Step 4

Nourishing the backbone of your family

Your relationship with your partner

Here is something I once learned in an intimacy and relationships workshop for parents that has stuck with me ever since: Your relationship with your partner is the backbone of your family. Keeping it strong, stable, and alive is one of the most important things you can do for your family, for your children, and for all of yours' futures.

I have spoken to so many women and mothers over the years who have developed a resentment towards their partners. They feel alone, like they carry all the weight, and that their partner isn't attentive, responsive, or proactive enough. In essence, they feel like they are completely in their masculine, but then are supposed to be in their feminine when all the work is done and their husbands want "wife attention." At the same time, the husbands tell me that they feel emascuated, like they cannot do anything right and they are only there to bring in money.

Do you see that there is a disconnect in the relationship that has grown pretty deeply (and/or perhaps has always existed but was ignored).

Here's what's happening that the couple has missed to do so far in order to prevent resentment and set the basis for a healthy family backbone: create a foundation for positive communication and dialogue, an honest declaration of each other's expectations, wishes and desires as people and as parents, a joint agreement on family values they want to instill, and the freedom, flexibility, and respect to let your partner be a different person and parent from the one you are striving to be.

In many cases there are also unresolved issues from one or both individuals' pasts and families of origin that are creating difficulties now that they are shaping their own families and/or have introduced a child into their former twosomeness.

Diamond insight

Creating a family and having children can bring up a lot of your own past hurts and pains. Many people are reminded of their own relationships with their parents, what went well, what didn't, what they would like to replicate, what they definitely want to avoid repeating with their own children and partners. Many are also reminded of the pressures of money that come with building a family and their own relationship to finances becomes more triggering.

In addition, life does get a lot more stressful and demanding when you have the joint responsibility of raising a human being that you both love deeply. When people experience stress and a lack of sleep, communication often suffers and people become insensitive and irritable.

My advise would be to not put your relationship on the back-burner or think you'll figure it out later. The longer resentment builds, the harder it will be to heal.

An exercise for you

Now, this is obviously a vast topic and I could lead you into an exercise to explore your own family dynamics and the baggage that you carry, or an exercise that will help you look into uncovering what you actually really want from your partner and how you need to be supported.

I could guide you into a deeper exploration of your own relationship to your mother and father and how you experienced their relationship as a child, because all of these impact how you show up in your own relationship.

I could even talk to you about family values and how discussing those with your partner can help you create a solid foundation for your own family to thrive as a unit. Honestly, there are so many incredible tools and important things to address, but, here is what I want you to know: none of this would be helpful to you unless you first unravel in complete honesty how you relationship is doing right now.

That's why I put together a set of questions for you address in all honesty and in your privacy. This is a place for you to let it ALL out -the things you resent AND the things you love about your partner and your relationship.

1. Why are you with your partner? What made you fall in love with him/her?

2. In your life right now, what are all the things your partner contributes, does for you and your family or says to you and your family that you are grateful for? In what ways does he take care of you and your family (physically or emotionally)?

3. How often are you just happy and connected with your partner? Is there intimacy that you enjoy (not just sex)?

4. Is there something you miss in your relationship? Perhaps something that you and your partner previously had, did, or shared together.

5. What do you dislike or resent about your partner? What do you know he/she has got within himself/herself that you wish he/she would finally do?

6. How often are you annoyed or frustrated with your partner? What do you say to yourself in your own head when you are annoyed or frustrated with him/her?

7. How much time do you carve out to be together just the two of you? Are you satisfied with that time or would like more/less? How satisfactory is that time? If so at all, is there something missing?

8. What would it take for you and your partner to have a truly solid, strong and alive backbone for your family? What are your unfulfilled needs from your partner when it comes to enabling you to be the best mom, wife, and woman?

A quick note

Well done, mama!

I know this is not an easy topic to address for many of you, but you did it.

I also want you to know that I believe that for 85% of couples who are struggling (especially post having babies) there is great hope and many opportunities to work on their relationship.

If your partnership is suffering right now, get the support you need sooner rather than later.