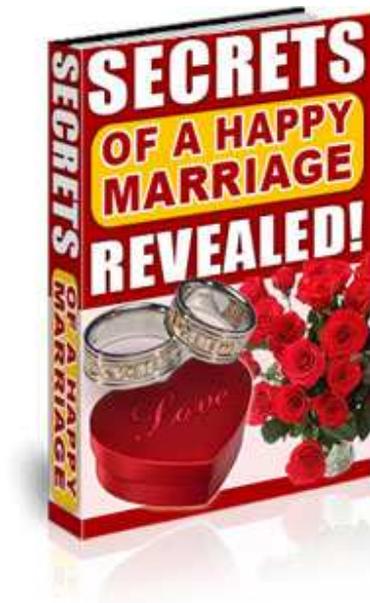


SECRETS OF A HAPPY MARRIAGE REVEALED!



By Keith Cook, CC and Joy Bing Fleming, MBA, CC

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Introduction

Is marriage a blessing or a curse? For many married people who are having problems with their spouse, marriage is considered “a regretful act.”

Marriage is a sacred vow to love your partner for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, till ... well you know the rest. But for many people, the pressures, challenges, and monotony of married life has shrouded its wonderful positive aspects.

It is the aim of this book to reveal the beauty and joy of married life, and to prevent any unfavorable circumstances from ruining your marriage.

But first, here are some important facts you might be interested to know. And guess what? The sample stories below are true!

FACT # 1: Some couples get so madly in love with each other, they'll get married a few weeks (or even days) after they've met!

Hannah is a 26 year-old career woman. She and Isaiah broke up last February. She was in grief for a month. Come March, she has a new boyfriend. They got engaged by April. First week July, they'll tie the knot.

FACT # 2: Pre-marital sex can ruin your life!

Chantal and Jake are lovers for seven years now. They're planning to get married next year. A couple of months after their seventh year anniversary, Jake impregnated a woman other than Chantal. Jake got married to someone he doesn't love after a month of rush preparation.

FACT # 3: Sheer persistence and determination can melt a heart of stone!

Cherry is a man hater. She has become what she is right now because of two failed relationships in the past. The two men left her for the same reason; they found a new girl whom they believe can give them happiness. After a year of grief, she meets Michael. Michael irritates her. She can't stand near him. But the latter is so persistent. Five years later, Cherry walks the isle wearing a white gown and a bouquet of flowers in her hand.

Marriage is a lifetime commitment. Some may even fear it; some take it for granted. Some take it seriously enough that they look for ways on how to make it a lifetime of happiness. Want to find out how to make your marriage eternal? Read on.

Chapter 1

Romance and Passion

We are all born for love. It is the principle of existence, and its only end. - Benjamin Disraeli

Reminisce.....

When was the last time you and your spouse went on a first date? Think. Was it a long, long time ago? Come on think. You have to remember. True to many people that they had butterflies in the stomach during the proverbial first date.

Alex and Nina are happily married for the past 26 years. Their first date happened 28 years ago. It was a simple dinner date on their favorite restaurant. Nina recalled that she was very nervous. She stayed in the mirror for two long hours checking for stray hair or crumpled dress. Her heart was beating so fast. After so many years she still feels quite nervous every time her husband asks her out.

Did you get a little nervous? Or anxious? Ever wonder why? I suppose your heart was beating faster, making a faint throb on your chest. You got nervous because you wanted to make sure that everything would turn out right. The date itself was important to you. You wanted it to be perfect.

Belle stammers when she is nervous. She's also clumsy. Don asked her out for the first time to dine. She agreed. There on the restaurant happened the most unforgettable scene in her life. While they're having dinner, she noticed that her hands were shaking violently. She tried to stay

calm, but she can't. She then decided to go to the restroom in the middle of the dinner. To her haste, her heels got caught in the lacy tablecloth. The moments she stepped forward, the tablecloth and the rest of the food on top of it moved with her. The food was on the floor and the dinner was a complete mess. Don just looked at her in awe.

Prior to the date, you checked on things that you'll need. You ransacked your closet. You looked for an outfit that seems to fit the event. A couple of hours before the big event, you took all your time in front of the mirror. "Did I forget something? Is everything in order now?" you asked yourself. Then you smiled. Now you're ready.

You looked on your date. He or she was fantastic. You wish he or she also felt the same way for you. The waiter took you to the table you reserved. You can't think. You don't know what to do. You just stared at your date. You exchanged meaningful glances. You were brought back to your senses when the waiter asked for your order. You smiled again. You noticed that the nervousness was slowly fading away. You then felt more comfortable to strike a conversation.

Charlotte is a very shy girl. She doesn't usually engage herself in chatter. But Brad has made an exception. Whenever he and Charlotte are together, he persuades Charlotte to express herself. After a series of dating, Charlotte's friends and relatives are shocked to see her as a chatterer.

The meal was served. You both enjoyed the meal, and most especially the company. You asked for a walk after dinner. You head to a nearest beach. There, in the stillness of the night and sea,

you learned more about each other. The wind played with your hair as you go deep into a conversation.

After a couple of minutes walking, you got tired and decided to sit down on the sand. The two of you became quiet, relishing the moment. Happiness was in the air. You hesitated to break the silence, but then you know that you had to voice out what you feel. You told him or her that you had a great time.

He or she felt relieved. Your special someone assured you that he or she felt the same way too. Perfect moment! You wanted that moment to last forever. You wanted time to stop in that instance. The two of you decided to have another date. You set the date you both agreed. Although the date set was a few weeks from now, you can't wait for it again.

