

## *Tips for Couples*

*Did you know that most newlyweds have the “post wedding blues”? According to many sources, after all the planning and excitement that happens for the wedding and the honeymoon; some couples want the “fairy tale” to continue. The couple is passionately in love and in wedded bliss. Then there is down-time. All the festivities and the honeymoon are over. It takes time to get your life back into a “normal” state. All this leads to the start of a new life with each other. Here are a few tips to help you succeed in avoiding some of the “blues” and to have a successful relationship.*

- Finances are the number one reason couples have arguments. Before you even get married, discuss them. You are both used to spending your money your own way and it will be difficult discussing how to handle your finances together. Figure out rules that you want set, such as who will pay the bills and when. Having a joint checking account can help things run smoothly as well. It is extremely important that you have savings. Emergencies can and will happen. Try to avoid having too much debt. Too much debt causes stress and can also add to troubles in the relationship. . Follow those rules, stick with them. Don't spend anything without discussing it with each other. Figure out short and long term financial goals (student loans, retirement, buying a home, travel, etc.) Most of all, work together.*
- Communicate, Communicate, And Communicate. Address important issues immediately rather than avoiding them and hope they go away. When your spouse feels their needs aren't met, resentment is likely to arise and bickering as well as arguments can ensue. You are both individuals and you need to stay true to yourselves, however, you do need to learn to work together. Talk about the small things as well as the big things. Set aside time every day away from distractions (TV, telephone, etc.) and genuinely listen to each other. Look at each other in the eyes when you are talking. If you aren't sure about the meaning behind something your spouse said, ask for clarification and don't ever assume.*
- Never go to bed angry. Disagreements can, and will happen. Sometimes you want to control each other's behaviors, you can't. You agreed to accept your spouse as they are. Does the issue you have affect the*

*relationship? If not, let it go. How important is the issue? If it is just that the tube of toothpaste is squeezed from the middle instead of the bottom, let it go. Don't "play dirty" when you argue. Name calling and berating each other is never a good way to fix things. Bringing up anything that happened in the past is "out of bounds". If your spouse constantly hears criticism and insults, the less likely they are going to want to be with you. Apologies and making up before bed is key. Learn from the mistakes that caused the arguments and your relationship will grow stronger.*

- Just because you are married, don't let go of your friends and family. These people are your support system. Your spouse is not to replace the relationships you already have but to enhance your life. Your spouse fell in love with you and who you were which included your friends and family. You still need to go out with them, to re-energize your married relationship. Factoring in regular time apart can give you topics of conversation and will help make your relationship stronger and help you enjoy each other's company more.*
- Don't fight in front of others. Your family and friends have agreed to support you both in your marriage. They only see both of you together for a limited amount of time. Based on the interactions between the two of you they will form their own impression of your relationship. By arguing in front of them they may form a negative opinion and may not support your marriage. If they see that your love is strong, they will support you and continue to be a part of your lives in a positive way.*
- You need to discuss when and how often you will see each other's family together. Make sure you make equal time for both families. Issues will also arise with your own families. If you have a relative that behaves in a hurtful way, it is your responsibility to talk with that family member, discuss the issue and ask them to apologize to your spouse. Your spouse deserves that respect and it will also help to solve the issue.*
- Don't take each other for granted. If an activity is important to your spouse, try it out, you may discover you as a couple like something new. It can also enhance your relationship. Continue to look good for each other. Go on date nights. Be creative, plan little surprises for each other like little notes in a lunchbox, the bathroom mirror, etc. Share hobbies and interests. Most of all make time for each other every day.*
- Finally, if you can, wait to have children. It is better to be financially stable and have a strong family foundation before having children. They*

*are wonderful and it takes a lot to have children. You need to agree on shared duties when the children do arrive. It is not just one parent's responsibility to change diapers, bathe, feed them, and when they are older discipline. You still must work together.*

*These tips can help you get your marriage off to a good start; the most important thing is that it is just advice. It is up to you as a couple to make the rules and decide whether you should consider using the advice as guidance you want to use. Every relationship is different and couples will pick and choose different things to use as guidelines. There is no such thing as a "perfect" marriage, but advice you get from various sources can help you have a strong marriage, as long as you work together.*



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