



## “When our Spouse does not assume their role in the family”



**“A good marriage is one which allows for change and growth in the individuals and in the way they express their love.”**

**~ Pearl Buck**

When we enter marriage, we assume we are marrying a responsible person. We know that our roles will be somewhat different, but we each assume that our partner will use his/her mind, skills, and energy for our mutual benefit. When it seems apparent that our spouse is not the responsible person we thought we married, we feel hurt, angry, and betrayed.

Our response will be influenced by our personality. If I am by nature a “controller”, I will deliver angry lectures about irresponsibility. If I am a “peacemaker”, then I may suffer in silence. However, neither of these approaches is very productive. The first step in becoming a positive influence on your “irresponsible” spouse is to identify the problem behind the behaviour.

### Looking Behind the Behaviour

Let’s assume that your husband has little ambition. He won’t work. He shows no interest in fathering or being a husband. What lies behind this? There are four possibilities:

1. He may be following the model of his father. He is simply doing what seems natural to him.
2. He may be rebelling against the model of his father. His father was a workaholic. As a child he decided that work was bad, and so consciously or unconsciously he is rebelling.
3. He has developed a self-centred attitude. He is a taker, not a giver.
4. His “irresponsible” behaviour may be an expression of his resentment toward you. Whatever you want, he will move in the opposite direction. He is angry and this is his way of expressing it.

Understanding what is behind your partner’s behaviour will help you choose a positive approach to addressing the problem.

### Your Responsibility

Positive action begins by examining your own behaviour to see how you might be contributing to your spouse’s “irresponsibility”. Acknowledge your own imperfections. Ask for suggestions on how you can be a better spouse. Pay attention and take seriously their feedback. If you’re going to be a positive change agent, you must be willing to change first. Once your spouse gives positive feedback, you know you are getting through to them on an emotional level

### A Small Request

Now it is time to make a request of them. “Do you know what I would really like? I would like for us to have spend more time together. If I make the dinner arrangements, would you pick up the children?” Begin with small but specific request. If your spouse responds positively, you are on the road to seeing more requests honoured. As you both respond positively to each other, you begin to change the emotional climate in your home. And you can continue to influence them in a positive direction.

*Excerpt taken from Desperate Marriages by Dr. Gary Chapman.*



### Pre-Marital Assessment

CLM is licensed to use PREPARE, a very well researched and internationally used tool in pre-marital assessments. A report detailing relationship strengths and potential areas of conflict is included in the feedback session. Further counselling with one of our counsellors is available, if necessary.

### SMARTSTART Pre-Marriage COURSE

Dates: 22<sup>nd</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> Nov 2008  
Time: 9am – 4pm

Venue: Unit 20-2, Jalan PJU 8/5G,  
Bandar Damansara Perdana,  
47820 Petaling Jaya.

**Limited to only 20-couples.**

### CONTACT US

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