

16 Negative Habits that Wreck Your Relationship

thehealthymarriage.org/negative-habits-that-wreck-your-relationship

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Image by [Augusto Ordonez](#) from [Pixabay](#)

I was tasked with taking my son to school one morning because he had to be there early.

We cranked up our (his) favorite tunes and spent the time catching up and jamming out.

The drive wasn't but a couple of miles, so you can imagine my surprise when 20 minutes later I pulled into the parkin lot of my office. Which is no where near the school. Not even the same direction.

Funny thing is, neither one of us clued in that we were headed the wrong direction.

I was so used to driving to work, I automatically took the route I drove every day. Not once thinking I was going to the wrong destination.

Neurologist call it the **Reticular Activating System**. It is responsible for regulating wakefulness and sleep-wake transitions. It's like a search function on Google.

Type something in and Google only (supposedly) returns **the results you are searching for**.

In my case, the input I gave my brain was 'go to work.' Even though I needed to go to the school.

So **my RAS took over** and produced the results I had input.

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How Does That Apply To Habits? Or Marriage?

Much in every way.

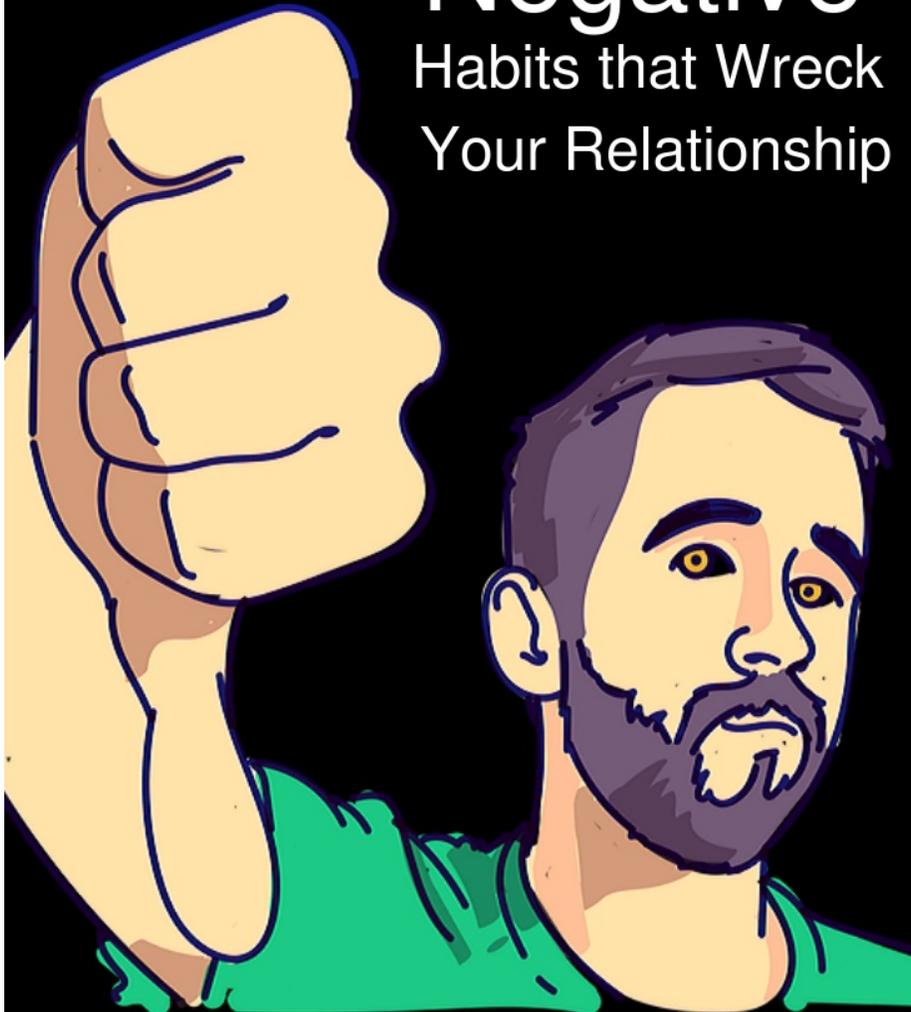
Our **habits are like a program we've installed on the hard drive of our personality**. We constantly get the results we've programmed our life to produce.

Problem is, we often complain about the outcome. Not realizing our habits are giving us exactly what we have programmed.

Unfortunately, some of these habits can damage your marriage.

16

Negative Habits that Wreck Your Relationship



Here's 16 Negative Habits That Will Wreck Your Relationships.

1) Criticizing Your Partner

It's okay to be honest and let your partner know you are disappointed or don't like something.

It is not okay to nag, criticize and belittle them.

Criticism is the prelude to contempt.

Contempt is not hate. It's worse. **It's the attitude superiority.** It's feeling you are above your spouse. That they are not good enough.

John Gottman puts it this way:

| If betrayal is a question of trust, contempt is a question of respect. Contempt says, "I don't respect you. In fact, I'm going to actively disrespect you."

Constant criticism sends the message of contempt. It drives a wedge in your relationship.

