



3 Things That Kill Love

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Can love actually die? After all, the Apostle Paul wrote, love “endures all things [and] . . . love never ends” (1 Cor. 13:7-8). Although it is true that love between persons may never end, their relationship can. [A wise marriage counselor](#) once said that there are three things that kill love in a marriage. Without these appropriate virtues, marriages will remain stuck or fail. I suppose that these three vices will also kill love in any relationship.

A LACK OF SELF-AWARENESS

It can be said of all humans that there are things “we don't know that we don't know.” This becomes acutely painful in relationships, especially when we don't realize how we are coming across to others. We can be innocently ignorant, or willfully ignorant. By means of our poor socialization, cultural narrowness, or historical naiveté we can have appreciably negative effects on others. Factors of temperament also must be taken into consideration for our cluelessness.

We remain out of touch with reality if we don't have some standard by which to calibrate ourselves—something or Someone who is bigger than our socially constructed views of reality. We are inclined to use ourselves and our preferences (that with which we are familiar) as the standard of measure. The homes we grew up in seemed reasonably normal—until someone came along and annoyingly pointed out the dysfunction. Do you have some means, some standard by which you calibrate yourself to reality?

A LACK OF OWNERSHIP OF SIN.

Denial of guilt is a built-in default of the human condition. "Hiding" and "covering" begins in early childhood and extends well into adulthood. And it goes with many to their graves. Hiding becomes sophisticated as we age. This is most noticeable when we take on clever personas and self-protecting strategies. Covering is equally sophisticated: blame-shifting, minimizing, rationalizing, and self-justification are ways of we avoid responsibility for our poor choices.

In some instances, calloused hearts are no longer able to take responsibility for bad choices. In other instances, a lack of ownership of sin can be due to shame that has been deeply buried and unexplored. Does anyone explore your soul and help you see that you and you alone are the owner of your sin? Do you allow, even invite this?



A LACK OF HUMILITY

Some ancients believed that pride was the ability to make oneself look larger than normal. In other words, to make life work and to keep people under your control, acquire an exaggerated sense of self-importance. Be over-confident in all that you do. When this happens, God is often pushed to the periphery of our thinking; he becomes a mere bit-player in our stories where WE are the hero.

In its most severe form we think of boasting as a lack of humility. In its subtler forms a lack of humility consists of inwardly holding others in contempt, but being nice and pleasant on the outside. Over time, our inner lawyers can become crafty and intellectually brash.

Brokenness is the corrective for pride. The hard knocks of life have a way of pin-pricking our inflated selves. Tragedies, physical ailments, financial reversals, relational abandonment can be some of the effective means of penetrating a proud heart. So too, the "faithful wounds" of friends can sometimes serve as a catalyst for brokenness. When was the last time someone gently, but firmly pointed out your lack of humility? When was the last time you allowed it? Invited it?

Obviously, these three love-killing deficits could be developed more fully with greater sophistication and nuance. Suffice it for now to say: Insight alone will not correct one's love-killing ways. Some kind of emotional and experiential shift must happen. The internal pain of these love-killing strategies has to become too much to bear. Knowing that the loss of a relationship is imminent must jar one into sobering reality. As noted above, the sufferings of life can also serve as a recalibrating jolt for stubborn hearts.



For change and revitalization of marriages to occur, there must also be a plan with intentionality and accountability. Couples are not always able to do this on their own. The ears of mature and discerning people are needed for shifts to occur. Here's where a coach or spiritual director can be most helpful. Do you have a coach or spiritual director? Lasting change is well-nigh impossible without the input of wise and discerning guides. Finally, some of the best soul work happens in small groups with seasoned guides, humble leaders who are Spirit-filled and biblically-informed.

We all "stumble in many ways" (Jas. 3:2). We all have love-killing leanings. Do we and are we willing to invite others to recalibrate our skewed and self-focused views of reality?

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