Since it was getting late, you decided to part ways and go home. You ended the date with a simple hug. At your bed, you found yourself staring at the ceiling thinking of him or her. You were unable to sleep. You kept on thinking about your date and the forthcoming second date.

Is it possible that these kinds of feelings would last a lifetime? How will you keep the excitement as the years add up to your married life? Read on.

According to studies, when two lovers come together, their brains begin to “fall in love;” thus, a romance starts. As we all know, romance is something that most people are searching for. Some may find it, but only a few could appropriately deal with it.

I know if my wife is around. I could sense her. I could smell her scent in the air. Upon catching her scent in the air, it makes me feel happy. I could see a sudden change in my emotion. I look for her inside the house and hug her tightly, whispering love notes on her little ear. Life like this one is so satisfying.

Romance doesn't have to be grand, or a one-time experience. To live your life filled with romance is possible. It just comes out naturally. It is within you, and just waiting for the right time for its release. Just let it flow. Even small things like a touch, an audible whisper, a quick kiss or embrace can send a shiver to our spine.

A surprise kiss in the nape while holding your partner close can ignite excitement on your relationship. It is said that a love from your spouse is a fact, a stronger fact that is not reliant upon a one-time event or a perfect date. A true romance can be eternal. It will grow stronger as time passes by.

“I (Mary) called Jun and told him that I have to finish a report due for tomorrow. I came home so late that night. When I arrived home, the lights were off on the porch as well as inside. I still manage to put on my keys. Just after closing the door, a hand grabbed me on my mouth and then pinned me on the wall. I was so shocked that I can't think on what to do. I was on the verge of tears. I felt so weak and my attacker noticed it. He whispered something on my ear. I didn't understand it at first. He repeated it again. This time much audible for me to hear. The words are “ I love you.” The voice was familiar. I'm sure the voice was coming from my husband. I hugged

him tight while I was scolding him. He said that he wanted to surprise me. He got what he wanted; I was even terrified to death. At bed, he compensated by giving me a whole body massage?”

If you believe that a certain area of your life needs improvement, there are simple processes to start from. First, you need to admit that you want help. Look for a good counselor. Then, walk the talk. Continue learning and lastly, you should never give up until you are there.

Romance varies in different people. It's always a different stroke for different folks' scenario. One may find great happiness by merely receiving a flower. Others say that a dinner is quite ideal. Others say that receiving a card or love letters from a spouse is so romantic.

Lorna woke up alone in bed one morning. She called out her husband's name. Five minutes later still no one answered. She got out of bed and decided to look for Joel. In the living room, she found a note on the table. Actually it is an instruction on where to find Joel. She smiled. There goes Joel again with his witty romance flick. First clue lead to the kitchen. In the kitchen she finds another set of clue card. Next stop is in the attic room. She rushes to the attic. When she opened the door, she could not see Joel. In the corner of the attic sat a table for two. Breakfast set in the attic with the wind blowing mildly. A couple of seconds had passed Joel showed himself with a bouquet of white roses in his hands. Lorna found herself sobbing happily.

When a wife receives a flower from their husband, bouquet or not, it's not the flower that makes them exultant, but the meaning behind it. The gift of flowers from her husband simply means that he cares about her. It is a way of showing affection, physically.

Liam really loves to give flowers to his wife on a regular basis. He said that he couldn't explain the joy he feels upon seeing her wife happy face when he hand-over the flowers to her. He said that Linda's face brightened up every time she receives one. That's the reason why he keeps on giving her flowers even without any special occasion.

Most women want attention from their husband. A surprise gift even without an occasion can make her very happy. Compliment her from time to time. Tell her that the curtain looks great on the living room. Praise her for a good meal. Tell her that you love her even more as days pass by. Tell her how beautiful she is.

Women want to be pampered. Men on the other hand, want appreciation to boost their ego. They want to know how great they are. They wanted to be treated like heroes. Tell him how proud you are of him.

There are a lot of ways on how to make your spouse be in a state of bliss. All you have to do is look for things that will make things pretty interesting, or try to draw interest by introducing new things.

TIP: Don't expect your partner to be a mind reader, because apparently he or she isn't.

The best thing to do is to tell him or her what's going on inside your mind. Tell your partner exactly how you feel about certain things. With this on hand, conflict can be resolved properly in just a snap of a finger.

Next to romance is passion. Passion is the exact opposite of romance, but nevertheless as important as romance to keep the marriage always exciting. Passion, as defined in the dictionary, is something that is desired intensely. It is a strong desire to do something. So the stronger your desire is to delight your spouse, the better your relationship will be. Same thing happens when commitment and devotion are given. If you have more passion, the happier the marriage will be. That is why, passion is considered as one of the key elements necessary to achieve success in all aspects of life.

He always remembers even the little things. By the look on the face of his wife, he could tell if she's happy, troubled or angry. By her gesture alone, he can tell the exact feelings. So before an argument can occur, he pacifies his wife right away. He has mastered his wife's mood swings upon keen observation. He really loves her.

May I ask you a question? Are you passionate about your marriage? Maybe by now you're probably thinking about it. What are your plans? Do you intend to excite your partner everyday? Are you that eager to do it?

If you really like what you're doing, there is still a probability that you'll soon get weary of it.

Passion and romance have their own share in building successful marriages. They are two of the essential pillars in a fulfilling relationship.

