

Forgive Each Other

Remember that none of us are perfect and at some point in your relationship, your spouse will do something that hurts, frustrates or upsets you and chances are, you'll do the same thing to them a time or two! Sometimes it may even be something done on purpose during the course of an argument or misunderstanding. For-



giveness is an essential virtue in any marriage especially since no one is perfect! Try to allow your partner some room to make mistakes, because after all, you will make some of your own. When you do make a mistake, act quickly to apologize and fix the problem. Doing so will help to encourage forgiveness and strengthen your marriage.

Look for the Best in Each Other (and forget the faults)

When you first met, you were likely so in love that you didn't even notice one another's faults

(yes, they were there all along, your "rose-colored glasses" just didn't allow you to see them). Over time however, your view of your partner changed. For example, he may have been really good at saving money when you met, now you just think he's cheap! Go ahead and take a step



back to your dating days and remember all

of the things you loved about your spouse. Give each other the benefit of the doubt and create a list of all the things you love about your spouse. It will help you fall in love all over again!

Play a Little Every Day

Take the time to add a little play time into your day! With the bills piling up, household chores, to do lists, meetings, car pooling, and more, it's important to take time to just enjoy one another and your family as well! Take the kids out on the lawn for a game of touch football or catch, play tag or hide and seek around the house with your children.

Your children see everything you do, don't you want them to see that you

enjoy each other too? They will cherish those memories!



"What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life—to strengthen each other in all labor, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting?"

—George Eliot,
Novelist and Poet

The Wyoming Healthy Marriage Initiative offers a wide range of classes and resources on Marriage Enrichment. Go ahead! Take the first step to keep your marriage alive and strong!

Looking for more information? The Wyoming Healthy Marriage Initiative is here to help! Visit us on the web at www.WYOFAMS.org or Contact us to find classes, resources, articles, and tips to help you on your lifelong marriage journey.

To Learn More
or
to Register for a Class
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or call
1-866-WYO-FAMS

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*Keeping
Your Marriage
Strong!*



COMMITMENT * COMPANIONSHIP * COMMUNICATION

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Keeping Your Marriage Strong!

Marriage is a partnership characterized by love, compassion, mutual respect, commitment and friendship, but with the ever-increasing speed of daily life we know that it is sometime difficult to Keep Your Marriage Strong and Healthy. Commitment and Communication remain the vital foundations of happily married couples. Here are a few things you can do to nurture your relationship:

Friendship First More and more research is showing that when a marriage is build upon a foundation of deep friendship, that is having a deep respect for one another and sincerely enjoying each other's company, a healthy, successful marriage is the result. Knowing each other's hopes, dreams, fears, likes and dislikes and regularly expressing heartfelt appreciation and fondness for one another creates a team-like attitude. Remember the things you used to do together when you were dating? Try to find those mutual areas of interest and take the time to "catch up" with your spouse. Marriage does not involve sharing every interest, but shared interest will be important to keeping your friendship growing.



Time– Spend it on Each Other Forget about the "quality vs. quantity" discussion, a marriage needs both to excel! Spending time each day "catching up" and "reconnecting" with each other will keep your marriage a top priority and show your spouse that



you value their place in your life. Try a daily ritual: maybe you can enjoy a cup of coffee each morning as you talk about your day; enjoy time after the kids are in bed just chatting; read through the Sunday Paper together; watch a favorite sitcom each week; or go for a daily walk. By spending time with each other, you will strengthen your couple bond and better understand what you can do to lighten the load for your spouse. After all, even if we aren't

Plan (and carry out) a Monthly Date Making the commitment to your marriage for "Date Night" takes planning! Time is often a major barrier keeping couples from spending time alone focusing on one another (not bills or doctor's visits or household chores). Be creative! Dates do not have to be in the evening, perhaps you can both steal away for a luncheon together. Likewise, do not let money be a barrier that keeps you from

"dating your spouse"...a date can be as simple as renting a movie; planning a nice homemade dinner by candlelight to be enjoyed after the kids are in bed; attend a community concert; do something physical like running, playing tennis, or bowling; take a class together; or host "Game Night" with a few other couples (kids can be included). Even the busiest of couples can usually find some time if they plan for it and stick to the plan. Doing so gives the message to each other, and to your children, that you care about one other and your relationship.

Be Respectful to Each Other at all Times Research shows that nothing can be more damaging to a relationship than criticism and put-downs. When a couple falls into the trap of negative habits, it takes real effort to get back out of the cycle. When you are tempted to complain to someone else about one of your spouse's flaws, ask yourself how you would feel if they did that to you. Remembering to treat your spouse as you want them to treat you will do a lot to strengthen the bond between husband and wife. Paying your partner a compliment is a wonderful way to show your love and respect.

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. Good communication involves such things as: avoiding harsh criticism and contempt; not being defensive or unwilling to discuss a problem; being open to change; using "I" statements



instead of accusatory "you" statements; counting to 10; scheduling a time to discuss a highly emotional subject so you both have the time to calm down and think rationally; and being willing to say you're sorry. Effective problem solving involves such things as: knowing that some problems can't be solved right now and learning to love with that; working on the differences ad problems that can be solved; knowing when y need to calm down; avoiding saying or doing hurtful things to your spouse; accepting differences and imperfections; being willing to forgive; and being flexible and open to different solutions to the problem at hand.

We are not born with these skills, but you can learn them! Once you learn these skills, it will still take practice before they become second nature! As you and your spouse learn to better communicate and solve problems in a



healthy manner, you will grow in love and respect for each other, be an example of good communication for your children and others around you, and will dissolve much of the tension in your home and daily lives. In short, if you will

take the time to learn these skills, your marriage relationship will flourish.

Increase Your Intimacy Intimacy does not always mean physical or sexuality; a forgotten aspect of intimacy is the emotional bond that couples share. Marital intimacy can open your relationship to a whole new level of enjoyment and closeness. Remember to create a safe space for your spouse to share their emotions without fear of you judging or making light of them. Learn the difference between emotional and physical intimacy when each one is most appropriate in your relationship...offering your partner one type when they really need the other can create problems. Be open and honest with one another and yourself about your feelings. Plan time with your spouse to listen to their feelings and to share yours as well.

