Centered Connections
Theresa Herring, LMFT

Marriage Saving Guide & Checklist

Your spouse wants a divorce but you don't. I cannot guarantee that this will save your marriage. But I can tell you that as a couples therapist and discernment counselor who helps couples on the brink of divorce, **this is your best shot.**

Don't expect change overnight. Chances are it took many years for your marriage to get to this point. So it will likely take months to see improvement if you're embarking on this on your own. You can potentially expedite the process through discernment counseling if your spouse is willing to go to counseling. I'll go into more detail on that option below.

First Pause.

I know you are upset right now but reacting isn't helping your cause. In fact it's likely pushing your partner away.

☐ I have done what I need(ed) to do to feel calm and centered

☐ I will continue to self-soothe so that I can respond instead of react

Prioritize and focus

Chances are you and your spouse have lost sight of what you wanted your marriage to be. And found yourself in a unhappy place because of it. If you want to save your marriage, you need to know what you're aiming for. If you haven't already, print this out. It's time to get clarity and direction.

What would being happily married look like?

Break it down into concrete, specific, and measurable goals

Brainstorm how to achieve your goals

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☐ I have a clear idea of what I want my marriage to look like

☐ My marriage goal is concrete, specific, and measurable

☐ I have made a plan to achieve my goal through actionable steps

Do Something Different

Couples tend to fall into patterns. And this pattern that you're in has all but broken your marriage. It's time to do something different. Consider a 180 of your previous behavior.

What do you normally do in arguments?

What are your typical attempts at connection and repair?

☐ I know what my spouse's complaints are and I am willing to do a 180

☐ I know my pattern and I'm determined to do something different

Keep Calm and Carry On

In order to win your spouse back, you need to first show up as a friend. You need to respect their decisions and autonomy. Avoid the "I love you"s and demonstrations of affection. These things aren't going to help you woo them (right now).

☐ I will be a good friend and treat my spouse with respect and kindness

☐ I will avoid saying "I love you" or showering my spouse with affection

Reconnect with lost parts of yourself

When couples get to the point of divorce they often feel like shells of their former selves. Which means you probably aren't acting like the person that your spouse fell in love with all those years ago. Now is the time to reconnect with lost parts of yourself.

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☐ I'm pursuing hobbies and activities that are important to my identity

☐ I will take time to reconnect with myself and important loved ones

Try Discernment Counseling

If your partner is open to it, discernment counseling is a great option for couples on the brink of divorce. The goals of discernment counseling are not to save the relationship but to see if saving it is even a possibility.

The goals of discernment counseling are to get clarity on the relationship, confidence about the future of the relationship, and a better understanding about each person's role in the relationship.

☐ I will send my partner a link to discernment counseling

☐ I will ask my partner if they'd be willing to go to discernment counseling to see if we can get **clarity** on the relationship, **confidence** about the future of our relationship, and a **better understanding** of what happened in our relationship and each person's role in it.

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