The bottom line is that romance and passion co-exist. As we all know, romance is very important in marriage. Spend some time alone with each other without the kids. Try to rekindle the things you did when you are still dating. Do all the things that can make your partner feel special and wanted.

All great things start with small things we usually ignore. Remember, small things mean a lot.

Small things will find the way directly to our heart and soul.

Make sure to imply that no matter what happens, you will always be there for your partner. Strive to improve your relationship as well as yourself. You should give the best of you to your partner.

Darren loves to plant butterfly kisses on Nicole's face. He loves to do it over and over again making Nicole giggle.

Being happy starts within you. If you can't be happy with yourself, then there's no chance that you'll be happy with someone else.

Be the best that you can be to your spouse. The best gift you could ever give.

Chapter 2

Rekindle the Flame

“Love doesn’t just sit there like stone; it has to be made, like bread, remade all the time, made new.”-----Ursula

K. Le Guin

As they say, everything starts with dating. It is a very important part of the courting process, wherein you are able to learn more about each other. You will be able to determine if it’s healthy seeing each other or if the two of you is compatible together.

During dating, behavior is at its best. Both parties exert the effort to make sure that everything goes well. There are times that the needs of your date comes first before your own. You slowly build a feeling that you are somehow special to him or her. You’re always together.

“Man is not the creature of circumstances. Circumstances are the creature of man.” ...Benjamin Disraeli

Can you remember the dates you had with your spouse? Let’s go back in time ...

As the dating itself progressed for longer periods of time, you began to unravel the mystery in that special someone. You have learned more about him or her. Without noticing it, your feelings for him or her grew deeper. You also noticed that you really wanted to spend more time together. Nothing matters except the two of you being together. Every decision that you made revolved around that person. He or she has become your universe.

All these good feeling made a good impact on you. You're always on cloud nine. You're always happy. You said that this is the life you have always dreamed of from the start. He or she treated you like royalty. Every day, your life seemed so bright and carefree.

You wanted these things to last a lifetime, so you decided to get married. You set the date and purchased things needed for the big event. You're excited to buy the rings. You made a design specific to suit your taste. You couldn't wait for the wedding. You really wanted to spend the rest of your life with that person.

As the wedding date grew near, you can't help but feel very much nervous. You were both excited. The wedding ended in a flash and you soon found yourselves all set for your honeymoon. What a great terrific life!

I was shaking while walking my way to the altar. I can't walk properly. My feet were too heavy as if I'm a wearing shoe made of stone. I was happy and at the same time afraid, actually, its mixed emotion. The nearer I got, the more I became afraid. I looked straight ahead. At first I could see nobody. I concentrated. There on the right side of the altar was my husband, smiling lovingly at me. The fear vanished into thin air at that instant.

Why am I telling you all of these? Upon recalling the past, did it make you smile? What were the feelings then? Exhilarating, right? If those things gave you sheer pleasure, then why not do it on a regular basis?

Mr. and Mrs. Smith have been married for three decades now. Their children have also started to build a family. They look so good together, as if they just got married yesterday. Care to know the secret? For the past thirty years, they keep the fire burning by means of regular dating. They believe that it is one of the factors why they stayed together for three decades now.

Dating is not only limited to unmarried couple. It should also be enjoyed after marriage. We know life now is entirely different because of the bigger responsibilities and the kids, but dating is very important even after marriage.

“Everyone should carefully observe which way his heart draws him, and then choose that way with all his strength.”-----Hasidic Saying

Dating will keep the bond between you and your spouse intact. Try to spend some time alone with your spouse. This is very critical. If you believe that you can't concentrate while on the house because of the kids, then do it outside the comfort of your home. Say for example, a two days and two nights stay in a nearby resort. This will surely bridge the gap brought about by being busy everyday. It is a way of coping up with each other's activities.

If you're not comfortable leaving the children to a sitter, perhaps you could leave them to your parent's house. Or if you believe that you'll surely enjoy the trip as a family then let the children tag along. It depends on you on how you will enjoy company of your spouse with or without the children.

Take the case of Zum and Jamie as an example. They have been married for 5 years now, blessed with a daughter and a son. Jamie is a housekeeper while Zum works in a brokerage firm. He usually comes home late at night, leaves early the following day. He works five times a week. What do you think he does on weekends? He wakes up early, prepares breakfast and serves his wife and kids. After breakfast they usually go out, a picnic in a park or a stroll in a mall. He always makes sure to spend his weekend time with his family. Saturday night is quite special to him. He and Jamie always have dinner in a modest restaurant.

No matter how busy you are, find time to spend it with your spouse.

“To keep a lamp burning we have to keep putting oil in it.”-----Mother Teresa

Dating reduces the so-called empty nest syndrome. Empty nest is the feeling of emptiness when a spouse is left all alone in the home. This is natural and considered harmless but we cannot be sure sometimes because this syndrome also has its dark side.

Maria is a traveler. She enjoys travelling the countryside. Every weekend without fail, she and her husband Tom set out for an out of town trip. She feels rejuvenated every time she tours around. According to her, their relationship has grown so much because of that. The closeness they have right now is even more remarkable as compared before.

Great marriages don't just happen. You have to do something to make it last. Improve your marriage now. Remember that improvement is not a one-time event. It's a process, so better start now.

Avoid doing the same things over and over again. This is very risky. This will lead to boredom and eventually can be a factor for disparity.

Chapter 3

Qualities of a Successful Marriage

“In every union there is a mystery.”-----Henri F. Amiel

Love

Love is the most essential component in a relationship. It is the powerful force that binds two unique individuals together. A relationship will not start without love.

