



7 Separation Pitfalls That Push Her Away

Introduction

If you're here reading this, I'm assuming you've already watched the [3+1 Separation Strategy](#) video and read through the [detailed strategy guide on the Haven](#).

If I've done my job right, you have a big picture idea of what you should be doing to get the best possible chance of saving your marriage. But, you probably still have some questions, or maybe you're not quite sure where to start.

That's okay! Even the most confident men who've come through the Haven didn't start that way; they built up their confidence over time.

Since 2014, nearly 20,000 men have subscribed to come Inside the Haven. It's not uncommon for me to get 50+ emails from men going through separation on any given week.

With the 3+1 Separation Strategy, you know what to do. Now we need to talk about what NOT to do.

When you see *that many* men trying to fix their marriages, you start to pick up on some common mistakes. This guide is my way of preparing you NOT to make the same mistakes of men who've come before you.

We'll cover a total of seven big mistakes in this guide. For each of these mistakes, you're going to learn two things:

1. How and why that mistake hurts your chances of getting your wife back (even though you might think it's a good idea).
2. What you should do instead to help your wife see you differently.

We'll wrap up with a quick overview of what you should do if you've already made any of the mistakes listed in the guide.

You'll also learn what you can look forward to as a subscriber Inside the Haven.

Sound good?

I don't want to waste your time with a long introduction here, so let's jump right in.

Mistake #1. Begging

This is by far the most common mistake that I see desperate husbands make in a separation. I would guess that about 80% of you reading this have made this mistake already.

You might not have been on your knees in tears (although you wouldn't be the first), but you *did* try to get your wife to change her mind by asking her over and over again to give you or the marriage another chance.

She doesn't see a man who wants her to stay. She sees a man who has grown comfortable and is desperate to keep things the same... Even if it means keeping her unhappy.

Why is begging such a big no-no?

- A. **Begging your wife is a TURN OFF.** And a big one, too. I don't think I've ever met a woman who described her ideal man as desperate and dependent.
- B. **Begging is SELFISH.** Even though on the surface, you tell yourself that you're begging your wife because you love her, the truth is that begging is rooted in desperation. And desperation is rooted in fear, not love.
- C. **Begging simply does not work.** It just can't. Think about it...

If your wife has told you she wants out, she's already made the decision to start prioritizing her happiness over yours. This means that begging *cannot* work because she has already accepted that she must hurt you to make herself happy.

Truthfully, she's probably felt a whole lot of hurt over the years too, so she's not going to let herself feel much sympathy for the pain you're going through.

That's just the way it is.

If you're honest with yourself, you'll realize that the reason you beg your wife is NOT because you love her and want her to stay; it's actually because you're scared of the pain you'll experience when she leaves. You don't beg because you love her; you beg because you want control and you don't have it.

Remember Step 1 of the 3+1 Strategy? Desperation is what happens when you try to control what you can't.

I can guarantee this is how your wife sees it when you beg her... She doesn't see a man who genuinely wants her to stay in the marriage; she sees a man who has grown comfortable in his apathy, and who, now that he's facing the loss of that comfort, is desperate to keep things the same even though it means keeping her unhappy.

What You Should Do Instead

I'm not saying you need to *agree* with your wife's request for divorce, but you should acknowledge that she's unhappy and that you *do* ultimately want her to be happy.

Remember, if you truly love your wife more than yourself, then you would rather have her happy without you than miserable with you.

Obviously, best case scenario is that she's happy *with* you, and we're going to work to try and make that a believable option for her. I'm not saying you have to throw in the towel, but you need to find a way to express your desire to work on the marriage without begging.

The message you should send your wife is essentially, "I don't want you to leave, and I truly believe we can save this marriage, but I also respect that you must do what *you* need to do to be happy."

Mistake #2. Smother Her With Romantic Gestures

When your wife tells you that she wants out of the marriage, she already knows that you are not going to agree with her. She already knows that you're going to try to change her mind and get her to stay.

From the moment she says she wants out, any effort you make to change her mind is instantly perceived as you trying to get what you want. It becomes you versus her.

In a way, this is just a more positive version of begging.

