

Whether you are *Planning for Your Marriage,*

or already working on *Keeping your New Marriage Healthy and Happy,*

we've got some tips for you...

Discuss Your Expectations for Marriage with Each Other... Unrealistic and unmet expectations often lead to resentment in relationships. Talk about the household chores, division of labor, child-rearing duties, financial matters, etc. Registering for a *Pre-Marital Education Class* near you will help you learn what makes relationships successful, and help you practice skills that can make a big difference in your relationship. Many Pre-Marital Education Programs utilize a Pre-Marital Inventory - a set of questions, usually his and hers, designed to shed light on issues you may or may not have previously discussed, and then help you work out any issues through a series of workbook exercises, activities, or classes. *Show your partner you care by preparing for a healthy, lifelong marriage before the wedding occurs.*

Spend Time Together... A marriage is a work in progress and it needs attention and effort to grow. No matter how busy you are with wedding plans or daily life, make plans to spend quality time together. Try establishing a daily ritual: enjoy a cup of coffee together each morning as you talk about your day; spend time after the kids are in bed just chatting; or go for a walk after dinner. By spending time with each other, a deeper love on many levels can emerge and strengthen your couple bond. Both you and your partner will feel loved when you spend time together. *Make your Marriage Priority Number 1!*



Maintain a Sense of Humor... Laughing often with your partner and being willing to laugh at yourself can help solve many of the smaller issues couples face daily. Humor can also relieve stress and tension and help you get through a difficult time together. *Add a little play time to each day! Laughing is contagious!*

Learn Good Communication and Effective Problem Solving Skills... Couples who can talk to one another and can resolve their differences in a positive manner are more likely to have a healthy, happy and successful marriage. In the well known book *Empowering Couples*, author David Olson says, "It's not the absence of conflict, but how we deal with it that affects the quality of our relationship." Do you know the three biggest areas of conflict in the first five years of marriage? They are sex, money, and time. To have a successful marriage both of you will need to learn how to communicate about these (and other) issues. Communication is the most crucial ingredient to a happy and successful marriage. It is the vital link to every aspect of our relationships! Good Communication and Conflict Resolution involves such things as: avoiding harsh criticism; not being defensive or unwilling to discuss a problem; knowing that some problems can't be solved instantly; brainstorming solutions; being open to change; being willing to forgive; sharing your feelings and understanding each other; and learning skills to help you communicate effectively to make sure you are understood and working together to resolve problems.

Appreciate Your Partner's Strengths and Accept their Faults... None of us is perfect. We all have weaknesses, quirks, and bad habits. You must not get married hoping to change your partner - you will likely be disappointed. And don't focus only on the negative; remember to show gratitude for their strengths too! Marriage is a partnership where both partners bring their strengths and weaknesses to the table. *Be prepared to go from "me" to "we"... joining strengths and sharing weaknesses.*



Keep the Romance Alive... Relationships are often romantic in the beginning, but as time passes and we become involved in daily life, we often forgo those opportunities for romance. Keeping the romance alive takes work! Schedule DATE NIGHTS regularly...it doesn't have to be expensive, just time scheduled for the two of you to be together. *Date Nights are a secret of happily married couples!*

Want to Learn More? WHMI is here to provide you the opportunity, skills and information you need to strengthen your marriage and family. **Visit us on the web at www.WYOFAMS.org**