

# hitched

life advice

## Learn to Stay in Control Instead of Jumping to Conclusions

Don't taint your marriage with negatives and "what-ifs." Use this guide as a way to help restore personal control and move forward.

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Don't let your mind wander with worst-case scenarios, take back control.

Ever notice how you obsess over what's up with your spouse when something goes the least bit from "normal?"

For example, your spouse is off on a business trip and didn't call you last night. You know your mate got there all right—you did get the "good flight—at the hotel" text—but you usually get a goodnight call and at least a text or two in the morning.

You figure, "No biggie, he's probably caught in a late meeting." But you didn't get a call this morning, no texts, nothing... and so now, you're worried.

You fret over the argument you had before your spouse drove off to the airport, was it that bad? Are they angrier than you thought? Or is it something more threatening: some hottie that's putting the moves on your beloved?

You don't want to appear clingy or untrusting, so you sent a breezy, non-committal, "Hi, love you" text (but no response, ouch!), and your anxiety level increases with each hour that passes without hearing from your spouse.

Take Back Control

Whenever someone does something you didn't expect, especially someone as close to you as your

spouse, you feel out of control. It's difficult to stay in that place of out-of-control; it makes most of us very nervous. So, what you do is try to re-establish some kind of control by jumping to a seemingly rational reason.

Thinking that your spouse is still upset over the argument you had, or responding to a stranger's advances may be painful, but it does bring back a sense of orderliness (control) to your personal universe. Your reasoning is most often negative because feeling out-of control makes you feel insecure, which promptly activates all the other insecure feelings you have about yourself, and presto, a negative conclusion!

There is a way to restore your sense of personal control that goes beyond the solely negative:

- \* Be willing to live with several possible reasons as to whatever is going on.
- \* Make sure at least some of those reasons are not negative.
- \* Regain control by determining your response to each of the possible reasons, rather than by trying to pinpoint "the" correct conclusion (which is impossible anyway).

For example, your spouse isn't calling/texting. You can come up with a number of reasons why:

- \* They may be preoccupied with work and trusts your marriage is strong enough to withstand a few days of non-contact.
- \* They may be embarrassed about their own behavior during the argument and needs some time to get past that.
- \* They may be tempted by a seductive "whoever" and your marriage is strong enough to withstand such advances.
- \* They may be tempted by a seductive "whoever" and act on it.

Remain open to all of these and whatever other conclusions you come up with. Notice that three out of the four are positive. Get real. If your marriage is solid, reason No. 4 is highly unlikely. Be happy and continue doing whatever it is that makes your marriage wonderful. If your marriage is rocky, start thinking about how you can improve things between you. Once you know how you are going to respond, you are in control, regardless of which reason ends up being the real one.

You can't control things by setting them in cement. Everything changes all of the time, even if only in apparently small ways. You can choose, however, your response to events so that you are continually building a strong marriage, not ripping it apart with "what if" doubts and fears.

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