Just yesterday I got an email from a guy asking me how many times per day he should text his separated wife, "I love you," or, "Have a good day," or, "I'm thinking about you!" Stuff like that. He told me he was currently texting his wife three times a day, morning

noon and night, and he wanted to know if that was enough... Even though she was ignoring all his texts.

In a way, this is just a more positive version of begging.

I gently told this man that he should probably text his wife romantic stuff like that only once every few days or even just once a week.

Why? Because right now, these **ooey gooey romantic gestures come across as yet another desperate attempt to change her mind.**

- Telling your wife, "I love you," over and over again when she has already told you she wants out just seems like you're trying to get her to say it back.
- Buying your wife a huge bouquet of flowers, showering her with gifts, taking her out to a romantic dinner... All this stuff just comes off as you trying to guilt her into staying.

Even though I know you're doing this stuff to try and be a good husband, really what you're doing is giving her more reason to resent you, because she will (rightly) feel like you're trying to manipulate her and change her mind.

You're trying to give her what you want her to want, *not what she really wants.*

- You *want* her to say, "I love you," back...
- You *want* her to fall head over heels for the romantic dinner, or accept your invitation to her dream date night...

She can feel these expectations behind your romantic gestures and words, and all they're doing right now is pushing her further away.

Most of the time, an unhappy wife will spend weeks or months feeding her resentment until she builds up the courage/anger to ask for divorce. Once she finally says she wants out, she usually opens the floodgates and stops hiding her "true feelings" about you; instead, she starts hiding behind the wall she's built around her heart so that she won't change her mind.

You can't force her to take down this wall, all you can do is give her a good reason to peek her head up and look over it.

What You Should Do Instead

To be clear, I'm not saying you should never do anything romantic for your wife once she's asked to leave the marriage.

Every separation is different and there ARE cases where turning a new leaf and courting your wife like you're dating her again can be the big thing that gets her back. I've certainly seen that happen plenty of times, especially when an unhappy wife hasn't quite made up her mind about the marriage... She just knows something needs to change.

But, if you've tried courting your wife and she has responded to it negatively, pump the brakes and back off.

Remember Step 3 of the 3+1 Separation Strategy? It was: *Show her the man you want to be in a way that makes her life better.*

Two key phrases there.

First, show her. Your words aren't going to be what changes her mind. It's your actions and your attitude. You need to SHOW HER that you can and will prioritize her happiness, even if it means going against what you want by backing off and giving her space.

Second, make her life better. You need to put yourself in her shoes and identify what will make her life feel better *for her*.

- What will relieve stress for her?
- What will make her day easier?
- What will lighten her load?

Is it buying her that big bouquet of flowers? Or is it leaving her alone and giving her a few days of silence.

Is it writing her that sweet little love note and putting it under her pillow? Or is it doing the dishes when it's not your turn and not saying anything about it.

I'm not promising that non-romantic gestures will guarantee a positive reaction from your wife... She might still lash out at you just the same when you do the dishes for her as when you leave her that little love note. But, she's a lot more likely to be re-attracted to the man who's actually *doing* things to improve her life (and showing he understands

her pain) than she is to the man who's *saying* things to change her mind (and showing that he's clueless what she feels).

Mistake #3. Force Her to Attend Marriage Counseling

One of the reasons that I started Husband Help Haven in the first place was because I was so fed up with marriage counseling. I was convinced that there had to be a better way to save marriages; that counseling was almost always more harmful than helpful.

These days I have a much more positive, forgiving perception of marriage counseling. However, that doesn't change the fact that marriage counseling has some pretty abysmal success rates.

- ~25% of couples have a worse marriage two years after attending marriage counseling than before they attended counseling.
- ~38% of couples are divorced within four years of completing a marriage counseling regimen.

Even marriage counselors will tell you that it doesn't work for everybody... Marriage counseling is not a fix-all. And the goal of counseling is not always to save a marriage.

Many counselors make it their goal to help couples move forward in the *healthiest way possible*. This means that there are times when a marriage counselor will look at a relationship and say, "You know what? I believe the *healthiest* thing for both of you may actually be divorce."

There is one thing a marriage counselor can't do: they can't make a person WANT to work on their marriage.

Now, despite all this doom and gloom about marriage counselors, I still 100% believe that marriage counseling can be a great tool for some couples. Turns out, it's pretty easy to predict which couples will benefit the most from counseling...