Support

Being a supportive spouse can be both a rewarding and a difficult role in a relationship. The most important aspect is being a loving presence always in your spouse's life. Being supportive means strengthening the partner. You bear the weight. It is quite a responsibility for any one to take on.

Shawn came home late that night. His wife, still awake, did not even bother to ask why he looks distressed. Shawn was devastated. He thought he could share his problem to his wife. He changed into sleeping attire and went to sleep. He felt that he's alone in the world. What do you think will happen to this kind of relationship? Will it last for a lifetime?

The sense of responsibility grows deeper when your spouse faces certain problems. To avoid conflict, respect your spouse's personal decisions. Show that you have faith in your mate. Be the shoulder to lean on. Work together to maintain balance in your life together.

Don't be threatened by your spouse's accomplishments. Be proud of your spouse's achievements. If you want to help your spouse to recover from a difficult situation, don't try to solve it on your own.

Lisa is the big earner in the house. She's a manager in a multinational company. Darryl is just a simple clerk. Lisa shoulders almost all expenses, except for few things that Darryl purchases for his wife. Darryl doesn't seem to mind. Money is not a big issue in their relationship. He is very proud of his wife. He openly admits to his relative that his salary is just a quarter of Lisa's.

Listen well. Make sure that you understand the issue.

"If you will invest time listening, you will save that time in arguments." ...Joyce Meyer

In encouraging him, be realistic. Don't exaggerate. It will give hope.

Tolerance

The meanings of tolerance in the dictionary are:

1. The power or capacity of an organism to tolerate unfavorable environmental conditions.
2. A disposition to allow freedom of choice and behavior.
3. The act of tolerating something.

4. Willingness to recognize and respect the beliefs or practices of others.

5. A permissible difference; allowing freedom to move within limits.

“Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish.”-----John Quincy Adams

The given meaning has only one denominator. Patience. Without it, the word tolerance is nothing.

Always remember that it pays to be patient. As the saying goes, patience is a virtue.

Communication

All arguments can be solved through proper communication. If your partner annoys you for things he or she has done consciously or unconsciously, approach your spouse. Talk to each other. Explain that you are offended by that act. Remember that he or she can't read minds. Don't try to keep it inside. It will corrupt you. The annoyance will grow in your heart. Don't wait for it to burst one day. As early as possible discuss the problem with your spouse.

Gary has been irritated recently by the way Anna welcomes the guest to their house. Instead of telling Anna about his irritation, Gary decided to keep his mouth shut. Anna, knowing nothing about his husband's irritation, continues to act that way. After some time when Gary could no

longer contain himself, suddenly slaps Anna in the face. Anna, caught by surprise, couldn't believe her husband's irrational act.

If only Gary told Anna beforehand, such lousy act will not happen. Gary assumed that Anna knows he's somewhat irritated. Perhaps he tried to show his nuisance but failed because Anna is busy entertaining visitors that moment. **If a certain thing bothers you, tell it straight to your spouse. It doesn't hurt to be straightforward. It is just a choice of words on how you will express yourself.**

Realistic Expectations

Don't expect too much from your spouse. They are also humans bound to commit mistakes.

Caring

Show your spouse that you're concerned. During lunch, ask him or her if he or she has already eaten. Small simple things can mean a lot to them. Take time to notice your spouse. Say I love you everyday.

"Remember that a good marriage is like campfire. Both grown cold if left unattended."by H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Nurturing

Grow with each other. Nurture intimacy. Live together and raise your children.

Thirty-two years of marriage is no big joke. Vita shyly admits that they still have a sex life. Puzzled? According to Vita, they scheduled to have it every week. It is one of the factors to maintain closeness with your spouse. A very good one to bridge a growing gap.

Sense of Humor

Laugh together. Have fun together. It is healthy to stretch out those lazy lips. Don't be too serious - it is boring.

"Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." ...Abraham Lincoln

Pressures of life? Don't let it weigh you down. Uplift your spirits high. Don't take things too seriously. Stop trying to be perfect because no person is.

"Humor is the great thing, the saving thing. The minute it crops up, all our irritations and resentments slip away, and a sunny spirit takes their place." ...Mark Twain

Always put on a happy face! Smile immensely. It can really change the way you and other people feel. Happiness is a choice so don't choose to frown. A wrinkle on the face is ugly. Smiling is considered as one of the fountains of youth.

Smile wide. Make the world a brighter place to live in. Don't forget to laugh and joke around. Be kind and smile at everyone, especially your spouse. If tensions start to grow, smile at him or her.

Laugh out loud. It's the best medicine in town. Heal your body, mind and soul. Fill your life with laughter so that you won't have much room left for negative emotions.

"Once you get people laughing, they're listening and you can tell them almost anything."Herbert Gardner

Know the signs if your marriage is in trouble. Is laughter still vibrating at the four sides of your home? If the laughter disappeared, something negative has taken place. Assess yourselves.

Want to be a more desirable person? Do you want to increase the fun in your relationship? If yes - smile, smile now, and humor yourself and others.

"Among those whom I like or admire, I can find no common denominator, but among those whom I love, I can: all of them make me laugh." ... W.H. Auden

Commitment

A happy couple in a happy marriage develops bonding rituals. These become the pillars that hold up the marriage. Show your dedication every day.

Respect

Appreciate each other's eccentricities and differences, especially as woman and man. Learn to be happily different. Learn to give and take. Practice kindness and politeness with each other in at least 95 percent of your interactions.

