



Dr. Tracy's Counseling Services

20 years of experience

Q: My husband asked me for a separation. What should I do?

A: Very few women or men know how to respond when their spouse is asking for a separation. However, most know that they have hit a crossroads in their marriage and need to make the best decision possible. It is important to find out what your husband is really trying to accomplish with the separation. Does he really just need time to think, freedom to date other people or is he trying to ease you into a divorce. These type of questions can frustrate you and move you towards the negativity that can make things worse.

Sometimes men just need some distance to reflect. They may be confused about what they feel and are exasperated with fighting about the same issues. As frustrating as it is to not know exactly why he is asking for the separation, sometimes you are better off focusing on where you go from here.

Many women try to change his mind about the separation. They may go on a campaign to point out his flaws in thinking or that he is being unreasonable or selfish. Even if these things are true, you may only reinforce his desire to be on his own. Many times, the wife offers a compromise and sometimes this works. You can offer to leave the house or do a separation in the home.

One of the biggest mistakes couples make is keeping the separation open-ended. It is important to know how often you will check in with one another. How long will the separation last? Will you attend marital counseling during this time?

Try not to think of the process as all or nothing. Leave the intense topics for marital counseling sessions. Use your check in time for fun, upbeat activities. You want to be able to build on the positive connection so that you are both able to have hope for the future. If he is already dating someone new, it will be very difficult to work towards reconciliation but it is possible. Talking to a professional counselor helps you to focus on how to move forward.

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