

Kick 'em Out of Your Bedroom

By Harold & Bette Gillogly

No, we're not talking about kicking your spouse out. We're talking about kicking out a couple of habits you may have developed in your marriage relationship. If you are going to experience joy in your sexual relationship, these two habits have gotta go!

Demanding Has Gotta Go:

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 is an often misunderstood Scripture. People have tried to use it to prove they have a "right" to their mate's body. But that is **not** what it's saying at all. Let's take a closer look at it. *The husband should not deprive his wife of sexual intimacy, which is her right as a married woman, nor should the wife deprive her husband. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband also gives authority over his body to his wife. So do not deprive each other of sexual relations. The only exception to this rule would be the agreement of both husband and wife to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time, so they can give themselves more completely to prayer. Afterward they should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt them because of their lack of self-control.*

This is talking about **mutual giving** and **mutual willingness to not deprive**. It is not talking about taking or demanding. It's not that we own our mate's body and can demand, "Give, because I own you!" We're not in that position. This Scripture commands us to give. As a married couple, we're both in a giving relationship, not in a position of ownership where we have the right to take or demand.

Based on this principle, we then have to take responsibility for our own sexual pleasure. We know this sounds a bit contradictory to the idea that we're to be other centered. But

it's not! Because if **we** are not taking responsibility, then we are demanding that our mate take responsibility for our sexual pleasure.

Clifford and Joyce Penner describes what we're talking about in their book The Gift of Sex (page 108). "We advocate the idea of taking the responsibility for your own sexual needs. The sexual response is something that happens in your body. It is personal and loaded with emotions. Each individual differs from every other individual and each individual differs from one experience to another. You can't count on all women wanting it 'this way' or men 'always wanting'...or even this particular woman or man responding to the same thing every time. Because of the beautiful and complicated creation you are, there is no way your partner can consistently guess what would please you. [That's what we would be demanding they do – '**consistently guess.**'] However you usually know what you like, so you should take the responsibility to go after that desire."

Your mate cannot consistently guess what would please you.

We believe this. We promote it. But...with these three cautions:

1. Honor your Mate's preferences. Don't proceed in pursuing your own needs at the expense of your partner. Otherwise it becomes a self-centered, selfish pursuit. No pushing, badgering, nagging or manipulating your spouse to do what you want. Simply ask. If your spouse doesn't feel comfortable with what you are asking, back off without coldness or theatrics. Such antics are seen as punishment to your mate for not doing what you want and will

actually lower your mate's sex drive. Now that would be pretty dumb, wouldn't it?

2. Ask to be scratched where you itch. Simply tell your spouse about your needs and desires without placing demands on them. Your spouse is not a mind reader. He or she can't know where you itch or how you want scratched...unless you say it out loud.

We sometimes hear, "But if he loved me – if she loved me – they'd just know!" Now we ask you, does that make any sense?

3. Communicate to your mate when he or she is doing something that turns you off. Here are the ground rules: Talk together outside of your bedroom, fully clothed. Otherwise, you are both too vulnerable. Talk kindly about what it is that's turning you off. Put it in positive terms like, "If you would try 'this' instead of 'that,' it might work a lot better for me." Or, "I think it would be sexier if you...." If you talk about the problem in a non-blaming way, giving a positive solution for it, your mate will feel like there's something definite he/she can do about it. Then it doesn't seem so hard.

Harmful Games Have Gotta Go:

A lot of couples fall into the habit of playing manipulative, selfish games with each other. Instead of **mutually giving** to one another and being **willing to not deprive** one another sexually, as 1 Corinthians 7 clearly states, they manipulate their mate to get what they want. And instead of being honest in their communication about sex with each other, they play games that hurt their relationship.

We play these games because we don't understand our differences

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sexually. Women are wired: “No love, no sex.” Men are wired: “No sex, no love.” This is hard wiring, so we need to give ourselves to truly understand the way God made our mate.

Female wiring declares – value me, love me, make your love obvious to me, then I’ll want to have sex with you. Male wiring says – have sex with me, then I’ll know you love me. Generally speaking, that’s the way we’re wired. And guess what? God made us different sexually **on purpose**. He wants us to learn how to adjust to each other. You’ve got to learn how to understand each other and adjust to each other sexually, or you and your mate are going to be in a standoff that will harm your marriage.

Many couples play the Approach/Avoidance Game.

This standoff usually manifests itself in a little game called The Approach/Avoidance Game. One of you has a greater sex drive than the other. Generally men have a higher sex drive than women, but that’s not always the case. The game starts when the spouse who has the higher sex drive starts believing he or she has to ask or hint for sex 6 or 7 times in order to get it once. You feel like you have to go through this pattern,

this game, in order to get sex one time. The problem with this is every time you hint, every time you ask, is seen as a full-blown approach to your mate with the lower sex drive. So what it looks like to your mate is approach, approach, approach, approach...that can be very intimidating.

If I were to run as fast as I can at you, would you want to lean forward to catch me or would you step back out of the way so you wouldn’t get run over? You’d step back out of the way, right? That’s called self-protection. That’s what happens with the mate who has the lower sex drive. She or he will back off from you out of self-protection and start avoiding sex altogether. If you are the “Approach-er” in the Approach/Avoidance game, you are actually lowering your mate’s sex drive. That’s not what you want. **You both have to talk about this. Together you have to confess you are playing this game.**

If you are playing the game, you must decide together what you are going to do about it, because it takes both of you to stop it. If you’re the “Approacher,” you’ve got to back off lovingly without even subtly trying to lay guilt on your mate. If you lay guilt, you’ll lower your mate’s sex drive. You’ll shoot yourself in the foot. Back off lovingly.

If you are the “Avoidee,” then you have a responsibility here too. Talk about how you have been playing this

game and together decide that it’s going to stop. As the “Avoidee,” you must be honest with your mate and with yourself. You can now stop avoiding sex with your mate, because he (or she) is going to stop approaching you so much. Start learning to talk together about your sexual desires. Learn how to mutually give to one another. Think about loving and giving to your mate, not about taking.

We’ve had “Approach-ers” complain to us, “I quit approaching last week and it’s not fixed yet!” We have to ask, “How long have you played the game?” You see, if you’ve played this game for years and years, don’t expect that in a week

The bedroom is no place for harmful games.

or two you’re going to turn things around and everything’s going to be hunky-dory again. It’s going to take time and effort, but if you work on this together, you can stop playing this game.

If you kick these two habits out of your bedroom, it’s going to be a lot happier place. Not only that, but satan won’t be able to use these habits against you. 1 Corinthians 7 makes it clear that the devil wants to get a foothold in your love life. And it also makes it clear that one way to kick him out of your bedroom is to be sure you are **mutually giving to** and **willingly not depriving** your spouse.

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