

The Ten Commandments of a Happy Marriage

1. Learn the true meaning of forgiveness.

We need to learn how to truly forgive and not to hold things in our heart unresolved. Throwing things in each other's faces every time you get mad is very unhealthy. Once you have forgiven the other you no longer have the right to bring it up again. Learn how to really forgive or come to grips with the hurt. Learn how to ask for forgiveness. Pride makes us see the other as always having the real fault. It is easy to blame but that is not being honest and is a great obstacle to love. Learn the phrase, "I need to ask you to forgive me for everything that was my fault in the argument." You don't have to take all the blame but you do need to recognize your part and ask for forgiveness.

2. Forget your dreams of a perfect marriage and work at achieving a good marriage.

Pride takes over and we begin to try to control everything by making the other conform to my way of doing things (which is always the best way). We need to accept others as they are and this includes their shortcomings. We need to be patient with their defects and appreciate the good qualities that your spouse possesses. It all starts with accepting ourselves.

3. Discover the particular needs of your spouse and try to satisfy them.

We all have needs. The more selfish we are the more that we look to my own needs instead of those of my spouse. Love is self-donation, it is self giving. How aware am I of the needs of my spouse. How open am I to giving to my spouse without looking for something in return. Real charity is service, humble service, like Christ who washed the feet of his apostles. If you are looking for a 50-50 split you are going to lose. That is not pure love. These needs have to be recognized and appreciated. Not about what it is about.

We all are different. 5 languages of love, Gary Chapman.

1. Words of Affirmation
2. Quality time
3. Receiving Gifts
4. Acts of service
5. Physical touch

4. Show praise and appreciation rather than look for it. Praise your spouse in front of others.

The Golden rule. We need to be always loyal. In our family the quickest way of getting into a fight with one of us would be to pick on someone within our family. Build each other up in front of others. Never cut the other one down in front of someone else (especially your kids!!!!) Never allow gossip to enter into your home and never let it leave your home (Did you know what Bill did?). My Dad would always brag about being married to the best wife in the world.

We recognize 100% of what we do for others but only recognize 30 % of what the other is doing for us. Dr John Gottman. If you do not take time to recognize and appreciate you will never fall back into love. We can only love that which we appreciate and the more we appreciate the more we will love. The more we take for granted the less we truly love.

5. Forget your desire to control and dominate, to be king of the home.

Marriage is all about mutual respect and mutual service. Men do need to be the head of the household but what does that mean. It means that they are the ones who need to set the example for being unselfish and serving the other. If you are look to serve your queen there is little time to become a despot. Service is king. Who are you for the other person: best friend, co-parent, partners, lovers.... Don't turn into each others parents.... When you try to control you stop trusting and respecting. RESPECT is everything. Gottman on Respect vs. disdain. The more we have to control the more insecure we are.

6. Greet your spouse always with affection instead of complaints and demands.

Need many times to stop at a chapel on the way home to DETOX. Remember that there is nothing more important for you to do during the whole day than to make your spouse feel love when they walk in the door. Two or three minutes of full attention and then figure out a way of having some "couch time" every night with each other.

7. Abandon all hope of changing your spouse through nagging or complaining.

The only thing nagging does is reinforce bad attitudes and help create resentment and tension in the battle off wills. But if we really believe in the goodness and potential of our spouse then we can help them believe in themselves. We get much more with honey than we do with the sword. Bring out the best in each other. Need for positive reinforcement and continuous self-giving. Your job is too build each other up.

8. Remember the importance of unimportant things.

Small details do matter. They show where our heart and minds are. Things such as listening with attention when I'm about to pass out to doing the dishes for no reason at all. Flowers can be nice too. Never assume that the other person will understand why we don't do something.

9. Be aware that moods change and that is normal.

Accepting the other person as they are and where they are. Too many times whenever the other person is in a bad mood we take it personally. That's crazy! We need to recognize when the other person is down and do everything we can do to help. (At times that means just getting out of the way.)

10. Pray together

That is the glue that unites you. Don't force the other person. Remember we all are on different parts of our journey and God has a different pace for each of us. But it is really good if you both agree to do something together on a daily basis.