Know how to handle conflict

Don't make things worse by not talking to each other. Look into your spouse's eye when asking him or her. Don't delay the conversation for quite a long time. This will only make the conflict worse.

"Make love not war."Anonymous

Solve problem together

Resolve arguments rather than letting things fester. Speak up. It will not aggravate the situation.

Interdependence

Learn to reciprocate.

Enjoy one another

Focus on enjoying life. Live a carefree life. Think that your spouse is the one that really matters in this world.

Do things together. Excite your relationship by finding new ways to enjoy each other.

Have fun together

Play in the rain together. Isn't it great to be a child once in a while? Run like a madman while you chase each other in the rain.

Chapter 4

Peace and Harmony

“Spread love everywhere you go: first of all in your own house...let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your warm greeting.”-----Mother Teresa

Peace and harmony, sounds pretty interesting to discuss. These two should coexist always.

Have you ever encountered the old saying, “what you sow you shall reap”? This saying has been in existence since time immemorial. People oftentimes tend to forget to apply this in their daily lives. If you expect help from someone, you should lend a hand first.

“Give and it will be given to you.”

Give what you want more in your life. General rule: In order to have more, you must give more. To some this may sound absurd but if you believe in the Law of the Harvest this makes real sense.

You get what you get. There is something inside us that causes us to want to give back whenever someone else gives to us. If someone shouts at you, most likely you want to shout back. Or if someone does you a favor, you make it a point to return the favor.

Try smiling at strangers and that stranger will smile back at you, no doubt about that. Isn't it amazing how much easier life can become when you start to give whatever it is that you want in return?

"How you give love is how you live love."...Jaci Velasquez

Cooperation

Cooperation is a joint operation or action. Since it is stated as joint, it means two or more people are involved. When two people come together in a certain relationship, expect the differences in opinion.

Our differences can actually be the key to a strong long-term marriage we are aiming for.

After some time the man may want more independent activities, like going out with his friends. The woman on the other hand may want more contact with girlfriends.

"The greatest of all faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none."...Thomas Carlyle

What's the impact of this on marriage you may ask? Well, one of the main reasons we pick at each other is our conflicting attitude towards marital independence. Nature keeps moving forward in the life cycle. Change is the only permanent thing in this world. As you count the years, you'll eventually discover each other's strengths and weaknesses. It is a step-by-step process. It can't be done in a night or two.

“Sometimes I wonder if men and women really suit each other. Perhaps they should live next door and just visit now and then.” ...Katharine Hepburn

These differences can even lead us in a better direction. It may even cause us to make better decisions along the way. Don't think of your differences as an obstacle to be happy. It can have positive synergy effect on your lives.

You and your spouse are a squad. You are partners. This partnership has two sides. Either you let this help you live a more fulfilled life, or treat your spouse like he or she is your competitor.

Is it cooperation or competition that will bring you the most success in your marriage? The answer is quite obvious. But are you practicing cooperation in your marriage from the very start?

You should work together to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome. Marriage is a partnership and not just two people living in the same roof.

Tips on how to know that cooperation is present in your household

1. Discuss all major purchases. Agreed on what to buy with your money.
2. Agree on what you will and won't buy and where you will invest the money.
3. Focus on each other's strengths not on each other's weaknesses.

4. Point out the things you need to improve in your life. Ask his or her opinion.
5. Don't try to change your spouse's mind to your way of thinking. Assess yourself if you are willing to change your mind. Giving in once in a while is healthy.
6. Agree on how you will raise your children. Include discipline, allowance, curfew, education, religion, dress, friends and chores.
7. Write plans for the future. Discuss it together.
8. Always look for ways to improve yourself and your marriage
9. Give your spouse the benefit of the doubt. Reserve judgment until you get all of the facts.
10. Try to understand what is the motive behind, if your spouse offends or hurts you. Don't get mad in an instant.

Treat your relationship like a cooperative partnership. It doesn't matter how long you've been together.

Never ever fight

Disagreements can sometimes be healthy in a relationship if done once in a while. Never allow fighting to eat away your relationship. In fighting, both parties lose the fight. No one ever wins.

Fighting can be damaging. It involves emotions. When emotions get involved, you may say harmful things that you really don't mean to say, and unfortunately what's done can never be taken back.

Marvin came home drunk one rainy night. On his way upstairs he's singing his favorite song. He opened the door and found Leah on the bed. He tried to kiss Leah but to his surprise he caught Leah's hand on his cheek. It drove him angry in that instance. The painful fight lasted for almost an hour leaving Leah with a swollen body.

As much as possible, avoid getting into a heated argument. A fight can easily damage a marital relationship. The fight may start over an unimportant matter and before you both know it, it soon escalates into an exchange of offensive words.

"Never yell at each other unless the house is on fire." ...H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

There are four relationship factors:

1. In a marital relationship you tend to be more vulnerable than in any other kind of relationship. As the relationship becomes more intimate, the more vulnerable we become.
2. A critique is not meant as a personal attack.
3. Back to childhood

When we were still small, we all know that our knowledge and vocabulary is limited. We don't know how to express ourselves properly. We lack the politeness. We often resorted to name-calling after a fight.

Even adults go back to old ways, back to this childish behavior. But this may take on a different level which is somewhat damaging to your spouse. The following are some examples of our more complex name-calling:

“Are you blind?”

“When will you ever learn!”

“I am very disappointed in you.” Try rephrasing these words. “I am very disappointed in what you did. It's not like you, you can do better than that.”

“You jerk!”

“I can't believe you did that again!”

“You always...” or “you never...”

