

SLOW FADES in MARRIAGE

In their book, *No More Perfect Marriages*, Mark and Jill Savage identify seven ways in which a husband and wife can drift apart in a marriage without even realizing it. They call these “Slow Fades.”

The following is adapted with permission from *No More Perfect Marriages*, © 2107 by Mark and Jill Savage, and published by Moody Publishers.

Looking back, it wasn't the big things that made a difference. It was the little things. Things that simmered under the surface. Things unnoticed. Untouched.

These unknowns began an unraveling that gained momentum over time. No marriage crumbles in a day. It's a drift of one centimeter to another, one feeling or one decision that leads to another feeling or decision that's a little off-center. If left unaddressed, those feelings will draw us away from each other instead of toward each other.

But what if you could see those early symptoms? What if you could identify the slow fade and do something about it before your marriage is in crisis? Or, if your marriage is already in crisis, you could identify the fades you're in and, with God's help, turn things around?

Understanding the slow fades and knowing what to do about them can make all the difference in the world.

1. **The Slow Fade of Unrealistic Expectations**

Most couples have expectations of each other that are unknown and therefore unspoken. That means they're unmet and often unrealistic. Humility, courage, grace, and acceptance are likely the best tools to pull out of your toolbox when you're doing marriage improvement work in the area of expectations.

2. **The Slow Fade of Minimizing**

There are two kinds of minimizers found in most marriages: internal and external. Internal minimizers are those who minimize their own feelings and concerns. External minimizers are those who minimize the feelings and concerns of their spouse. Both of these kick minimizing into gear, pulling us away from each other.

3. **The Slow Fade of Not Accepting**

The truth is, we're all wonderfully incompatible, and marriage simply brings a magnifying glass to those differences. Instead of being frustrated with each other's personalities and temperaments, we have to learn to be fascinated by the differences!

4. **The Slow Fade of Disagreement**

We will all see things differently than our spouse does. We will have different perspectives. We will have different opinions. The most important thing to do is identify what happens inside of you when you and your partner disagree, then turn things around with courage, humility, grace, and forgiveness.

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5. The Slow Fade of Defensive Responses

Some of the biggest blocks to honest conversations are defensive responses. Because of this, defensiveness hinders intimacy. It shuts down communication, forcing us each to our own corners. The slow fade of defensiveness moves us from unresolved conflict to isolation. Too often we don't seek to understand.

6. The Slow Fade of Naiveté

Naiveté is to knowingly place ourselves in a position of relational danger downplaying the possibility that it could lead to compromise. Years ago, that primarily meant being careful about not being alone with someone of the opposite sex other than your spouse. Today, social media has opened up a whole new arena of relationship circles where seemingly innocent connections can lead to no-so-innocent relationships.

7. The Slow Fade of Avoiding Emotion

A guarded heart causes disconnect and emotional distance. We have to learn to be open, honest, and vulnerable with our spouse, uncovering our deepest thoughts and feelings.