A New Marriage Proposal

For Mixed Faith Couples

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Dear {spouse},

I love you and, above all else, I want to keep our {marriage} or {family} together. Esther Perel, a prominent marriage therapist, says that every person is married three times. They are either married three times to their same spouse or to different spouses.

Now that I have come to learn about Mormonism in a new way, and no longer feel the same about the church as I once did, this foundation that our “first marriage” was built on, has now shifted.

I am optimistic as I share a proposal for creating a new marriage foundation together. I actually want to have an even healthier marriage than we did before, and I actually believe that we do now have the potential for a better marriage because of how we both have and are growing.

Below I will outline this new marriage proposal idea, because for me, our mutual foundation and common bond, can no longer be rooted in Mormonism. My proposal is that we root our new phase of companionship upon these principles:

1. Unconditional love - This means that I don’t love you because of your relationship to the church and you don’t love me because of my relationship to the church. Moving forward our love, respect, admiration, appreciation, etc…is not based on if the Church is true or not true. I love you for you and you love me for me.

2. Fidelity - We are going to be faithful to each other, because our most important core values are still intact and important to both of us.

3. Honesty, with healthy and safe boundaries. Right now we are both feeling unsafe about talking to one another about church things. There are many layers and years of pain, for both of us, for different reasons. Therefore a boundary around religious discussions is what is going to be best for us both right now.

4. Emotional intimacy. There are MANY ways to develop emotional intimacy that are not religion based. I propose that we work to strengthen those during a phase where we are staying

away from the realm of intimacy about religion.

5. The TIME OUT rule. This means that when we are engaging in an argument OR if one person is somewhat out of control, either one of us can call a timeout. We will be respectful to the person who has called the time out. We will separate and calm down, do soothing activities, give one another space, for however long it takes, before coming back to the discussion. This may be hours and it may be days.

6. Love of our children. This will never change. It is a priority for both of us. I now believe that our differences can actually help us to provide a safer environment for our children to ask, explore and share. I believe that through this, we will become much closer to our children. Stats show that 50% of kids are leaving the church today and having a mixed faith marriage is actually proven to be a great set up for them!

7. Freedom to talk and get help. I need to be able to talk about what I am going through so I can move through this in a healthy way. It is quite impossible for me to share my experiences without mentioning how you factor in. You are intertwined throughout every detail of this experience. I have talked to John about details because he is a safe, disconnected person who does not know us and is not a part of our daily life. I ask that you respect me, respect my privacy and allow me to get help as I work through this. Similarly, if you want to talk to someone, I want you to know that you can talk about me, and whatever details you choose to share, with a safe person.

Would you be willing to “marry me again” under these new terms? Please take your time to carefully consider what I have shared. I also want for you to add additional terms that you feel are important to you, and to us, and I will consider them.

I want you to know that I do not believe in a plan of salvation that would break a family apart when any person of that family lives an honorable, upstanding, honest, charitable life, but can no longer believe in a religion because they have sought to pursue truth as they see it. Because of this I am not fearful for my eternal salvation or ability to be with my family forever.

When we talk to the children I want you to know that I will not attempt to “convince” them of anything. I will also not give them more information than they are asking for. If they ask, I am committed to explaining things in responsible terms that are age appropriate. We both have to be able to tell the kids what we think and how we feel. I am committed to the kids having their own journeys. If they feel like either of us is trying to control or manipulate them, they will resent that person and be pushed away.

Moving forward I am committed to creating a safe environment for both of us. An environment

where we can honor what feels important to you, and to me, even if those things look different for us now, when it comes to religion.

If we can mutually agree on these principles, and any that you may want to add for me to consider, to guide us into a new phase of marriage, I have so much hope for us!

I love you,
{name}