

Based on an unhappiness scale of 0–10
0 = Not Happy 10 = Very Unhappy

Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three	Stage Four	Stage Five
Disillusionment*	Erosion	Detachment**	The Straw**	Death of the Relationship**
<p>Stage One: A partner becomes aware of discontentment and says to self, “Uh-oh, I think I’m unhappy.” This is followed by, “I know relationships have ups and downs, so I’ll just wait and see if it’s serious.”</p> <p><i>The person in Stage One usually feels a level 2–3 on the scale of unhappiness.</i></p>	<p>Stage Two: The partner concludes the situation is serious and could lead to divorce, though the idea of divorce is quickly dismissed due to many factors such as children, finances, fear of failure, religion, etc.</p> <p><i>The person in Stage Two is usually a level 4–5 in the scale of unhappiness.</i></p>	<p>Stage Three: As the level of discontentment increases, the partner makes a bargain with self: “I can stay married if I put focus on things away from the marriage, such as going back to school, hobbies, working out, or an affair.”</p> <p><i>The person in Stage Three is usually a level 6–7 on the scale of unhappiness, and the number will increase.</i></p>	<p>Stage Four: In one cathartic moment the disgruntled partner experiences a crescendo of stress followed by clarity that they can no longer remain with a person who would say or do whatever it is the person just did. All other considerations against divorce cease to matter and a decision to disconnect is made.</p> <p><i>The person in Stage Four is a level 10 on the scale of unhappiness.</i></p>	<p>Stage Five: The partner now feels apathy and disconnect. A divorce decision may be made at this point, or the partner will stay physically but exist in a state of emotional divorce.</p> <p><i>This person has no motivation to work on the relationship or marriage.</i></p>

Important Note:

Once a partner enters Stage One, deterioration of the marriage will continue if action is not taken. When a person reaches Stage Two, this is the ideal time to act by:

1. Revealing your unhappiness to your partner and
2. Making an appointment for marriage counseling.

* Where most relationships begin: with positive regard for each other and functioning well.

** Disillusionment, Erosion, Detachment, The Straw, Death of the Relationship: The relationship is in a state of disconnect and apathy.