

# Ten Tips For A Happy Marriage – Better Marriage

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Ten Tips for a Happy Marriage

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Most people believe marriage is important and that the family is the fundamental unit of society. People get married with great hopes to “live happily ever after,” but it is not easy to maintain the love and happiness they experienced during courtship in the day-to-day struggles of married life.

I have worked with couples for many years as a marriage and family therapist, and as such I have developed many practical ideas to help couples build a happy marriage. Here are my top ten tips.

1 Discover what makes each other happy. Couples need to live what I call the Golden Rule for Married Couples: Do unto the other as he or she would like it done. Often in a loving relationship, people tend to use projection—the subjective act of attributing one’s own feelings to others; the tendency to “hear” others’ feelings in relationship to one’s own self-concept and experiences. When spouses use projection, they think that what they want is the same as what their spouse wants. We are all individuals and we are all different. Therefore, what makes one partner happy may not necessarily be what makes the other partner happy. If you take time to find out what each other really wants and “do unto to the other as he/she would like it done,” your relationship will flourish.

2 Share alike in doing the household chores. Research has shown that couples who work together stay together. Both husband and wife need to feel they are equally yoked. This will bring a sense of equality in the marriage and will help prevent feelings of resentment that could come if one spouse is doing more for the family and relationship than the other. Couples need to be very clear about what is expected of each other regarding household duties. The most important rule to follow here is that both partners agree to the division of duties. Be clear and straightforward when discussing roles.

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3 Be respectful and caring even when you are resolving conflicts in the relationship. When people are upset, they tend to act on their emotions. To be successful in relationships, sometimes people need to behave differently from how they feel. Couples need to learn how to regulate their emotions so they don't "take it out" on each other. You should not engage in trying to resolve issues when you are too emotionally upset and unable to be reasonable and caring towards each other. If needed, take a time out, cool off first, and rehearse the conversation in your mind before you discuss it with your spouse. Make a firm decision never to be disrespectful to your partner even in the heat of battle.

4 Learn good communication skills. To be successful in marriage, you need to be able to communicate your thoughts, feelings, needs, and wants in a straightforward manner. You also need to be a good listener. Allow your spouse to express his or her thoughts, feelings, needs, and wants freely and safely.

5 Learn how to stay in love. Spend time together building your relationship. When couples are courting, they spend a lot of time together, and when they are not together, they find ways to communicate often. After marriage, some couples drift apart. They no longer spend as much time together, are not as affectionate, and don't devote special attention to each other as they did during courtship. This leads couples to lose their loving feelings toward each other. You need to spend quality couple's time together frequently to continue to build the relationship. Go on dates regularly to have fun, not to discuss issues. Keep the love alive!

6 Maintain a healthy physical relationship. Physical intimacy is different for men and women. Both spouses should be mindful of each other's needs and reach compromises that will fulfill these needs. After children arrive, it becomes more difficult for a couple to maintain the same level of physical intimacy, but you need to make time to keep your physical relationship a priority.

7 Do everything with common consent. People in happy marriages never do important things without an agreement between the spouses. Couples need to balance the feelings and interests of both partners when making decisions. You need to make sure you understand how important an issue is to each other and only decide on a course of action after you both have agreed and are happy with the

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decision. Don't expect to have everything your own way; be willing to compromise.

8 Little changes in you can lead to huge changes in the relationship. Sometimes when people are in a conflicted relationship, they feel discouraged because they think the changes required to resolve their relationship issues are too great and they'll never be able to accomplish such changes. However, often all you need to do is find one or two small but significant things to change, and this will alter the direction you are headed. Over time, these changes will lead you to a very different place. You may need the help of a professional to identify what these significant changes might be.

9 Be grateful for each other. Gratitude has been statistically linked to happiness and hope. In every relationship there are positives and negatives. Find the positives in your relationship. Be grateful for your partner and express your love and gratitude for each other daily.

10 Develop empathy. Empathy means to place oneself in another person's shoes and understand how he or she feels. It is a process of partial identification with the feelings of others while still being aware that the others' feelings are owned by them and are somewhat different from yours. It focuses upon the feelings of the other. When you have empathy toward your spouse, you will be more effective in applying the other tips for a successful marriage.

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