

best to have an interest and seem interested in things they are interested in. But that kind of interest will not last. If you try to comp~~all~~ the interest it won't work. The thing is to find areas of real interest.

Of course between two real earnest Christian people there should always be a center of real interest in the things of the Lord, and of serving him to the utmost. But that's not always == all of life. There are other phases. One partner loves to do crossword puzzles, and the other finds them most boring. One is interested in this sort of thing, the other is interested in that. But I think most people can find some common center of interest, and they can learn to join together on their common interests and to tolerate each other, on the places where interests are different.

It is so easy to react. A person expects certain consideration, certain help, certain sympathy, and then doesn't get it and is very easy to react to it. To strike back in a small way, and then the other strikes back. Pretty soon you're going. Somebody said most marriages begin with each thinking each other is absolutely perfect, and then they move to the stage where each ~~thinks~~ thinks the other is just about the worst person in the world. The successful marriage moves on to a third stage where they realize they both are imperfect but that they can make a happy life together. It's good if that second stage can be skipped, but with a great -- I don't know if so many go through that second stage but I'm sure that everyone (interruption by phone. . . .)

I think it's important to realize that a person has an immediate tendency to strike back even in a purely verbal way, but to strike back at irritation. It is good to get the feeling of proportion == that the joy and personal fulfillment that comes from a good marriage is so important that one is willing happily to put up with things, and not to even show dissatisfaction, over them. I believe that is a thing for a person to have in mind well in advance. I think that would make a big difference in a great many cases.

A person will find -- it may be a lack of consideration. Of course the best thing that people can do is to talk things over. For instances I've known of two people. He thinks she would like to go to the mountains; he'd rather go to the ocean. She would rather go to the ocean, but she ~~thinks~~ thinks he'd rather go to the mountains. So they go to the mountains, each to please the other! It is very easy for that sort of thing to happen. To learn to be really frank and learn to -- but people can't be absolutely frank. You have to -- you're afraid of hurting a person. You are -- you don't express yourself fully. Learn to talk things over and learn the area of mutual interest. To give opportunity for the other. Perhaps enter the other things that the other person enjoys for their pleasure. Even if they don't reciprocate still to realize that the importance of the relationship is sufficiently great in one's life that it is worth putting up with. Maybe that pretty well covers what I have in mind.