

Change your own behaviour first

Unfortunately, we really can't try to change our partner's behaviour without changing our own. The harsh reality of life is that sometimes we just have to bite the bullet, swallow our pride, and take a good hard look at ourselves before we start to focus on others. We have to get real about ourselves.

If there are problems in a marriage it will rarely be because of just one party. It might seem that way to you, and yes, it may be that certain things your wife has done have led to you acting a certain way. But how long will that go on for if it's not working and both of you are unhappy? You call into the vicious cycle of playing the blame-game and pride prevents one or both of you from taking the first step to fixing things.

But if you are going to be truly honest and want to know that you have given your wife and your marriage everything you've got, you have to start looking at yourself and how you may have influenced how things have turned out, whether you have intended to do so or not. It may be that your wife has been snarling at you and for what you think is no good reason, or you may have been trying to help around the house and have tried to implement some of the advice in this book, but to no avail. So, at some point, you have to look at what you are doing and try a different approach. Even if you think you are "right" is being right getting you where you want to be?

If your partner is unwilling to try discussing any problems you can always seek help yourself. Sometimes all it takes is a bit of effort on the part of one partner for the other to see the motivation and become inspired to change as well. Sometimes it's a bit harder.

Obviously, you can't change into a new person. But you can change how you handle certain situations and how you react to things your wife says and does.

A communication problem doesn't usually come from just one person. You might think that what your wife says is clearly making a certain point, but the language barrier between men and women is a lot wider than many people think, and if it's not understood it can severely impact on how we interpret what our partner means in relation to what they say – they are rarely the same thing. By understanding how men and women are different it may be easier to understand how the communication problem you have has arisen. Do some reading, speak to counsellors, and try to get some understanding of how you can make a difference, rather than just expecting your wife to make the changes. If changes in the marriage are necessary, they will come from any changes you make yourself.

You don't have to be wrong to make the first move.