**Having your Partner’s Back --- Loyalty**

No marital contract spells out, or even defines loyalty. Yet, both partners assume that this commitment will be honored. Loyalty does not only mean physical fidelity it includes emotional devotion. Being loyal in every aspect of a couple’s life has many manifestations. . Here are some ways in which loyalty is expressed in love:

* Being loyal means being respectful of your partners’ weaknesses and discretely helping them compensate for those weaknesses. For example, if your mate is absent minded and loses her keys often, you may help her set a system to make it easier for her to find things and help her search, when needed, without anger or shaming.
* Being loyal means never saying anything that may shame your mate in private or public. “Well, she told someone she was sick, when she didn’t feel like entertaining.” Though this is a small offense, when it is revealed to others, it is shaming and disloyal.
* Being loyal means keeping confidences, without fail. Any information that is private, or labeled as secret must be vigilantly guarded as such. Telling “just one other person” means it will be told to one person at a time. If it is your partner’s secret, it may not be shared with ANYONE.
* Being loyal means siding with your partner, even when you think he or she may be partially at fault. When your mate tells you about difficulties at work with a colleague or supervisor, it is imperative that you affirm your mate’s frustrations, empathize with his feelings and refrain from saying: “Your boss just wants you to work harder.” That assumption may be made later, not at a time of emotional difficulty for your mate.
* Being loyal means reassuring your partner that you will be there emotionally and physically, whenever you are needed and following through with this promise. Your presence, helpful action and kind words are important signs of trust and security for your mate in the relationship. Many spouses hold resentments about their mates not being there at crisis points in their lives. These resentments can be avoided with conscious loyal behaviors.
* Being loyal means not speaking disparagingly about your spouse to others. You may share YOUR frustrations with a close confidant without blaming your spouse. “I feel so frustrated when he comes home and is too tired to help with the kids homework or dinner.” This is complaining without denigrating the mate.
* Being loyal means that when others say less than positive comments about your mate, you abstain from joining them in discounting your partner. Even if their grudge bears some truth, it is incumbent upon you as a loyal mate, to defend your partner’s actions and present him in a more favorable light.
* Being loyal means keeping your partner’s needs as primary over all other peoples’ needs. Any obligation or commitment to other people has to be assessed in importance, once your mate requires your attention. It does not mean that your parents do not get your attention until all your spouse’s needs are satisfied. It means that the spouse gets first priority in all-important or urgent matters.
* Being loyal means keeping your word, being truthful and reliable in keeping your promises to your mate. Not honoring your word discredits you and disappoints your mate.
* Being loyal means accommodating your mate- even when it not a choice activity for you. If your partner needs you to be present to help her with her volunteer party, your loyalty will aid you in rescheduling your previously planned recreational activity. If your spouse wants you to attend his business meeting, which is less than thrilling for you, you do it with grace.

Choosing to be loyal in attitude, actions and words is a personal decision. Being truly loyal is very hard. Yet, no other way works for truly intimate and loving couples.

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