

Couples as a Team

Realizing the dream that brought
you together

And there were two!

- When you get together there are only two of you with few responsibilities to each other
- Did you develop good teamwork-at home
- Maintaining the house and raising kids is more work than most people naively think
- Over time-You need clear decisions to determine who handles what responsibilities and what is smarter to hand off to other people (baby sitter, nanny, housecleaning, accounting, gardener, paying bills-to name a few possible)

Why Settle for Less?

- If you approach your relationship the right way, you will develop love that others will envy
- If you approach it the wrong way, negative destructive patterns are inevitable and you will burn out the love
- Your lifetime partner is the biggest relationship investment you will ever make

Managing Each Other is a Dead End

- Too many partners try to manage each other rather than managing the work
- This results in:
 - Power Struggles
 - Fights
 - Discounting each other's contribution
 - Despair, Grief and at the worst Violence

Stop focusing on faults

- Many of us have little sense of our talents, and only a vague awareness of our strengths. We focus on our own and even more on our partners weaknesses and spend our lives trying to correct these flaws, while our strengths lie unnoticed and our partners remain unappreciated and neglected!

Ask Yourself

- Do you glorify your partner's management of projects?
- Do you discount the amount of effort that is involved?
- Do you allow learning to take place or thwart learning from each project?

“Human beings who are almost unique in their ability to learn from the experience of others are also remarkable in their apparent disinclination to do so.”

Douglas Adams

Reasons for undermining your partner

- You haven't done it yourself and you believe or convince yourself it should be easy without ever doing it
- Guilt over not participating
- You agreed –resentful compliance and never really wanted it done
- You want to slow it down

Build the Foundation

- Understand the importance/value of systems that get put into place to accomplish work
- Systems are designed to get the work done, resolve conflicts, develop predictable patterns and schedules and allow for emotional recharging rather than ignoring your relationship

Managing Household Work

- Some jobs are never completed-grocery shopping/laundry
- Some projects have a beginning, middle and end
 - May be one time (remodel)
 - Doing taxes
 - May be ongoing each year/month(buying holiday gifts for in-laws and extended family)
- Contain multiple steps
 - A goal
 - A schedule
 - A final output

Approaching the Task

- Capabilities-What skills or capabilities are needed?
- Capacity-How do you make time to do the project?
- Cash-Is money needed to solve the problem?
- Thinking-Do you need a new way of thinking about the problem?

Breaking Down a Project

- Identify what needs to be done
- Organize and group tasks
- Decide who will do what and by when
- Obtain help
- Accountable person organizes the job, directs the help and keeps track of progress

- Analyze the results
- Report back to partner-the progress
- Solicit input when needed or desired
- Monitor quality
- Keep work on a successful timeline
- Finish the job
- Capture the lessons learned

Example-Give a dinner party for husband's office staff and spouses 18 people for dinner

- End result:-Have 18 people for dinner on May 15
- How do you know when accomplished
(When May 15 is over and successful dinner party for 18 is complete)
- Time Frame: 3 weeks
- Break it down into specific smaller tasks

Task Examples

- Make a menu
- Decide on help needed
- Shop for groceries
- Decide on beverages and shop for these
- Check on all silverware, china, etc.
- Arrange house cleaning
- Set table and arrange house

Analyze Risks

- Run out of time-House a disaster
- Food burns
- It rains and you can't do drinks and appetizers outside
- What can be done to eliminate risks?

Identify Resources

- Use housecleaner for extra cleaning
- Use a caterer or someone to serve and do dishes
- Nanny could do grocery shopping

Decide Who is in Charge?

- Do you have authority that matches the responsibility?
- Are you constrained by resources?
- Does your partnership allow you to create solutions that will work from time to time or only once for this project?

