

## THE DOWNSIDE OF COMPARISON (& WHAT TO DO INSTEAD)

### PART ONE

JULY 12, 2023 – PREPARE-ENRICH BLOG

Oh look, one of your favorite couples that you follow on social media just went on (*another*) amazing vacation. They look so happy! They must be doing something right. Scroll, scroll, scroll. Ah, and there's an old classmate gushing for paragraphs about their spouse... Should I be doing that? Should my spouse be doing that? Hmm, Is our marriage going stale? Are we doing something wrong?

The pervasiveness of social media and the rise of “influencers” (*both individuals and couples*) has created innumerable opportunities for comparison to take hold. Even when you know it's an unhealthy habit to fall into, comparison can creep into your thinking – especially when you're constantly bombarded with what other couples are sharing about their own lives and relationships. You might begin feeling like your own life and marriage isn't what it should be. Or perhaps you've started having a sense that something is missing. These nagging feelings often start out small, but they can become a larger problem if you're not careful.

*To avoid getting stuck in a rut of comparison, keep these things in mind:*

- **Other couple's highlights provide a skewed measuring stick for your own marriage.**

Material or superficial things like beautifully decorated houses, luxurious vacations, perfectly coordinated family photos for every occasion, and even the public declarations of how wonderful one's marriage and spouse are – are not a measure of your own marital success.

- **You're seeing the curated version of others' lives.**

Even the most authentic personalities are likely not sharing all of the details – the tension, the arguments, or the issues that never seem to get resolved. Constantly comparing your day-to-day life to the highlights, you see online is going to wear on your mental health.

- **Every couple and relationship is unique.**

That means what works for one couple might not work for you, and vice versa. Think of the differences between you and your spouse. You both have different personalities, love languages, triggers, and tendencies, which creates dynamics in your relationship that are one-of-a-kind. Trying to mold yourselves to be like other couples will leave you both feeling like you're *failing* when you could be succeeding at being yourselves.

- **The grass is not always greener.**

Adopting this mentality might result in missing out on the strengths and successes of your own relationship. Focusing on “living up to” or matching what others seem to be doing could mean you're not paying attention to the real issues in your marriage that need attention, which can be detrimental to your relationship over time. Try to work on watering your own grass, so to speak.