

Title: Relationship rescue – marriage maintenance II
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The power of surrender

Giving up control to have more power

“Women feel the need to control because they fear that if they don’t take matters into their own hands, their needs will go unmet. When you give up unnecessary control of things your husband does – how he drives, what he wears, what he does at work, how he loads the dishwasher – you actually gain power in the relationship and in your life.” – The surrendered wife by Laura Doyle

Surrendering: Reward for us as women

“When your husband knows that you are on his side, he can relax and feel confident in himself. Having that sense of safety will make it possible for him to share his innermost thoughts with you, and that’s where you’ll find intimacy. Treating your husband with respect makes him want to be around you more, talk to you more, share more deeply and make love to you more passionately. It will lead to a healthy sex life, the willingness to hang in through hard times, a spark of excitement in what would otherwise be an ordinary day, and that enduring look of affection you sometimes see from couples who have been together for a very long time.” – The surrendered wife by Laura Doyle

How do we surrender?

Listen to your husband and have regard for his ideas, suggestions, family and work.

The problem is that when you squash your husband’s ideas you kill his spirit.

Treat your husband like an intelligent adult rather than an irresponsible child.

Always remind yourself that you married a capable, loyal, hard-working, dependable man. When things go wrong as a result of your husband’s decisions, remember that he is learning. Allow him to make mistakes and stand by him.

Don’t tear him down.

“By constantly controlling my husband, I often unwittingly set up negative expectation for him. I subtly but clearly let him know that I expected him to screw up, drop the ball, let me down and make a mess. I call these spouse-fulfilling prophecies.” – Laura Doyle

Changing your hat

Practice “changing your hat” when you leave work.

Let your husband be the children’s father

Just because your husband has a different style doesn’t mean that he’s a bad dad.

Pick your battles

“If you find yourself with a criticism about something that doesn’t usually bother you, remind yourself that you must pick your battles. If you’re thinking about something small (eg he never puts his dirty dishes in the dishwasher, he just puts it in the sink) it is most likely not something worth bringing up. His habit may truly bug you, but is it worth nipping him so he’ll want to avoid you? NO. Instead, ask yourself what could be bothering you. Are you overtired, hungry, or lacking in self-care. Try to give yourself what you need.”

Practical tips in helping us to surrender:

Taking care of yourself

Once you're stretched beyond your limits, surrendering is nearly impossible. Surrendering means that you commit to being compassionate and understanding, which require patience and concentration. All of these qualities disappear when we feel run-down and anxious. The more well-rested, well-nourished and balanced you are in work, rest and play, the more sure-footed you will be on the high road of surrendering.

Foster friendships with other women

Friends can meet some of your needs in a way that your husband simply can't. You will also need women as a source of emotional sustenance because no one person – not even your husband – can meet all of your needs for human interaction. Without a few friends to talk to, you will feel clingy and needy around your husband. He may pull away to avoid being smothered and probably feel disappointed that he can't meet your expectations.

Relying on God

If you don't believe in God, surrendering to your husband is going to be a very tough leap. Without faith in God, you might as well continue to try to control everyone and everything around you.

****Content adapted from "The surrendered wife" by Laura Doyle**