

# *Marriage is a Four-Letter Word*

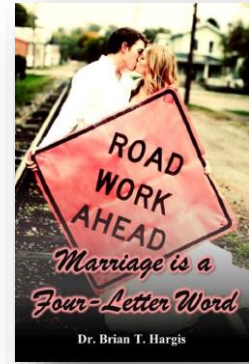
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From CHAPTER 6:  
Society's View of Marriage

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## THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH?

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In 2010 I hosted a marriage seminar in the beautiful Olympic city of Lake Placid, New York. I asked 78 couples, *“How many of you think that the first years of marriage are the toughest?”* Approximately 50 hands went up.

*“Of you that have your hands up,”* I inquired, *“How many of you have been married more than five years?”* All but 6-10 hands went down.

*“Ahhhh. We have a lot of young couples that haven’t yet experience longevity in the marriage,”* I said, *“What the rest of you matured couples realize is that the young couples still have some rough times ahead.”*

There is an increasing trend indicating the years six, seven and eight are the most difficult. It’s during these later years that husband and wife begin to recognize that the luster and of marriage has worn off. Their love for each other has faded with time, and their spouse just doesn’t create the excitement (the butterflies) that they once did.



The husband no longer surprises his wife with flowers, a spa certificate, or a secretly planned evening out on the town. He communicates more through grunts and burps than he does through talking. His idea of intimacy is one of self-gratification first, regardless of her satisfaction. He takes his wife for granted.

The wife wears the same night-gown that she’s had for the last two years. She no longer shaves her legs regularly, nor does she surprise her husband with unplanned intimacy. Why? It’s all too much work. All her energy has been stolen by the labor of cleaning up after him and putting the children to bed. Her love has also faded away.

This is a time in a marriage when couples experience what’s known as the “seven-year itch.” It’s when a husband or wife recognizes the downward trend and they try to spice things up with their spouse. Some couples seek counseling. Some try to make changes themselves to be more attractive or solicit the interest of their spouse. They may join a gym, spend \$5,000 on cosmetic surgery, change their hairstyle, and/or purchase a new wardrobe all because they desperately want to get out of the marital rut.

It's at this point that many spouses are no longer attracted to the one they married seven years prior, but still want a change in their direction. They still want love, but just don't feel it from their spouse.

This is a very dangerous and susceptible time in a spouse's life. A time when they want change but are not getting any from their spouse. A time when the opposite sex, at the right time, under just the right circumstances, steps into the mix and infidelity in the marriage takes place. That person is usually...

- A co-worker, or...
- A close friend, or...
- A past lover, and is usually...
- Known to both the husband and wife

At this six, seven, or eight-year mark, couples are deciding if they really want to fight for their marriage or take flight (separate and divorce).

It's about this time that couples have settled comfortably into their marriage. The luster and lust between the husband and wife are gone. They have children, careers, carriages, cottages and caretakers, but live unhappy because of circumstances. They have failed to keep the love alive. They have failed to identify problem areas and work through solving them. They entertain the thoughts of "fight or flight." Both are defensive tactic terms used to describe actions taken to protect (fight) or simply run away (flight).

"Do I fight for this marriage, or do I call it quits and walk away?"

Some couples decide to fight for the marriage, and many others consider it not worth fighting for. Whatever the case, it's decision making time. Those that divorce often claim that it was time to "get out" of the relationship before investing another eight to ten years into it. Others believe it's the best time to divorce before the children get older.

Then there are those that believe that they still have a shot at another relationship if they divorce before they get much older. Some have suffered through the years of marriage and have held on so long hoping for change that never came that eventually, something had to give.

Those that push past these difficult years are in it for the long haul. Perhaps their relationship isn't great, but, as they think, "It could always be worse." Others are strapped down financially or obligatorily and can't see a way out at the time. Some hang in there hoping that their spouse will change. Yet nearly all of them hang on longest for the sake of...you guessed it... the children.

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For more of Chapter 9: **Reasonable Rules for Raising Rug Rats**

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