

Marriage Counseling Alternatives *that* Really Work

Looking for an affordable alternative to marriage counseling? Or maybe you're the only one trying to save the marriage. Find options for both inside this quick report.

*Estimated Reading Time:
~15 minutes*

Why Do We Need Alternatives?

Marriage counseling is most effective for a specific kind of couple.

Study after study has shown that when both spouses are motivated to improve their marriage, couples counseling has a very high success rate... If you find a good therapist and stick with it for several months.

The thing is, if both spouses are motivated to save the marriage, *most* relationship improvement tools have a very high success rate.

And if you're the only one trying to save the marriage? Well, marriage counseling has a much lower success rate, and you're probably better off spending your time and your money elsewhere.

Here's Why You Might Want an Alternative

- Marriage counseling is expensive; alternative #3 and #4 are much more affordable.
- Marriage counseling depends on both spouses putting in the work. Alternatives #2 and #3 can be used when you're the only one trying to save the marriage.
- Marriage counseling takes time to see results. Alternatives #1 and #3 have the potential for much faster results.
- Success in counseling depends heavily on the counselor. All of these alternatives except for #3 can be done (mostly) on your own.

One last thing... If you haven't already, I would highly recommend you go over and read my most thorough blog post on when marriage counseling works best:

[Does Marriage Counseling Work? Yes, But...](#)

(includes stats & 3-question "will counseling work for me" quiz)

Alternative #1.

Weekend Marriage Retreat



Pros:

- One of the best ways to take a mediocre marriage and make it great.
- Perhaps the best tool out there to rebuild the feelings in a relationship.
- Very fast results.
- It's actually fun! Mini-vacation!

Cons:

- Every marriage retreat has a different approach.
- No studies to prove how well it works.
- Can be expensive.
- Like counseling, not a good fit for divided couples.

If your goal is to **take a good marriage and make it great**, then a weekend marriage retreat is one of the best investments you will ever make, and an excellent counseling alternative.

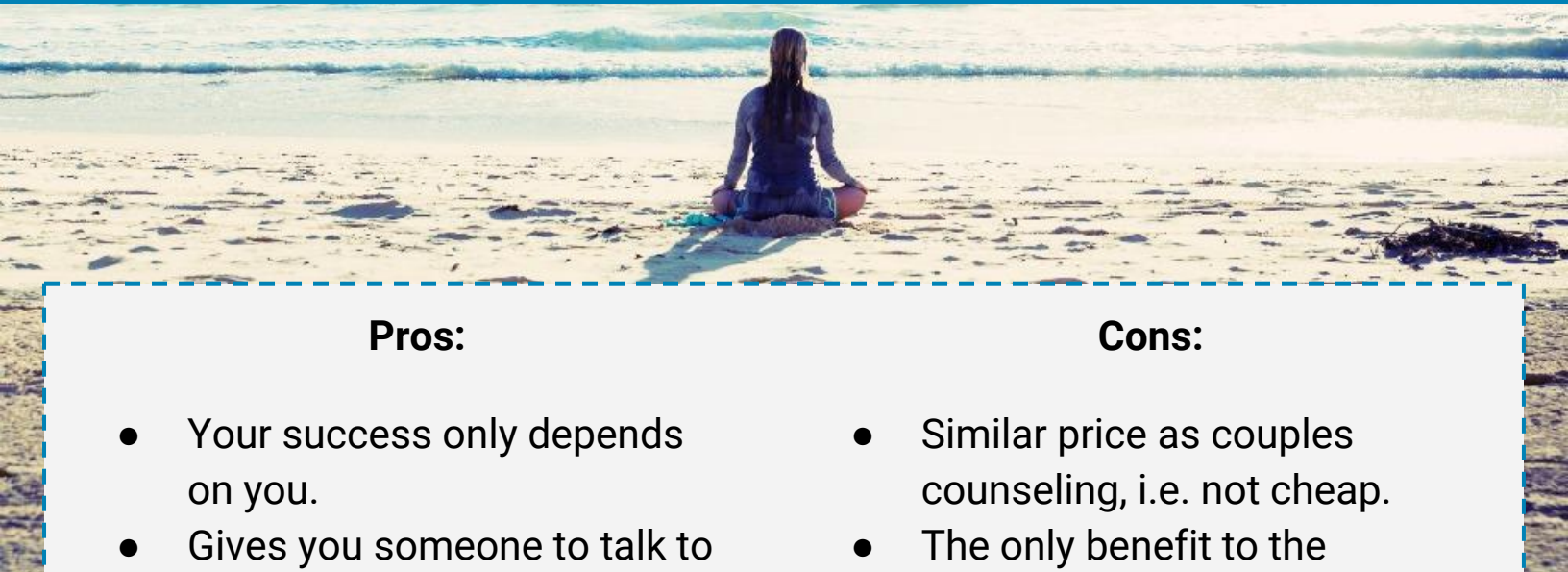
My wife and I did an AG Marriage Encounter retreat around our one-year anniversary, and it was an incredible weekend that's had a lasting positive impact. Can't recommend it enough, especially if your main goal is to rebuild emotional connection.