2) Not Listening

Communication is key to making a marriage work. One of the best things we can do for our relationship is learn to communicate on a deeper level.

The biggest part of communication is NOT talking. It's listening.

If you want to make your marriage better, practicing listening more.

You've heard the old adage: ***You have two ears and one mouth.***

That's the proper ratio of talking and listening. We should invest quality time tuning in to our spouse.

Related Article: [Our Top 14 Tips On How To Listen To Your Spouse](#)

Someone wisely said, '**The first duty of love is to listen.**'

3) Waiting for Things to Get Better on their Own

Things left to themselves will only deteriorate.

There is no perfect time to get help or change your relationship. Today is the best day to begin the journey of starting over or working on your marriage.

[There is no perfect time to get help or change your relationship. Today is the best day to begin the journey of starting over or working on your marriage. Click To Tweet](#)

One way I see this failure in couples is when one spouse waits on the other to get it together.

| 'I'll try when they try.'

| 'If THEY would just change, then things would get better.'

You are not in control of someone else's behavior. You can only control you.

The mystery is when YOU begin to change, your marriage will change.

So stop waiting on something to happen.

You are the agent of change for your marriage.

4) Expecting Your Spouse to Read Your Mind

You may see this happen in movies, but it doesn't happen in real life.

We have to work at understanding what our spouse needs, desires and needs.

It's unfair to expect your spouse to read your mind.

I love my wife and try hard to read the signals. (We all give signals and bids for attention and affirmation).

But I can't read her mind. We've learned to express our needs to each other.

FREE Marriage Quiz: Take the Healthy Marriage Quiz and Discover Your Marriage Score

5) Refusing to Take Responsibility

Here's a very harsh truth (Yes. It is a truth, not an idea):

Until you take 100% responsibility for where you are, you will not have the power to change.

Ouch.

I know it hurts. But think about it.

We are where we are because **we've made decisions that had consequences.**

Even if you were done wrong, violated, or rejected, you have the power to choose your response. **When you forfeit that right, you give your power away.** As long as you can own your 'place,' you can change it.

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But if you give that power to someone else, **they control your place in life.** Don't give that power away.

Take control by taking responsibility.

6) Living in the Negative

There is a negative zone is highly dangerous for your marriage.

Spouses that continually focus on what's wrong usually find what they are looking for.

We attract what we focus on. That's not some **law of attraction mantra**. It's human psychology.

We gravitate toward our frame of mind. **We produce the results we continually focus on.**

However you want to say it, the bottom line is if you are negative you will get more negative in your life.

7) Focusing on Past Failures

Past wounds, hurts and disappointments can deeply affect us.

It will cripple your ability to create a positive future. Just like allowing negative thoughts to dominate your mind. And like failure to take responsibility.

No matter what has happened to you, do not allow it to determine your future.

Forgive. And seek forgiveness.

Let go of the past. Your future can be better. But you must refuse to let the past control you.

Related Article: [How To Deal With Infidelity: 11 Practical Steps To Take Immediately.](#)

8) Thinking You Can Do the Same Thing and Get Different Results.

You've heard before. It's insanity, right?

Of course.

Logic lets us know that **we have to do something different if we want things to change.**

Successful marriages are the ones that figure this out quickly.

[Logic lets us know that we have to do something different if we want things to change.](#)
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9) Watching Too Much Television

I like a good movie like most guys. We even have 'our shows' we watch together.

But too much time in front of the television can ruin your relationship. It eats into one on one connection time.

A study done over a 25 year period (Tina D. Hoang, of the Northern California Institute for Research and Education at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Francisco) found that people who watched more than 3 hours of TV per day on average over the next 25 years were more likely to perform poorly on certain cognitive tests, compared with people who watched little TV.

The reasons are not certain, but it's speculated that:

1. Television dulls the cognitive engagement of the brain. Basically we get to be 'brain dead' while watching television.
2. Those who watch too much television have other habits that deteriorate their physical and mental health.

Whatever the reason, it's clear that **too much television can jack up our thinking**. This also has a negative effect on our relationships.

10) Obsessing over Social Media

This goes along side of television viewing. But it is far more disastrous.

Why?

Television is easy to monitor. It's obvious when we are sitting in front of the TV.

Social Media is more deceptive. It's often hard to track how much time we are investing in surfing the internet.

According to Andrea Syrtash (**Cheat on Your Husband with Your Husband** – affiliate link), gadgets steal our time, desire and emotional energy.

Dr. Jane Greer agrees.

“Many women say that there's no time for sex, but admit to checking Facebook an hour before bed.

In other words, emotionally you are somewhere else.”

Social media has to be controlled or it will control you. This goes for your phone as well.

It's the enemy of a healthy marriage. Remember that. Write it down and read it every day.

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11) Poor Self Esteem

How we view ourselves has a tremendous impact on our behavior.

