

hitched

life advice

All You Have To Do Is Ask

Does your relationship seem unbalanced to you? Dr. Nelson examines your frustrations and gives some simple steps to balance the playing field.

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Roll with the punches. Just ask your spouse to fulfill your wishes rather than hold them in.

It's late. You've had a long day. You get home, drop your things in a heap and collapse on the couch. Your sweetheart, who got home way before you did, cries out "Hi, Hon!" in a pleasant voice from the other room. You would love nothing better right than for your loved one to come in and ask, "How are you doing? You look bushed. Can I do anything for you?" But noooooo. At best, your mate passes through the room on the way to the den asking, "When's dinner?" or "Did you get the car fixed?"

At this point, you could kill. You do everything for your other half. You're attuned to his slightest whim. If your spouse complains of a headache, you fetch the aspirin. If your sweetie groans with fatigue, you give a soothing massage. If your mate wants to spend the weekend away, you plan, strategize, scrimp, save and make it happen.

"When is it my turn?" you yell (internally, of course). "He can see I'm lying here limp with stress. Why doesn't he take care of me for a change?" And you hear that annoying little voice inside your head squawk, "So, ask!" You reply, "I shouldn't have to ask. He should know what I want—it's not like we just met. My husband should know what I want!"

Why? Why should your significant other know what you want? Or, more to the point, even if he does know in a general way what you like, how should he know what you want *when* you want it? Only you know that.

Wanting others to guess what's on your mind is crazy-making. If your partner-in-life isn't good at it, he will end up feeling like a constant failure. The answer? All you have to do is *ask* for what you want, and your loved one will usually try to get it or do it for you.

"But I've asked him for the same thing a hundred times," you wail. Apparently, what you're asking for has a much lower priority for him than it does for you. So what? If your mate eventually is willing to do that thing for you when you ask, stop resenting the asking. If indeed, he is habitually unwilling to give you whatever it is you want, or does so grudgingly, sit down and talk about it. There may be other factors involved.

Generally, when people resent asking for what they want, it's because they feel guilty or undeserving. You hope what you want will magically appear or get done, which absolves you from having to face your feelings of guilt and unworthiness. Unfortunately, that puts you back in the position of a child, which although free of many responsibilities,

is also minus a good many precious freedoms adults enjoy.

Take responsibility! Be willing to ask for what you want and need. As hard as it might be initially, it will pay dividends in the end. And, start looking at your loved one with very different eyes; see how the lines of communication open up when all you have to do is ask!

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