From what I've found, an average weekend marriage retreat costs around \$500, although prices vary widely. For example, Marriage Encounter is free but they ask for donations at the end of the weekend to help fund future couples' retreats.

Alternatively, you could **attend a one-day marriage seminar instead**... Not as fun, but would still teach you and your wife a bunch of helpful relationship building tools.

Alternative #2.

Individual Counseling



Pros:

- Your success only depends on you.
- Gives you someone to talk to in a time of crisis.
- Great alternative if your wife has no interest in marriage counseling.

Cons:

- Similar price as couples counseling, i.e. not cheap.
- The only benefit to the marriage will be your own self-improvement, although that can still work wonders!
- Not a fast fix.

While marriage counseling has mixed results, **individual therapy is always helpful.**

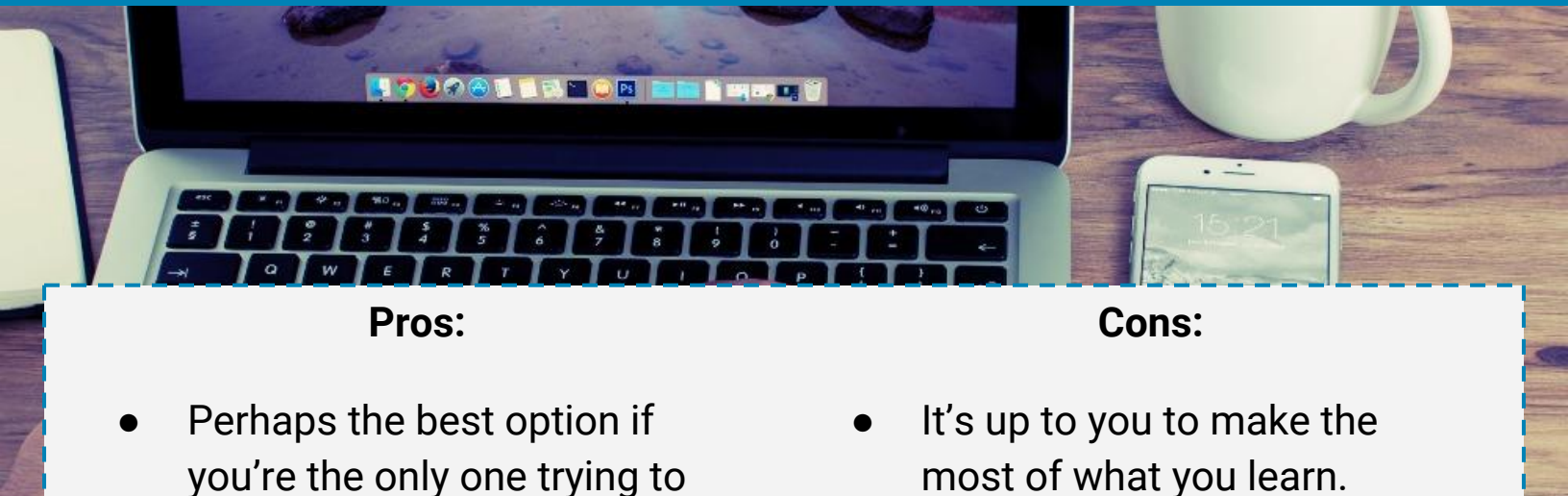
Even if your wife doesn't want to do marriage counseling, I highly recommend individual counseling for all men going through marital crisis, if you can afford it.

