

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize: The Real Loving Phase is Waiting

In order to get back to the connection we experienced in the beginning of our relationship and give it permanence, we must work on our relationship. Marriage is the perfect opportunity for *self-growth*. More than just a positive spin on dealing with conflict, it is the reason the two of you were brought together. The very challenges and frustrations you experience in your relationship are necessary to elicit growth.

Contact Us

Speak to a Marriage Counselor at The Marriage Restoration Project





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Book a time to talk

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