

The Do List for Married Couples

This article is simply a list of things married couples can do to help keep their marriage hot and spicy. Think of this as your **"Do List"** for a healthy, happy marriage. Cut this article out and place it on your closet door as a daily reminder.

1. **Recommended Books to Read.** I highly recommend the following books for couples to have in their libraries. They are available at most Christian book stores in The Bahamas. You can read them together or separately. Most importantly, discuss together the key points in the books that apply to your relationship. Be open to change.

His Needs Her Needs by Dr. Willard Harley

Empowering Couples by Dr. David Olsen

The Five Languages of Love by Dr. Gary Chapman

Sheet Music--Uncovering the Secrets of Sexual Intimacy in Marriage by Dr. Kevin Leman

Fall in Love Stay in Love by Dr Willard Harley.

2. **Recommended Movies to Watch.** Movies can often have a great impact on relationships that are starving for romance or dealing with other problems. The following movies, I believe, speak directly to two of the most common problems in marriage: lack of romance or putting the job above the marriage and sexual infidelity.

- *"Preacher's Wife,"* starring Denzel Washington and Whitney Houston.
- *"A Vow to Cherish,"* available at any local Christian book store in VHS or DVD format.

3. **Permanent Features in Your Marriage.** Based on research and my experience working with hundreds of couples, the following features are most important in keeping the fires burning in romantic relationships.

- Have a date night once a week. Every week there should be at least one night the couple spends time together with no one else involved--not even the children.
- Kiss for at least 5 to 20 seconds each day. This can really work miracles.
- Make one compliment about your spouse every day.
- Show appreciation to your spouse at least once every day.
- Hug each other at least twice a day. Make sure it is intentional and warm. Please hug a lot without sex on the agenda. This is very important.
- Dance together privately in your home. This can really demonstrate the warmth and passion you feel for each other. Dancing publicly often means nothing to a romantic relationship. However, dancing privately while holding your partner close to you when no one is watching requires an intense closeness and desire for each other.
- Have daily family/couple devotion. This creates a solid spiritual foundation.
- Sit together in church regularly or as often as you can. Do not have the children sitting between you. Sit them on opposite sides.
- Spend time having fun together at least once a week. This strengthens the friendship in the relationship. Go to watch a game together. Play a game at home together. Watch a funny movie together. Have a pop corn fight. Whatever it is, have fun. Lots of it. Laugh together.

4. **The Seven Basic Ingredients for a Healthy Marriage.** The following ingredients are crucial to making a marriage loving and meaningful:

1. Knowing and understanding each other's needs and knowing how to meet them. To know the ten basic needs in marriage read the book *"His Needs Her Needs.* In my

- opinion, this is really the most important ingredient in happy marriages.
2. Effective communication and good conflict resolution skills. Learning how to effectively handle conflict and how to prevent the many unnecessary arguments are most important in a healthy relationship.
 3. Listening with the heart and not just with the head. Too many spouses do not truly listen to their partners. Some tune out what they do not want to hear. Others have selective amnesia. Still others assume and add their own meaning to what said, not is allowing the other person to clarify. This is painful and destructive to a relationship.
 4. Have a spirit of humility. This is a willingness to adjust and a teachable spirit. This is really an important secret to a joyful marriage. Spouses who know it all, are stubborn, cannot change, or are too proud to admit wrong, are a pain in the neck. They prevent progress and healing in a wounded relationship.
 5. Commitment to a nonjudgmental attitude. When a spouse admits doing wrong and is forgiven by his/her partner, the forgiver must leave the wrong alone. Never bring it up again.
 6. Being a committed spouse, each other's intimate friend, lover, and sweetheart.
 7. Having a harmonious couple financial plan. Money mismanagement is a big source of contention in marriage. The happiest couples are those who have a joint financial plan.

If you want to know more about the secrets for a hot, spicy marriage, plan to attend the giant marriage conference on Sunday, December 16, 2007. Start planning now. Stay tune for more information.

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