You need someone to talk to. You need an unbiased third-party to give you insight and help you understand what you're going through, and to help you manage your emotions and avoid negative behaviors.

An experienced therapist will be able to **help you focus on what you can control** AND help you **stay consistent** throughout your separation. And, on top of that, individual counseling is generally 10% to 20% cheaper per session than couples counseling.

Alternative #3.

Online Marriage Courses



Pros:

- Perhaps the best option if you're the only one trying to save the marriage.
- Much more affordable than counseling.
- Go at your own pace.
- Can be very effective for personal change.

Cons:

- It's up to you to make the most of what you learn.
- Some courses work better than others.
- No accountability or individual direction, unless the course provider also does coaching.

If you're the only one trying to save your marriage, coaching or online courses from educators with experience dealing with separation and divorce are probably your best chance. Especially alongside individual counseling.

I may be biased here... I have a course about how to be the best husband you can be, no matter what your marriage is like right now (see: [Manly Marriage Revival](#)). Still, we *know* that marriage counseling does *not* work for one-sided couples, and I do know that **MMR has helped a lot of men get their wife back**.

The thing is, you have to pick the right course. There are a lot of good free and paid resources out there, but there's a lot of junk too. Try to find teachers with a proven track record of success, not just get-rich-quick marketers trying to pitch you a crappy product.

Alternative #4.

Date Nights & DIY Therapy



Pros:

- Very cheap.
- May be all that you need to make things better.
- It's not about the specific things you do, but that you're both agreeing to make the marriage a priority. That alone can make things better.

Cons:

- Like counseling, this option won't work for divided couples.
- It's easier to fall back into bad habits, or to let your commitment fall by the wayside.
- No accountability or direction.

There are lots of online courses and books out there that are intended for couples to do together... And I don't have one of my own, so I'm not even biased here! :)

Maybe all your marriage needs is more priority. It could be that making it a priority to spend time together every week is all you need to rebuild connection.

Much like the marriage retreat, the better your marriage is beforehand, the better this alternative will work. DIY therapy or date nights DO NOT work when divorce is already on the table.

The other danger with DIY therapy is that it can be an opportunity for resentment... I've seen many cases where one spouse is really involved in the DIY therapy, and the other never reads the material or does their part. You run the same danger with marriage counseling, but there's even less accountability when you're on your own.

What Now?

The point of this report is not to tell you that marriage counseling is bad.

If you and your wife can both want to save the marriage, a good counselor is one of the single best tools to help you not only save the marriage, but make it feel happy and fulfilling.

However, not every couple fits this description. Here are the alternatives I recommend, and when:

If you're the only one trying to save your marriage...

I recommend finding an online course or a highly recommended self-help book, and then seeking individual counseling to help you implement what you learn.

If your marriage isn't in any real danger...

And you just want to improve the relationship, I recommend a marriage retreat. If you don't have the time or money for that, DIY therapy and date nights are a good runner up.

Hopefully one of the alternatives in this report will be a good fit for you.

Either way, thank you for taking the time to read this. My mission on Husband Help Haven is to help as many men as possible save as many marriages as possible, so thank you for helping me make that happen!

Much manly love,
- Stephen