Marriage counseling is most likely to save a marriage if BOTH husband and wife go into it with a good attitude and a willingness to change. A marriage counselor can help you identify root problems in the relationship and give both of you the tools to fix them.

But, there is one thing a marriage counselor can't do: they can't make a person WANT to work on their marriage.

What does this mean for you?

This means that forcing your wife to go to marriage counseling is generally a bad idea. Making your wife do something that she doesn't want to do or that she has already convinced herself won't work is, at best, a waste of time and money.

What Should You Do Instead?

If you think that marriage counseling would be helpful, but your wife doesn't want to go with you, then my advice is to set up an individual counseling session. Go by yourself and get the help YOU need, even if your wife isn't willing to accept any for herself.

I fully believe that individual counseling is a great idea for most men going through a separation, even if you're also doing marriage counseling. Having someone to be 100% open and honest with in a safe environment can make it a ton easier to keep your emotions in check and stay focused on what you can control during the moments that matter most.

Plus, if you go to individual counseling instead of forcing your wife to do something she doesn't want to do, it just might help her to start seeing you as a man who is capable of change.

Mistake #4. Talk To Her Family or Friends

I cannot tell you how many times I've seen a man reach out to his wife's family and friends only to have those people turn around and rat him out to his wife.

Even if you are 99% sure that her family and friends will be "on your side", this is still almost always a bad idea.

Why?

Even when I see a man convince his wife's family or friends (or both) to intervene and advocate for the marriage, it rarely results in any meaningful change. In all my years, I can't think of a single time when a husband reaching out to his wife's family or friends has been *the thing* that saved their marriage.

One story in particular comes to mind...

A couple years ago, a guy emailed me to tell me about his wife's hidden emotional affair she'd been having for several months behind his back. He and his wife both came from religious families, so he decided to talk to their pastor and her conservative parents about what she was doing. The pastor and her parents were both on his side and successfully convinced the wife to drop the emotional affair and start working on the marriage.

It makes your wife feel like she has no one on her side, which actually just makes her more defensive and less likely to change her mind.

All good, right?

Not quite. A couple months later I heard from this guy again. Turns out, his wife only stopped the emotional affair for about 2 weeks, then started it up again with even more secrecy. Not only that, she now blamed him for "turning her parents against her" and was more determined than ever to leave.

Always remember, your wife's family and friends are HER family and friends, and you should expect their allegiance to be with your wife over you. And really, that's the way it should be... You shouldn't *want* to take those supports away because then it just makes your wife feel like she has no one on her side. This in turn makes her more combative, more defensive, and less likely to change her mind. The lonelier your wife feels, the more likely she is to find a friend (or more than a friend...) in unhealthy places.

Now, the exception to this rule would be if your wife is doing something legitimately dangerous and you are desperate for someone to get through to her. For example, if your wife is having a midlife crisis and has fallen into hard drugs, or if she has started neglecting the kids at an abusive level.

What You Should Do Instead

Turn to your own family and friends, not hers. Let her supports be her supports, and use your own supports to help yourself.

If you do reach out to her family and friends, do NOT try to convince them to “be on your side” or change her mind... Instead, simply ask them to be there for your wife and to non-judgmentally help her however they can. This way, even if they tell your wife what you said, all they’ll be able to say is that you were trying to make her life better. Still not ideal, but much better than her feeling like you went behind her back to turn people against her.

Mistake #5. Expect Your Wife to Work On the Marriage

Want to know how to make your separation as frustrating and depressing as possible?

Go into it expecting your wife to work on the marriage just as hard as you are.

That’s right. It is a mistake to expect your wife to work on the marriage.

This one probably comes as a surprise... After all, it seems wildly unfair that you should have to put all this work into saving the marriage and improving yourself, only to have your wife give nothing back. And you’re right, it is unfair.

It’s a good thing unconditional love isn’t built on fairness.

This mistake is such a dangerous one because it can hide under the surface of an otherwise great mindset.

You might be completely on top of your game in every other area...

- You haven’t made any of the first four mistakes.
- You’ve been following the 3+1 Separation Strategy as best you can.
- You’re making real changes in yourself to improve.