Avoid using these words. Always remember the Law of Harvest. Don't continue to sow seeds of “you always” or “you never” into your relationship so that you will not reap it. Whatever you focus on and hear over and over again becomes a reality.

You did it again! When will you learn? I can't believe this. I married someone who's not capable of doing things right. This is such a mess!

4. Don't pull out the big gun when argument progresses and emotions rise to the surface for the sake of winning. Don't try to bring in the past. Let bygones be bygones forever. Stay out of it. Leave it where it belongs. Bringing up the past in an argument can add fuel to the fire. Focus only on the present situation no matter how difficult it is.

Remember the first time we had a fight? Remember? You almost slap me on the face. Until now I still could not believe that you'll raise a hand on me!

In a fight no one really wins because both parties lose the game. This affects closeness of the husband and wife. Gaps arise because of the fight. Your spouse will feel awkward when you are around after the fight. Fighting is really immature regardless of how old you are or how long you have been married. It is only natural for children but not for adults.

It's now time to grow up. Develop your peacekeeping skills. Give yourself a chance to experience the kind of joy only a happy marriage can offer.

"Nothing gives one person so much advantage over another as to remain always cool and unruffled under all circumstances."...Thomas Jefferson

Treat your spouse the treatment he or she deserves. Be careful with the words that you use.

Jennifer admits that she's a nagger and has a bad temper as well. She easily gets angry. When mad she can't help but yell. She can't restrain herself in doing so. Good thing her husband Jeff is

a calm person. He's not the type that if you yell, he yells too. He only watches Jennifer shout at the top of her voice. He leaves her for a couple of minutes and afterwards if he feels that his wife has cooled down, he approaches her with a big hug and quick kiss on the cheek.

Grow up!

Are you familiar with the saying, "it takes two to tango"?

It always takes two to debate, it takes two to argue, and it takes two to fight.

Take this as an example scenario. You are married to a war freak. A war freak is someone who loves to fight. This kind of person loves to prove that he or she is right and you are wrong. Stay calm as much as possible. Tell him or her that you do not wish to argue.

I can't take this anymore! The door banged behind her. James, a man of reason just shrugs his shoulder. There goes his wife again. Acting silly when there's nothing to be upset about. He leaves her for a couple of hours, not bothering her. He can't afford to argue. It may seem futile.

Instead of engaging yourselves in an argument, why don't you tell your spouse that you would love to hear what he or she has to say. Tell him or her that you can talk in a civil manner. **Tell your spouse that you LOVE HIM OR HER.** Tell him or her that you don't want to fight.

There is no dispute that can't be solved by talking. Ask him or her: "Are you willing to continue this conversation yelling? I'm quite concerned about you. If you continue yelling at me you'll get very tired." Then smile at him or her widely.

Anger management

One piece of advice: **never make a major decision when you are angry**. I assure you, you will regret it later.

This is important. Angry people can't think properly. They don't think things through. Learn to control your temper. Controlling temper is not about suppressing your feelings. Don't hold emotions. If you like to tell something say it directly to your spouse. Don't pretend as if he or she doesn't exist. This is also harmful to your relationship.

Don't suppress emotions. It can lead to serious health issues. Just let it all out but without raising your voice or yelling.

He notices that his wife spends much of her time talking on the telephone. She talks too much that she often forgets her kitchen responsibility. Dinner is often served late, sometimes overcooked and burnt. He just can't voice out his feelings for fear of being misunderstood. And so he keeps silent. Until one night, he can't take it anymore. In the middle of dinner he burst out into a loud roar. His wife, not knowing what happened, doesn't have the nerve to ask him. He keeps on shouting, doing some name-calling.

To overcome your anger there are some few steps to live by:

1. Realize that you have a problem with it. This can be corrected through self-discipline. Have the desire to change.
2. Apologize right away if your anger was directed towards another person. Let him or her know that you are controlling your anger.

Have you heard that something very powerful happens when you share your goal with other people? This is often true in all aspects of life.

Mention to other people your plan to change and make yourself better. Don't worry about other people's thought. That doesn't matter anyway. What matters most is your will to improve yourself. If they know that you had a bad temper and you are working on it, you will gain their respect.

"Man is measured by the size of the thing that makes him angry." ...J. Kenfield Morley

3. If you are angry find out what you are angry about. Don't let your spouse be a victim of your misdirected anger. Don't snap at your spouse if you're angry with your boss.
4. Is your anger really worth all your mental torment? Find out for yourself. Determine it right away.

5. Find a confidant other than your spouse whom you can trust. Let's say your confidant is a male. He could be a best friend in high school or college. Let him know about your ordeal. Ask him to help you improve your life and attitude towards life. Ask him tips on how to handle marital conflict properly. Try to get his view. He might as well share you his experience with his spouse, or much better their present scenario.

Ford and Lance are best of friends since high school days. Ford got married two years earlier than Lance. Lance, after 8 months of being married, called Ford on the telephone in a very urgent manner. Lance told Ford that he's planning to divorce Tricia, his wife who he has married for eight months ago. Ford was shocked to hear the news. He set for an appointment right away.

They met in their favorite restaurant after office hours. There in the busy restaurant, Lance told him the story that happened for the past eight months. He said that the first two months of their marriage they were very happy, enjoying the honeymoon stage to the fullest. The horror started during the third month. They often have disputes, almost every night. They fight for even the smallest things.

