
DIFFICULT SEASONS

When Your Partner Won't Change

What to do when growth is one-sided and you feel like you are carrying the relationship alone.

Boundary Agreement Resource Library

Dr. Hines Inc. | boundaryagreement.com

This guide is a coaching resource, not therapy or counseling.

The One-Sided Feeling

You are reading this guide. You took the assessment. You are doing the work. And your partner is not. Or at least it feels that way. This is one of the loneliest places in a marriage: growing while your partner stays still.

Before we go further, two truths need to be on the table:

1. You cannot change another person. You can influence, you can model, you can invite. But you cannot force transformation.
2. Your growth is not wasted even if your partner does not match it. You are becoming a better version of yourself. That has value regardless of what your partner does.

Check your definition of 'change.'

Are you expecting your partner to become a different person? Or to address specific behaviors? One is realistic. The other is not. Define exactly what change you are looking for.

Have you actually asked?

Not hinted. Not sighed. Not left this workbook open on the counter. Have you sat down and said: 'Here is what I need from you and why it matters to me'? Direct communication, not indirect hope.

Is this a 'won't' or a 'can't'?

Some people lack the tools. They were never taught emotional intelligence, communication skills, or self-awareness. That is not refusal. It is a gap that might need professional help to close.

Set boundaries, not ultimatums.

A boundary is: 'I will not participate in screaming arguments. If voices are raised, I am leaving the room.' An ultimatum is: 'Change or I'm leaving.' Boundaries protect you. Ultimatums threaten them.

Model what you want to see.

Stop telling them what to do and start showing them. Be the partner you wish you had. Not as manipulation, but because you are committed to being the best version of yourself.

Know your limit.

There may come a point where you have done everything you can and they are still not willing to grow. You have to decide what you can live with and what you cannot. That is a personal decision that no workbook can make for you.

EXERCISE: The Honest Inventory

No blame. Just clarity.

What specific change am I asking for?

Have I communicated this directly to my partner? When?

Is this a 'won't' or a 'can't' for my partner?

What have I done to model the change I want to see?

What is my boundary if nothing changes?

Am I willing to get professional help together?

What is my timeline for reassessing?