... But you start getting more and more frustrated because your wife doesn’t seem to be doing any work herself to save the marriage.

She’s going to give herself every excuse she can NOT to work on the marriage and stick to her decision to leave.

It is very, very easy to get caught up in the expectation that if you're working on the marriage, then your wife should be working on the marriage too. Unfortunately, it rarely ever works that way.

As I said above, I'm not going to sit here and tell you that it's fair for your wife to put in zero effort while you're here pouring through page after page, working you're butt off to give your marriage a fighting chance. It is definitely not fair. But, chances are your wife has suffered her share of injustices as well.

It is true that there will come a point where progress can't be made inside the marriage until your wife starts to genuinely buy in and re-invest herself in the relationship. However, right now the wounds are too fresh. The big decision she's made to leave is still at the front of her mind.

Plus, many of you have had marriage problems before... Maybe you've been separated before too. You might have a history of making temporary changes to be a better husband, only to fall back into bad habits the moment your wife agrees to come back.

Even if you've never been guilty of going back-and-forth with your husbandly leadership, it's what your wife expects you to do. It's what she's telling herself so that she can stick to her decision to leave.

We touched on this in the 3+1 video... When your wife first sees your changes, she's going to tell herself that they're not real, that they're only temporary, and that as soon as she comes back they'll vanish. She's going to give herself every excuse she can NOT to work on the marriage and stick with her decision to leave.

What You Should Do Instead

Remember, the changes you've made in yourself aren't genuine if you're only making them to change her mind. If you've read [How To Lead Your Marriage When She Wants Out](#), then you'll recognize that we're talking about The Trader.

Take a deep look at the motivation behind the changes you're making. Yes, there's always going to be that little part of you that hopes your wife will recognize your changes and want to come back, but **your primary motivation for self-improvement MUST NOT be your wife's approval.**

The moment that you make your wife feel like, “I’m changing, why aren’t you changing too?!” is the moment that she will be justified in believing your changes are hollow and fake.

For now, you must accept that you are probably the only one putting any effort into the marriage. It might not be fair, it certainly isn’t optimal, but it’s the way it is and there’s no sense getting frustrated about something you can’t change right now.

Again, this goes back to Step 3. You have to be CONSISTENT until your wife starts to trust you again.

Mistake #6. Let Your Emotions Control You

No matter what problems you’re facing in your marriage, there is only one thing you can control: yourself. But when your emotions get the best of you, you can’t even control that.

There’s nothing wrong with feeling strong emotions during this extremely difficult time of your life and marriage. It’s both expected and accepted that you will feel sadness, depression, fear or even anger at the thought of losing your wife.

Don’t beat yourself up too much if you struggle with negative emotions; you’re not the only one.

But! The problem comes when you allow your negative emotions to control your actions.

The problem comes when you get ‘stuck’ in those emotions to the point that you can’t do the things you know you should do. Or when you make the mistakes discussed in this guide even though you know you shouldn’t.

Keep in mind, even the most self-controlled, disciplined husbands I’ve ever seen had moments of weakness... Days when they felt like giving up, or where they stopped believing that their marriage could ever be saved, or when they let themselves put too much pressure on their wife. So, don’t beat yourself up too much if you find yourself struggling to control negative emotions; you’re not the only one.

What You Should Do Instead?

By itself, losing control of your emotions probably won't affect the way your wife feels about you. It's possible that your wife may not even notice that you're having a really tough, emotional day.

As we said above, the true danger in losing control of your emotions is not the act of feeling emotional; it's the unwise, emotionally-driven decisions that you're more likely to make when you lose your self-control.

There are two things you can do to prevent this from happening:

1. First, prepare yourself ahead of time NOT to act on any big decisions about the separation or marriage while you're emotionally out of control. You need to have the self-awareness to recognize when you're not emotionally stable.
 - For example, I've seen many men agree to move out of the house in a moment of emotional desperation. Not that moving out is *always* a bad idea (although most lawyers will tell you it is), but it's not a decision that should be made while you're thinking emotionally.
2. Second, take care of yourself and avoid putting yourself in situations where you're likely to emotionally spiral out of control.
 - Self-care during crisis is a big topic that goes beyond the scope of this guide, but a lot of it is common sense. Don't let yourself spend hours and hours alone, avoid alcohol and other addictive habits, find people to talk to, get out of the house, keep yourself busy, etc.

