

The Couple Council

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Many couples have used couple councils and have reaped the benefits of getting more things accomplished and enjoying their relationship more. They have found that bills were getting paid on time, meals were more organized, fun dates were more common and jobs were equally distributed. Also, there was less nagging, less bickering and fewer breakdowns in communication. While couples frequently discuss things, they find with couple councils they can confront difficult decisions and concerns more directly.

Couples meet once a week at a pre-arranged time. Couples who have tried couple councils have discovered many benefits.

Couple Councils help to:

1. Eliminate nagging.
2. Involve both people in decision-making.
3. Encourage continued involvement in the relationship.
4. Encourage discussion and possible reassessment of roles in home and work.
5. Foster mutual responsibility and respect.
6. Eliminate grudge holding.
7. Minimize the number of crisis situations.
8. Promote organization and planning.
9. Minimize misunderstandings.
10. Keep lines of communication open.

You might find yourself thinking: “We talk together—why make it rigid and pre-planned?”

Couples have found that the organized, regular meeting tends to open the communication rather than box it in. When you know the other person’s feelings it frees you from guessing, assuming, and holding expectations that haven’t been communicated. You won’t pussy-foot around wondering what he/she will be doing, saying, feeling, or whether your decision to spend Tuesday evening away from home will be accepted, cause havoc, or go unnoticed.

A couple council is a way to maintain genuine concern for each other without meddling or anxiousness on the part of either partner.

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For those who might be interested in trying a couple council, here are a few guidelines:

1. Keep the meeting brief. It may help to set a time limit.
2. Keep a notebook in a central location. Compile an agenda during the week by writing down problems and ideas as they occur.
3. Keep minutes in the notebook concerning decisions made at the council. (By accumulating the notebook material you will be able to see your growth in working together over the weeks and months.) Alternate each week who keeps the minutes and records the decisions. The writer can read each recorded decisions to the other, or you can consult during writing it, so you are in agreement on the decision.
4. Find a regular meeting time during the week when you can both be uninterrupted.
5. If you are just starting out it's a good idea to devote the first meeting to planning an enjoyable date or project rather than tackling the problems.
6. Each person has the right to veto suggestions he/she is unwilling to go along with. The point is to find ideas and solutions each can agree to.
7. Keep the notebook in a mutually convenient place so each person can have access to it during the week.

The couple council is not a “gripe” session, but a resource for keeping communication open, sharing feelings, solving problems, decision making, and planning. Try to see and understand each other's point of view. Be willing to follow through on agreements.

At each meeting after the first one:

1. Read the minutes from the last meeting.
2. Discuss how agreements worked.
3. Bring up new business.
4. Summarize and clarify new agreements reached.

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