Avoid Unnecessary Conflict

- Stay in the lines
- Do what you said you will do
- Be honest when you don't know how to do it-or when you need help
- Stick to budgets and timelines
- Call for help when falling behind schedule
- Don't expand the project without consulting with your partner

When the Project is Done

Was the project
managed well

How was conflict
managed between
the two of you

Will future projects
like this be more
successful or more
conflict-ridden

Did the project
help/hurt
your relationship

System Breakdown

The next time you have a fight consider that a system broke down rather than either of you being bad

Not connecting cause and effect can lead to chronic conflict, major unhappiness

Traits of a Good Household Manager



- Coordinates Effectively
- Can Manage People
- Makes Decisions
- Determines Resources
- Keeps to Budget and Schedule
- Meets Deadlines
- Recognizes Skill Involved in what they are Doing

Discounting the Home Manager

8th Grader has Big Science Project Due

- In many families, this isn't even viewed as a project
- This takes recognition of the various stages: Implementation, Gathering Materials, Blocking Out Time

The Down Side of Managing the Science Project

Often wife takes it on by default, they get no credit and lots of emotional stress from child

When turning to spouse for help, they are often viewed as a nuisance and treated as if they are inadequate for everything not going easily, without stress-even though the emotional/developmental challenges with child are big and there is lots of practical management as well

The Worst of It!

Parent Managing Science Project

- Is yelled at by kid
- Is degraded by spouse
- Feels inadequate in knowing science
- Feels stupid in comparison to other families where kid had more help or loved science

Other Parent who has minimized the pm

- Feels neglected
- Comes home hungry-no dinner
- Is told they aren't as good as Johnny's dad
- Gets no sex
- Starts to hate their spouse

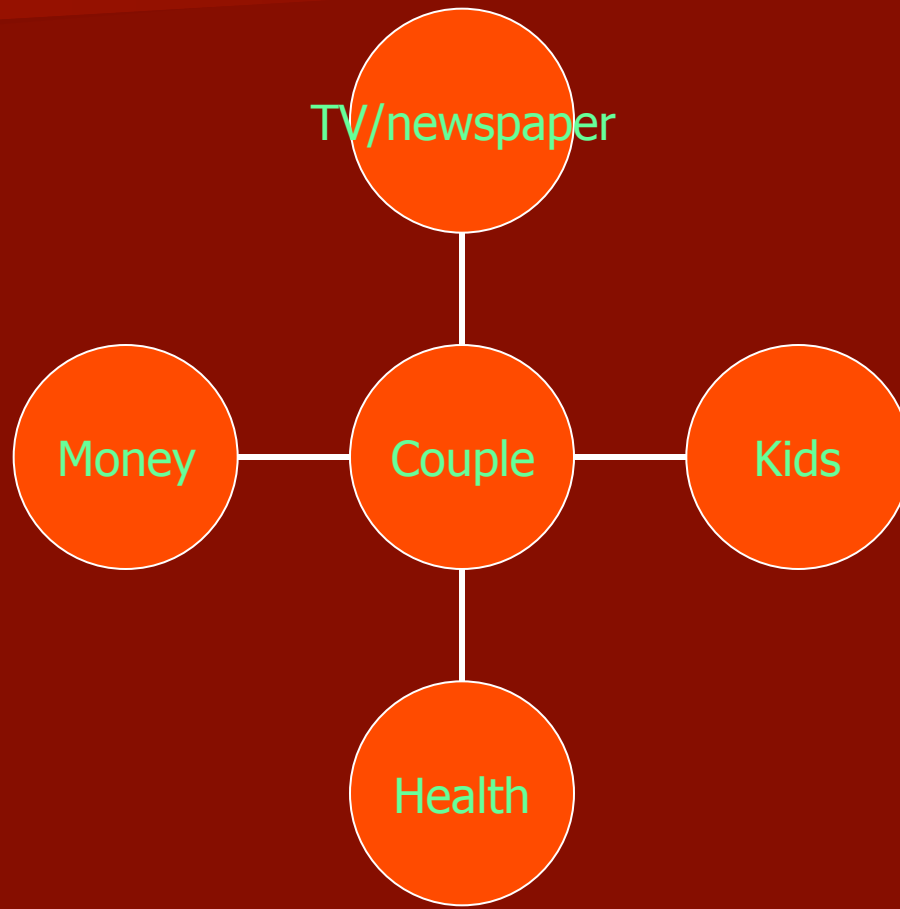
Why?

