

# NESTING ISSUES

by Dr. Valerie Correa

One of my favorite television shows is HGTV's *Designing for the Sexes*.

It is therapy at its best without a therapist.

Instead of a therapist, an interior decorator does his magic to get two spouses with divergent tastes to accommodate one another and create a room that makes them both smile. I'm in awe of his skillful therapeutic approach. He gets two people who are diametrically opposed to come to some agreement and be thrilled with the result instead of harboring resentment on what they had to compromise.

Now, why is this usually so difficult? Your home is a representation of the attitude, energy, and interaction of your marriage. It is not easy to get two different people to co-exist together. Specifically, a home is your environment to unwind, get inspired, feel welcomed, and should reflect the individual tastes of each



Illustration by Kevin Moore

## 5 RULES TO LIVE BY WHEN NESTING TOGETHER

- Nº. 1 Reflect your Partnership:** Your house is a home for two people, so decorate your home in a way that represents both inhabitants. To accomplish this, each partner has to communicate their tastes, be willing to compromise their vision, and reach a creative solution. If you do this collectively, each of you will have more pride and sense of involvement in the upkeep of your home.
- Nº. 2 Welcome Variety:** It is not "my way or the highway," there are two lanes going in the same direction but each has its own view. Be open to suggestion, change, and accept that each of you have unique ways of doing things. There are always many ways to do a simple task, let each one do it in a way they enjoy.

- Nº. 3 Infuse Positive Energy:** Do not let the little irritations of daily life take over the life of your marriage. You have a choice to either tear down your partner or build your partner up. Let your home be your safe haven where you can rejuvenate each other.
- Nº. 4 Negotiate Time:** Learn how your partner prefers private time and together time. Map out your day, week, etc. and create a schedule that honors your natural inclinations for self-care and relationship maintenance.
- Nº. 5 Make Traditions:** Create rituals for intimacy by how you share your day. How you wake up, go through your day, greet each other, and how you go to bed, are examples. This continually builds trust and intimacy. These activities don't have to be done methodically, instead do them in a way that energizes your passion for each other or soothes you through an intimate connection. It can be as simple as a kiss on your way to work. If you are fully present in that kiss every day, you will be amazed how you feel about coming home after work.

partner so it can be livable for both people. Unfortunately, this does not always happen.

Stereotypically, a wife says she wants to decorate together with her husband. Then, the husband will give his suggestions and the wife will reject the ideas. This will happen subtly or not so subtly until the husband learns to withdraw. Once the husband withdraws, the wife will say, "You never help me with anything around the house." The cycle persists. This interaction often mimics other interactions in the marriage. One person initiating or organizing and another either withdrawing or complying.

Also, when a couple first lives together, they are on a love high and all the little things that are about to annoy them for a lifetime are currently cute and so special. Leaving the toilet seat up, leaving the cap off the toothpaste, being persnickety on how the tools should be displayed; in a few years these cute and unique activities may drive you crazy on a daily basis. That is, if you let them. Moments of contention can be exaggerated into daily tension.

So how can a couple break this male-female marital tradition? A couple has to look at what is truly important every day. Yes, I did say every day. Can the way a person folds the socks really be more important than the way your spouse can give you that one look that reminds you everything is going to be okay? So when you are about to pull out your hair, take stock on how your partner enriches your life. Try to clear your eyes of their negativity rather than roll them. Give your spouse a hug in those moments, and thank them for reminding you that s/he is different from you, and that is why you love them in the first place.

PBC

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