Ford figured it out right away that the two are experiencing the power struggle stage wherein two people experience disillusionment. He told Lance to talk first with his wife before jumping into a quick decision. The divorce thing was quite irrational knowing that their case is so simple. Lance admitted that he's so angry with his wife. He still loves her. His feelings haven't changed a bit.

Lance agreed to give it a try. Three months later, he called Ford that he and his wife are just doing fine after the incident. He even told him that this time they got very close. Every time there is a misunderstanding between the two of them, they always make it a point to discuss it right away. Ford smiled widely.

6. When you get angry, give yourself some time to cool down before responding. This will delay or hopefully hamper a soon to be erupted emotion. Don't talk right away; in this way a probable argument is avoided. A fire is extinguished even before it starts.

Usually after a fight I keep my distance. I give my husband, Ron, time to think what had transpired between us. I stopped talking to him for at least an hour to give him the chance to cool down. After that I'll approach him and give him a big hug and a kiss on the lips while simultaneously mouthing the words "I'm sorry". He too is also sorry.

Write up

Some people express themselves more via writing. These people can't fully express their thoughts and emotion when talking. This is a powerful way of sorting out the feelings. This is a common practice but rarely used in personal life.

Dear Chantal,

Promise me first that you won't get mad at me while reading this letter. I wrote this letter for you because I noticed that you have grown silent. You seem to neglect my presence.

That thing bothers me so much. I don't know what to do. Have I done anything wrong? Have I offended you? I don't know if I said something that might hurt you. I'm so sorry love. Please let's talk. Let's work this out. I can't stand to see you in pain.

In grief,

Jake

Writing down your feelings is not only a good way to sort out the advantage and disadvantage of any given situation. It's a great way to work through your emotions. Writing is simply talking to oneself in silence. This is therapeutic. It helps release emotions before they cause you and/or anyone else harm. Once you have written down your feelings on paper, you can properly decide. You can analyze any act done by your spouse without hurting him or her.

Dear John,

I noticed these past few days that you are remarkably quiet. I really wanted to approach you to ask you what's bothering you. I didn't have the chance because you reject my presence. I decided to give you the privacy you need. I understand that as of the moment you are into a grueling ordeal. But your days of silence are bothering me. I can't stand it any longer that is why I am writing you now this letter.

Honey what's wrong? I am here to help you. Don't shoulder the burden alone. I can help you alleviate the grief or pain you are into right now. Please let me know. Let's talk. I know it'll make you feel much better. I'm just here. Let me know if you're ready for a conversation. We can solve your problem together.

Lovingly in distress,

Jane

Forgive and forget

A marriage becomes a lot stronger when the spirit of forgiveness abounds.

Are you sensitive enough to know that your spouse is in distress? Ask him or her if there's a slight change in mood. There are some people who try to conceal their emotions with a happy facade. A simple pat on the shoulder, and asking him or her if something's wrong while looking straight to the eye, will work wonders.

As mentioned before don't bring up past events. Forgive and forget. Of course your spouse is not perfect so he or she is bound to commit mistakes once in a while. Understand first the situation before jumping into conclusion.

When you don't want to forgive, it only means one thing: You're just giving him or her the power to hurt you. How's that you may ask? Because you're hurting every time you think of that person or situation. In that case you are making that person take control over you. Why? Your

happiness may seem dependent on it. When that event crosses your mind, automatically you will get angry, you'll frown. Don't hold back. Let it go and live life.

Never sleep while problematic matters are still unsolved. Don't go to bed angry. Settle things before sleeping.

Chapter 5

Understanding Body Language

"When you love, you wish to do things for. You wish to sacrifice for. You wish to serve."-----Ernest Hemingway

This may sound a paradox to the previous chapter you've read. It's not. I mentioned that the best way to solve a problem is to talk it over. Yeah, that is right, but you also have to take note that your spouse might not want to speak up on times.

There are times that they prefer to stay silent for so many reasons. Have you heard that 80 percent of communication is nonverbal? Surprised? That is why nonverbal communication is considered extremely important.

As they say "a picture is worth a thousand words". You have to express yourself properly. Relate to your spouse personally. It is one way to master the art of reading your spouse's body language.

Communication is very effective in a deep level than just talking and listening. These levels are: relating, understanding and caring. Of course what you have heard is good but it's not enough.

All people want to know that they have been understood. Body language will tell you quickly whether or not you are getting through to your spouse. It takes a lot of practice to be a good reader (body language). Please take note that this is very important.

She's singing when she opens the door for me. She's beaming. I could see the smile stretch on her luscious lips. Wow! Life is so great!

You can actually tell if people are with you or if they're not. It is obvious sometimes by what they say. They will interrupt you in mid-sentence. They will say quick words like uh-huh or something in the like. They will jump in as soon as there is a pause, or they will quickly change the topic, usually about themselves.

One of the body language signs that show people are not listening, is when they become restless. They play with their hands. They lose eye contact. In short they lose interest in talking to you.

While your spouse is talking to you, show respect and listen. Be with him or her in mind, body and spirit. Let your spouse know if the timing isn't right. Set up a time that works best for both of you.

If your spouse is in the other dimension while you are talking, get him or her back gently. Ask him or her if he or she is into something. Tell him or her that perhaps you could delay it later. Talking without a listener is useless.

The first step towards nonverbal communication is observation. Pay attention to him or her. With this you'll notice right away if something is different. Or if something has changed or if something is not turning out right.

If you are preoccupied, you rarely notice changes in other people. This can limit the possible closeness that couples can achieve. Why don't you make an effort to notice even the subtle changes that is taking place in your partner and in your relationship?