If you follow these two guidelines, you'll still have some very difficult, emotional days. But, those bad days will be a lot less likely to result in any additional damage to your marriage or your wife.

Mistake #7. Try to Go It Alone

There's a stereotype that men HATE stopping to ask for directions.

These days everyone has GPS built into their phones, so this stereotype has lost a lot of its meaning. But, the point is still there – we men are prideful, self-dependent creatures.

If you're anything like me, you take pride in being able to "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" and doing what needs to be done without any help. It's often seen as unmanly to get help in any way, shape or form.

Ironically, the same men who refuse to stop and ask for directions are usually the ones on their knees desperately begging their wives for just one more chance. Or the ones repeating the same mistakes over and over again.

A good husband knows that sometimes he will be wrong. A good husband knows when to ask for help.

The fact that you're here reading this at all shows you're willing to ask for directions.

- Even if you've been married for years...
- Even if you and your wife were best friends before your marriage...
- Even if you studied women under the tutelage of Don Juan himself...

You DO NOT know everything about marriage. Neither do I.

You DEFINITELY do not know everything about women. Again, neither do I.

We all need help from time to time. It's hard to get that help from the mirror.

What Should You Do Instead?

Do you know the number one tip that I hear over and over again from the strongest, most resilient men who come through the Haven?

GET HELP!

Don't go it alone, and never let yourself believe you've learned it all. **The men who grow the most are the ones who learn the most and seek the most help.**

I'm not just talking about the resources available to you on Husband Help Haven; I'm talking about the real people in your life who *want* to help you. Trust me, they are there.

You can make this separation extra difficult by trying to bear the burden all alone. It is much easier – and you will be much more likely to *maintain* positive changes – if you have someone to confide in along the way. It could be a friend, a family member, a church member... Just find *someone* reliable who you can talk to!

Now don't get me wrong, you've already made a great start in the 'asking for help' department simply by reading this guide. The fact that you're here at all shows that you're willing to ask for directions. That's great! Just keep this trait in mind as you go forward.

Being able to ask for help puts you ahead of the 95% of men who will never have a happy marriage because they're unwilling to stop and ask for directions.

What If You've Already Made These Mistakes?

Go back to the 3+1 Separation Strategy... What is the first step? *Focus on what you can control.*

You can't go back and change the past, all you can do is change the future. It's pointless to dwell on your mistakes any longer than it takes for you to learn from them... Beyond that, move on and look ahead.

I firmly believe it is

NEVER too late to save a marriage.

There are no guarantees, but I have personally seen men get their wife back even after making the worst mistakes a man can make...

- I've seen men repair their marriage after they had an affair.
- I've seen men turn things around after *they* were the one to ask for a separation.
- I've even seen men who got divorced and *still* managed to get their wife back in the end.

I've seen marriages saved from infidelity, midlife crisis, mental illness, homosexual desires, depression, divorce, drug and alcohol addiction, and just about anything else you can think of.

For now, no matter what mistakes you've made in the past, it's time to move forward into the future. **What matters is what you do today, what you do tomorrow, and what you do every day after that.**

What's Next?

If you're at a point where every single day matters in your marriage, I recommend you check out my starter leadership course. It's called:

[10 Steps to Gain Husbandly Leadership](#)

If you liked this report, you're going to *love* the 10 Steps guide. It takes less than 2 hours to complete, you can pay what you want for it (even just \$1) and by the end you'll have a clear starting point for making changes in yourself and your marriage TODAY.

You are now at the beginning of a 14-part email series about applying husbandly leadership during separation. Throughout the next few emails I'll be giving you a man's road map to saving your marriage and getting your wife back.

Keep an eye on your inbox, and remember to add my email address to your contacts to make sure you get every email.

THANKS FOR READING!

The next email will come tomorrow with some man-to-man advice you won't want to miss...

Next Time >>

The Obvious Secret to Getting Your Wife Back

Keep an eye on your inbox for this message!

I hope you enjoy your time Inside the Haven! It's always a pleasure to serve another man who's passionate about saving his marriage. Thanks for stopping by :)