

## [From McHenry, Dundee And Cary, IL:How To Find The Marriage Counselor Who Will Save Your Marriage](#)

Finding a skilled marriage counselor who really cares about you and your marriage can be difficult. When considering relationship counseling, your self-esteem is often at its lowest point and when you experience constant bickering and arguments you may feel afraid that a divorce may be in your future.

You may also feel terrified and worry about the welfare of your kids. When you are suffering from a troubled marriage, the best thing you can do is reach out to a counselor.

Qualified relationship counselors come with various credentials. You should usually look for a licensed psychologist, clinical social worker or mental health counselor who specializes in marriage counseling. These highly trained counseling specialists have seen it all and can give you expert advice.

If you have never consulted a counselor before, but want to, you are probably feeling apprehensive. This is absolutely normal.

After all, you will be revealing to a stranger some of the most intimate and personal details of your life and it may be embarrassing and painful. But it can be well worth the opportunity for a new chance at a full and loving marriage.

To start, make a list of the features you are seeking in a counselor. For example, reflect on what you might like about your family physician.

You should be most concerned about finding someone with the right credentials and with whom you have a good rapport. You may need to find someone with flexible hours who can accommodate a hectic schedule.

For some, the most important thing is having a very knowledgeable counselor with an excellent reputation and extensive training. A good counselor should treat you with respect, patience, sensitivity, and courtesy.

Before your first visit, take the time to prepare a list of questions. Pick someone with whom you feel comfortable talking and with whom you will be able to carry on an open dialogue.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask. Good marriage counselors want you to be prepared and to demonstrate an active interest in the process.

If you find your counselor stiff, rigid or difficult to talk to, consider finding a new one. You should never feel rushed, ignored, or unable to ask questions.

Let your counselor know about any anxiety or nervousness. This can help him or her become more sensitive to your concerns and will result in a better consultation.

After deciding to take this important step, here are some additional tips. For example, if the cost of treatment is paramount, consult your health insurance or employee assistance program at work to see if they cover counseling.

Also, you may be restricted to a specific network of professionals. If so, get the roster and then make an appointment as early as possible.

When going through the roster, remember that a well-trained marriage counselor must be a psychologist, social worker, marriage and family therapist or mental health counselor who is licensed to practice independently.

This licensure often requires the passage of an oral examination and/or a comprehensive written exam. He or she will have graduated from an accredited graduate school and have completed specialized training.

Another thing to look for is membership in a major professional association. These include The American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, The American Counseling Association and The National Association of Social Workers.

Members of these organizations often receive continuing education classes and must remain in good standing to remain members. Also, pick a marriage counselor with lots of experience. The one with many years experience is more apt to make an accurate assessment and provide the best services.

Marriage counselors usually do not believe that people should enter counseling with the primary goal of trying to change their partners. It is frustrating, does not work and often makes things worse!

Remember, the ONLY person you can really change is yourself and sometimes that is not so easy either! One of the most horrendous mistakes you can make is to get married to an incompatible person thinking that you will be able to change him/her!

Also, sometimes only one person is motivated to pursue counseling or really improve the relationship. How can you deal with a difficult marriage when your partner does not want to change?

What do you do if you have a spouse who has a serious behavior problem i.e. compulsive gambling, drinking, or spending, explosive temper, inability to keep a job, emotionally or physically abusive, unfaithful etc. And what if he/she is not willing to go to counseling or work on the marriage?

What do you do? Some experts believe a marriage can become much better even if a difficult spouse never changes.

How? By working on oneself-by learning to HANDLE your spouses flaws more effectively i.e. not blaming, not allowing yourself to become over-involved in your partners problems, detaching yourself from the troublesome aspects of your spouses life, and even going to support groups and counseling to learn how to achieve all of this.

When your spouse is not cooperative, it is imperative that you assess your expectations and attitudes to determine how you alone can still be a positive force in your kids lives and in your relationship. However, there are no easy answers.

Much depends on how much you are willing to sacrifice to keep your marriage from falling apart. Most professionals would contend, however, that if your resistant spouse is causing you to be dysfunctional in maintaining your physical or mental health, or at home, in your job or with your kids or friends, it might be best or even necessary, to develop a plan to end the relationship.

One absolute rule is to not endanger yourself or your kids by remaining in an abusive relationship. The imperative of saving lives comes before that of saving your marriage.

### About the Author

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