You have to take note of your spouse's body language, facial expressions and even the tone of his or her voice. You have to pay close attention to these nonverbal cues.

Ask these questions if you notice that he or she is trailing off:

“You seem a little distracted, what are you thinking about?”

“You seem down, what's wrong?”

“You seem flustered, what can I do to help?”

These questions show that you really care for your spouse. This will give your partner the courage and strength to face whatever lies ahead. This will make a big difference.

CAUTION: If you happen to be the recipient of these kinds of questions be sure to share your thoughts and feelings. Don't neglect your spouse. It's the worst thing that you'll do. It will make things really complicated.

Dear, is there something wrong? She turns her back on me. I am so embarrassed. Okay I'll leave you alone. Don't bother to talk to me, alright?

This is one classic example. This could lead to a major conflict.

Tell your spouse what's on your mind. Much better say to him or her that you could discuss it later. This kind of communication will bring your relationship to a higher level.

Arrange things that are convenient for the both of you. Never persuade him or her to talk if he or she doesn't have the guts to do it. Maybe he or she is thinking of something else and needs time and space for it.

One action to watch out: Don't push. If your spouse doesn't want to talk it over, let it be. Wait for him or her to initiate the talking. The fact that you notice his or her situation is already a big support to your partner.

Sometimes conversation is not that important. A simple hug, smile, kiss, touch or a little time and space are enough to make him or her happy.

Trust your intuition. After some time the connection between you and your spouse will evolve into something far more dependable. The gut feeling that you have will guide you.

“Action speaks louder than words” is a very popular saying. This saying embodies the most important form of communication, one of the forms of nonverbal communication that is proven and tested through time.

She's in distress I know. Her actions told me so. Got to talk to her. She needs help.

According to some, the most important form of communication is in what you do, not what you say.

Some few examples:

1. If you say that you love your husband or wife, but you don't act lovingly toward him or her, your spouse won't believe you.

We've been married a year now but I still can't feel his love. I'm having some apprehensions on why he married me in the first place. Gina, 30 years old, Accountant

My husband when he arrives home never forgets to give me a hug and a meaningful kisses on the lips. Oh I really love it when he does that to me. It's one of the things that I look forward to every night. Nadja entrepreneur, 33 years old.

2. If you say that you are sorry for being late and then you repeat this behavior, your spouse won't believe you the next time.

He's always late. I always wait for him for more than two hours when we agreed to meet outside. He acts as if nothing has happened. He's so insensitive about it. Joyce, a homemaker 35 years old.

Glenn is always conscious about time. If he said 6 p.m., he'll be there five minutes before 6. He doesn't want that I wait for him, but he waits for me instead. Isn't that sweet? Leah, manager 50 years old.

3. If you say that you trust your spouse, but you continually ask if your mate knows what he or she is doing, your spouse won't believe you.

"I trust you", I always hear him say that to me but I don't understand why he keeps on asking me on the things that I usually do. This is pretty annoying. I'm losing respect and love for him. Cherie, chemist, 24 years old.

4. If you say that you care about him or her, but you continually forget your anniversary or your spouse's birthday, your spouse won't believe you.

Honey, today is my birthday, remember? Oh I see you forgot. Honey you always does.

Happy birthday love!

Hey it's only twelve midnight. Wow! You wake up so early to greet me. Oh love you are so sweet. I love you.

5. If you say that you value your mate's opinion, but you argue with him or her regarding many of the things that he or she says, your spouse won't believe you.

You value my opinion? Then what's the point of this argument? You don't value it. You like to push your idea on me. I am a person. I also have my own disposition.

6. If you find your lover attractive, but you never tell your lover or pay him or her compliments, how will your partner know what you think?

Hey Lucy, would you mind if I ask you something? Am I that ugly? Why is it my husband doesn't notice me. I'm beginning to think that I look so horrible. Do you think a reconstruction surgery is needed to enhance my looks? Tell me please. I need to know.

Honey you are so beautiful! I can't take my eyes off you. I'm so proud to have you as my wife. Really honey? Thank you so much.

7. If you tell your mate that he or she is special, but you rarely do the small things that he or she likes, your spouse won't believe you.

He said that I'm special. Why is it that he doesn't know my favorite flower? Oh poor me.

My husband never forgets to bring home something for me. Be it my favorite cake, my favorite perfume or my favorite flower. He always makes me feel special to him. When he has no time to buy a gift, he just embraces me while whispering to my ears that I'm special to him.

Your spouse means everything to you. Act on it everyday, and he or she will believe you.

Hey darling I got something for you. Come over here, I'll whisper it to you. "I love you". You heard it?

Listen to your partner; hang on to every word that he or she says. This will develop a closeness that you haven't felt in years.

Dear Honey,

I wrote a simple letter to brighten up your day. Hope you are doing pretty fine today.

It's me,

Hubby

Recognize when something has changed. Notice when your partner seems frustrated, disturbed or lonely.

Darling, is there something wrong? I noticed you look so pale. Is everything all right? Is there any way that I can help? I'm just here for you. If you need to talk it over, just give a pat on my shoulder.

Tell your spouse often that he or she means a lot to you.

Always say, "I love you"!

Happy Ever After

Finally, you have read the secrets to a happy marriage. Now you are both ready to face all circumstances whatever it may take. A petty quarrel will not rattle your marital relationship because you now have the knowledge on how to handle such things.

You don't need a marriage counselor to solve your conflicts. All it takes is common sense, understanding, and a whole lot of loving.

Have a happy married life!

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