Body image is the mental representation an individual creates of themselves, but it may or may not bear any relation to how others actually see them. ([Source](#))

Psychology Today list **11 characteristics of poor body image**:

1. Focuses excessive attention on a minor flaw in appearance.
2. Views oneself as unattractive, even ugly.
3. Fears other people can see the so-called deformity.
4. Might be a perfectionist..
5. Avoids social engagements.
6. Constantly grooms and looks at oneself in the mirror.
7. Constantly hides the perceived flaw with makeup or clothes.
8. Constantly compares one's appearance with other people's.
9. Pursues excessive cosmetic procedures or surgery.
10. Needs reassurance from others ("Do I look fat in this?").
11. Is never satisfied with appearance.

I put this in the category of habits because **if we reinforce those negative thoughts they become habitual patterns that control us.**

"Giving yourself negative messages about your body every time you look in the mirror can bring down your mood and well-being and deplete your energy," – [Dr. Shannon Chavez](#)

Let's be honest, our moods, attitudes and perspective have a great impact on our relationships.

12) Ignoring Your Spouses Bid for Attention

We talk about this often. It's a concept I first heard from John Gottman.

Every day we make little bids for attention from our spouse. Not negative attention. **The kind of attention that asks 'I'm I important to you.'**

It's little signals we send through statements, questions, and gestures.

A bid for connection is an attempt to create connection between two people. Its function is to keep the relationship going forward and in a positive direction. Bids are the fundamental element of emotional connection. – John Gottman

A bid can be a question, a look, an affectionate touch or anything else that opens the door to connection.

Gottman has [a good article on this concept](#).

Couples that have a habit of ignoring their spouses 'bids' have a greater likelihood of divorce and marital conflict.

When we ignore those little signals we miss an opportunity to connect.

Related Article: [5 John Gottman Quotes on Trust](#).

13) Gossiping to Your Friends and Family About Your Spouse

Gossip. Because that's what it is.

Look, I realize we need people we can vent to. Where we must exercise caution is **what we say** to them, and **who we tell things to**.

My recommendation to young couples: **Never share marriage problems with immediate family**. We tend to voice things and move on. We reconcile after we cool off. Before you know it, we kiss and make up. Things are better.

Our family, however, doesn't forget or forgive so quickly.

Running to your parents can create friction in your marriage that is unnecessary.

One exception to this rule is physical abuse. If you are being abused, do not hide abuse from friends or family. Get help immediately

Another reason this can have a negative affect is we talk to others about our problems **but we do not communicate with our spouse**.

It's easier to complain than problem solve. Many individuals would rather grip about the problem than work through those issues.

Harsh? Maybe. But the fact remains, when we are talking to others we are not working on solutions.

Related Article: [How To Manage Marital Conflict: 6 Experts Weigh In](#)

14) Disrespecting Common Space

We all have quirky ways and unique habits. It's best to recognize and cherish those idiosyncrasies.

What happens when our eccentric ways clash with common courtesy?

Answer. **Learn to compromise and get along.**

Sometimes one spouse is messy and the other neat. This can cause conflict. We need to learn to get along with each other.

There are occasions when the conflict has less to do with our personal habits (how we perform cleaning chores, etc) and more to do with respect.

When we ignore (or don't care) what our spouse desires, needs and wants concern common areas, **we disrespect them**.

Disrespect need not be verbal; not paying attention to your partner's opinions is also form of showing disrespect to your partner.

15) Not Filtering the Influencers in Your Life

We are no greater than our 5 closest friends.

I'm not positive that axiom is 100% accurate, but it makes a great point.

The people we hang around influence us. Make sure the key people in your life inspire you to be and do great things. Do not tolerate negative influences.

Jim Rohn once said:

There are two parts to influence: First, influence is powerful; and second, influence is subtle. You wouldn't let someone push you off course, but you might let someone nudge you off course and not even realize it.

16) Not Getting Enough Rest, Water and Movement

This one falls in the **health category**. But it has big implications for your relationship.

Studies show a continuous lack of sleep harms your memory and damages overall health.

When our body rests, we eliminate toxins and by products. It's literally a brain flush. This clears our emotions, moods, and perspective.

I've talked to women who experience hormonal changes that affect their sleep patterns which result in shifts in moods and mental clarity. If you've ever lost a lot of sleep consecutively, you know what I'm talking about.

Most doctors suggest getting **7-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep every night.**

Movement is also important to overall health.

Last but not least is making sure you are hydrated. Since our body is comprised mostly of water, it's important to make sure we are drinking enough water.

Why do I mention these last three?

If we are not operating at our optimal best, our relationships can suffer.

Developing good diet and exercise habits will help us maintain quality relationships.

FREE Video Reveals: [The Exact Words To Say That Stop Fights, Arguments and Disagreements](#)

Wrapping It Up

We all have habits. Most of what we do on a regular basis is from routine. Habits.

We take the same route to work. We do the same thing each morning to get ready for work.

Most of our lives is the reflection of our habits.

Developing good habits is crucial for a healthy life. And a healthy marriage.

Changing negative habits is even more crucial. In this article we identified **16 negative habits that will wreck your relationship.**

Summary

Questions To Answer

What are your daily habits?

Are any of these bad relationship habits hurting your marriage?

It's Your Turn. Leave a comment and weigh in.

Article Research

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