- They didn't recognize this as a project
- No clear roles were defined-who is responsible for what?
- No time was allotted so time is taken out of family/couple/or individual time which results in resentment

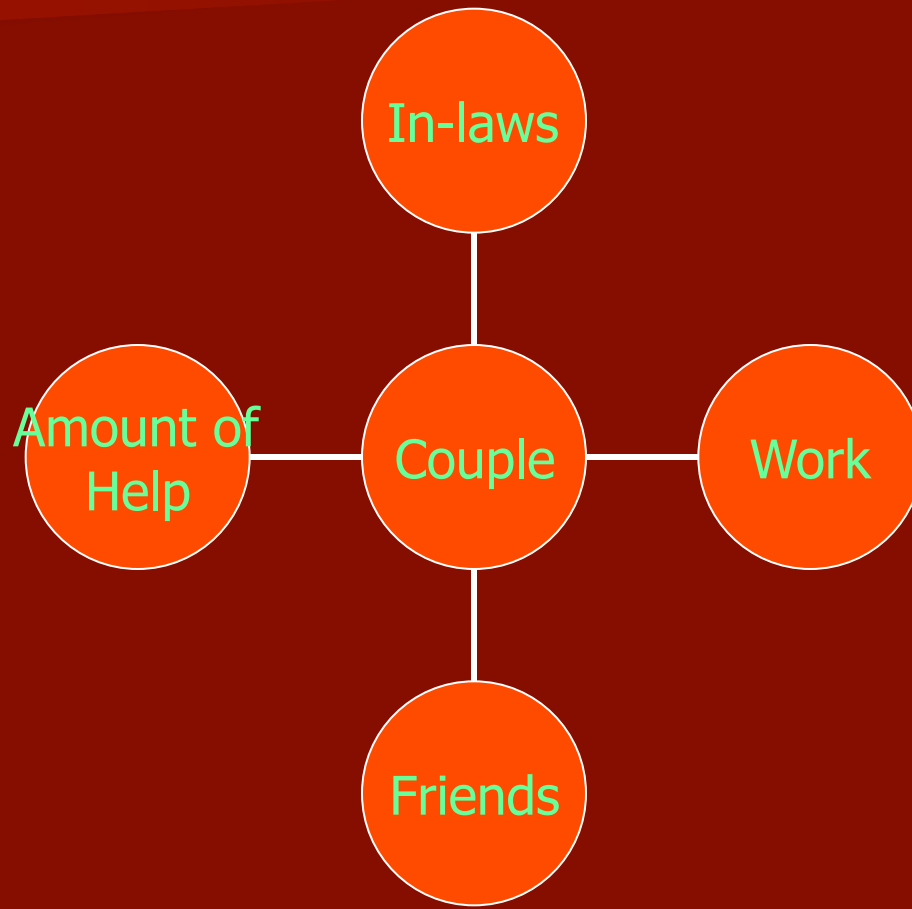
The Final Disaster

Partner who does the
work, never wanted the
job and never gets any
recognition for doing it!!

Internal Forces



External Forces



Four Major Roles-Who are You?

The Doer

- Gets things done
- Chores and projects are taken care of
- Relies a lot on self
- “Why pay someone, when I can do it better”
- It will be better if I do it myself

The Manager

- Develops systems-who is the best person to do X
- Develops predictability and stability
- Integrates and coordinates the actions of others
- Determines best resources to use

Four Major Roles-Who are you?

Visionary

- Sees what is possible
- Keeps a long term perspective
- Emphasizes core values
- Does long-term planning

Investor

- Views the relationship as an asset that is worth nurturing
- Pays attention to what they are giving
- Recognizes emotional challenges and prepares for them

Chart Your Time

Day	Visionary	The Doer	Manager	Investor
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Chart Your Partner's Time

Day	Visionary	The Doer	Manager	Investor
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Put in the box how much time you spend in each role

Visionary

The Doer

The Manager

The Investor

The Couple/Marriage System

- There is a lot of work to manage a family successfully.
- Can you outline the steps/tasks to get the work done



Time to get clear about you!

- What is the value you bring?
- What do you want your relationship to be like?
- What can you give?
- What needs to change in your relationship to reach your desired future?