

# 10 DUMB MISTAKES VERY SMART COUPLES MAKE – MISTAKE #2

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## THEY FORGET THAT INFATUATION IS EFFORTLESS AND THAT REAL LOVE TAKES WORK.

### It's not what HASHEM wanted

Imagine you meet an old friend. You have haven't seen him in years, and you barely recognize him because he's huge. When you were kids, he was a toothpick, but now he's a hundred pounds overweight, chain smokes, and can barely move. You say to him, "Shmeil. You look terrible!"

"I know. I know," he responds, "But what can I do? I love to eat. I hate exercise. And I'm so busy that I don't get more than three hours' sleep a night."

"But Shmeil," you say. "What about your health?"

"My health?" he says incredulously. "My health? It's lousy! I get sick all the time. I can barely walk up a flight of steps. And my energy level is almost nothing. But what can I do? It's the will of HASHEM that I should suffer. It's what HASHEM wants, and I accept it."

Ironically, he is correct. It is the will of HASHEM because nothing can occur that isn't the will of HASHEM. Yet that doesn't mean HASHEM wanted him to suffer. There are some issues that HASHEM puts into man's control. One is the ability to wreck his health. If a person doesn't take care of himself, his health will decline, and he'll pay the price. But that doesn't mean that's what HASHEM wanted for him. HASHEM allowed him to choose his lifestyle, and his condition is the consequence of those choices.

In a similar vein, sometimes, when people find themselves in a lousy marriage they blame HASHEM. "I guess this is what HASHEM wants for me. I must have been born to suffer." What they fail to take into account is that just like good physical health depends on proper choices, so too does a successful marriage. To stay healthy, you have to eat properly, exercise, and keep your stress levels under control. To have a good marriage you have to do the work needed. If you don't, your marriage

will suffer.

Sadly, many couples find themselves in a relationship that has stalled out, and they can't figure out why. It all started out so well. They were so infatuated. He looked at her, she looked at him, and there was magic in the air. And now they find themselves wondering, "What happened to the passion? What happened to the fun? What happened to the love?"

Many times the answer becomes clear if you ask them one question: in the past year, how much time did you spend **together as a couple**?

**Together as a couple** doesn't mean running errands, or doing chores, or going to see your in-laws. **Together as a couple** means spending time enjoying each other's company. Without an agenda. Without talking about the kids, or finances, or any of the other thousands of issues that arise. Without all the busy work, including answering the phone, using the blackberry, texting, or looking at your e-mail.

In fact, a simple way to gauge where your marriage is at (or where it is headed) is to do a time study. Take an average week and ask yourself how much time you spend together talking, sharing, and connecting as a couple? When your spouse calls do you take the call, or are you just too busy? Do you run to share news with your spouse? When you come home at night, do you put everything else aside to speak to your life's partner? And when was the last time the two of you went out—alone?

For a relationship to remain healthy, a couple should go out on a date at least once a week. But that means every week. Not once a month or once a year. It means getting a regular babysitter and dedicating time to your relationship. And if you say, "We're way too busy for that," it may be true—but your marriage is going to suffer.

The reality is that we are all very busy. In the course of history, there has never been a busier generation. Most of us are working long, hard hours, juggling many commitments, and there are countless demands on our time.

And too often, a couple is just too busy to work on their relationship, and things start to unravel. They spend less and less time together, and they start to drift apart. And what began as a match made in heaven ends up as two roommates, sharing a roof but little else. Oh yes, they share things. They share bills, and chores, and kids, but they are no longer bonded. They live parallel lives, but what once connected them becomes weaker and weaker until they have become like two ships that pass in the night. And they find, a few years and a few kids later, that they almost don't recognize each other. Then begins the bickering and squabbles. Over little things and over big things. With each not even knowing where they went wrong.

What went wrong was that the most critical part of their marriage dissolved. For a marriage to be successful, there must be a *climate of love*. If there is love and acceptance in the marriage, then everything is OK. "He is a good guy. Oh, he has his shortcomings and things that need improvement,

but he's a good guy, so it's OK." If there isn't a climate of love in the marriage, then forget it. "Everything he does is lousy. And even the one thing that he does half right, he always forgets to do."

But love takes work. Infatuation is easy. Effortless. It just happens. Love, however, takes dedication and focus, and it requires constant renewal, attention, and time.

And this is the **2nd Really Dumb Mistake that Very Smart Couples Make**: they forget that love is the glue of a marriage. And real love takes work, commitment, time and dedication and needs constant renewal.

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