

Can your Marriage Grow without Change?

People find change such a difficult thing to do. Many insist that they are creatures of habit. But not all habit is good. And some habits need to be adjusted or new ones formed. People who don't want to change use the very common argument,

"That's the way I am."

One should recognise when he needs to make changes in himself and his actions and then begin to take the necessary steps towards those change. All of us need to change because in life, there is no growth without it.

It's not always pleasant. History is full of mankind's struggle against change. But you can't make progress without it. At one time in my life, I found it hard to change. I liked doing things the way I had always done them. I was comfortable with the way I was. But from the time I came to know Jesus and began to expose myself to inspirational teaching, I found myself changing and it wasn't as difficult as I thought. Several years ago in the mid-nineties, I heard Chris Oyakhilome say,

"If you want to grow, be quick to change."

I took that to heart and began to practice this in my life because I wanted to grow, I wanted to improve. Do you? Do you want your marriage to grow and improve? Then you need to be ready to make changes. Some of them might be difficult, some might be easy, but the results will always be beneficial.

Remember what we said about people saying that they are creatures of habit? Well for those who want to be happy in marriage and ensure that they don't make life miserable for their spouses, they may need to start forming new habits or be ready to adjust to a new way of doing things because like it or not, marriage is a different situation from the single life. Add children to the mix, and it means that you need to make a whole lot more adjustments. Don't be too rigid. The way you are may have worked for you while you were by yourself, but now that you're with someone else, things have to be different.

Because I had learnt this at a younger age, I made some effort to adjust to my new situation as a wife. My family was surprised when from a few minutes after the "I dos" I started responding to my young husband as the one whom I should listen to. He was now my husband and so he was the one in charge. Not my parents or older relatives. I remember one of them remarking on my wedding day, "Are you already treating Chuka as the one in charge?" I replied, "He's my husband, isn't he?" And he was, even though we had just been married a few minutes before, I knew that the situation had changed and I had to adjust to it.

Some people can see that you're changing because you're married now and may resist it. They want you to be the same way you always were. They may even tell you beforehand, "I hope marriage won't change you." And you might unwisely remark, "Don't worry, it won't." Well it should. You're no longer single, but married. That's a change in itself.

You know how they say that you can't fit a round peg in a square hole, or vice-versa? Well you can't fit a single person into a marriage hole. So look out for your single or divorced friends who will try to manipulate you into staying the same. I had a friend who kept on telling me, "you've really changed, you've really changed." And I felt bad about it for a while because our very close relationship wasn't the way it was before and I knew that she wasn't happy about it. Then I had an epiphany. When she made the same remark again to me one day, I said, "Yes I have changed, I'm married." We are still close friends. But our relationship isn't exactly the way it was before because a new situation requires new responsibilities, new accountabilities, and new habits.

How does change start? It starts with the mind. There can be no permanent positive change in your marriage or life without a change or adjustment in the way you think or see things. Are you ready? Can you do it?

King Solomon says, "As a man thinks in heart so is he."

Why does it start with the mind? Because we are pulled in the direction of our thoughts. Our lives are a reflection of the way we think. Our thoughts are shaped by the environment we grew up in, the friends we have, the people we listen to (books and the media), and the things that we give attention to. So don't resist change, find resources that will help you make positive changes in the way you think. It will move your relationship forward in the right direction.

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Valentina Ibeachum has been counselling pre-wed and married couples for several years. She helps them prevent and resolve relationship problems by providing effective guidelines for building strong relationships. For FREE advice, visit her website <http://www.relationshipwrks.com> now.