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How to Have a Happy Marriage

1. It starts with you

The happier you are with yourself and your life, the more attractive you are to your partner. Another way to look at this is: if you were someone else, would you marry you? Start today to work on being the kind of person you would want to know, date, and marry. If you're not that kind of person, how can you expect your spouse to stay attracted or stay passionate?

2. There's you, there's him/her, and then there's we.

You don't have to give up your identity or be known as your spouse's partner.

It also doesn't work when two people each do their own thing without regard to their partner's wishes and feelings. Marriage is, and should be, more than cohabitation. As the marriage vows state, "two shall be as one". That "one" is neither you nor him. The "one" is a third entity: the relationship, the marriage, the "we".

The "we" is what you share, what you have in common, the nurturing that cannot be provided on your own. Think companionship, intimacy, and sharing.

3. Leave behind your emotional baggage

Are you really over your previous relationship? If not, you can't fully commit to your spouse. Likewise, if you are still Daddy's little girl or Mommy's boy, you are not in control of your own life. Therefore, you cannot fully enter into an adult relationship of mutual sharing and support. You can't be accountable to your spouse if you have to keep pleasing Mommy or Daddy.

4. Your marriage comes first

Marriage is the strongest bond between two people. Parents are here and one day they are gone. Children grow into adults and leave to start their own lives. Your spouse is only person who is meant to stay with you the rest of your time on this planet.

Women who say their children come first are usually unable to let their children grow up and become independent adults. Instead of a mature adult-adult relationship, the roles are forever adult-child. So the children never emotionally leave home and are forever dependent on the parent.

These women are always surprised when their mates get tired of being number two, and decide to leave for someone else who WILL put them first.

5. Your marriage is your top priority.

You didn't get married to commute two hours a day, work at the office 60 hours a week, and pay on a mortgage for 30 years. You probably got married to share your life, your hopes, your dreams-not your bills-with that special someone. During life's ups and especially during life's downs, keep in mind why you married in the first place. Not jobs, nor cars, nor your favorite sports team. At one time, your partner was the most important thing in this world to you. Act like it today and every day.

6. Don't compare

This holds true in your life as well as in your marriage. There will always be a couple that seems happier, wealthier, sexier, and more perfect than you two are. So what? Their happiness doesn't increase or diminish your happiness. Neither does their money, their jobs, their house, or their glamour. All that matters is whether you and your spouse have created a relationship that works for you.

7. Don't wonder "what if?"

Wondering what it would be like to be with another person-for a night or for a lifetime-is self-delusion and is really unfair to your spouse. You see other people socially when they are at their best. You see your spouse when he/she is at his best, her average, and sometimes at her worst. If you could swap mates, guess what? You'd see that person at his/her worst, and you probably wouldn't like what you see.

8. Realize that love can grow.

As much as you were in love when you got married, your love and commitment to each other can grow over the years. Marriage can get better, not worse, with time. The longer you've been married, the more history you have together. The triumphs and disappointments, the successes and the failures, all are part of sharing a life together. And that history is unique to you. No one else has that or can duplicate it. This is why a man who leaves his middle aged wife for a younger woman eventually wants to come back. With his wife he has a history-a shared past. With the new woman there is only the present.

9. Commitment means no matter what.

It's as simple as making the decision to be totally committed to your spouse and to the relationship. No matter

what happens financially, or health wise, or otherwise. No matter what. Once the two of you have decided to stay "no matter what", there is no question of stay or go, yes or no. Now the emphasis is on problem solving. Write this down: all couples have problems. Happy couples learn to deal with their problems. Unhappy couples eventually just run away.

10. Believe that a happy marriage is not only possible, it's yours for the making.

It won't happen by itself. It takes intention, commitment, and practice. But the couples who have happy, blissful, and satisfying marriages are proof that it is possible. Just choose to be happy, and choose to be happily married.

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