

# Ten Tips to Stay Happy in Your Marriage



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# 1. Stay honest with each other.



- Emotional dishonesty creates distance between you and your partner. This distance can create an environment that makes you vulnerable to emotional and/or physical affairs. Staying honest with your emotions creates emotional intimacy, which is an enduring bond.
- Make sure to talk with your partner when something is bothering you -- don't hide emotions and think they will go away. They won't.

## 2. Treat your loved one as if they are the most important person in your life... Because they are!



- We often find ourselves being more polite and respectful to the pizza delivery guy than we are to our significant others.
- Treat your spouse as if they have a choice each and every day about whether they really want to spend time with you... because they do! Earn their choice by treating them with love, respect, and kindness.

### 3. Give up the need to be right.



- If the focus in your conflicts is “who is right and who is wrong” you will both lose. A conflict is successfully resolved when both parties have been heard and have moved toward each other in understanding.
- Stop using the accusatory “You, you, you” when in conflict. Talk about how you feel and what you need from your partner. Also, ask for what will help you get resolution. When you are on the receiving end of this, listen, affirm your understanding, and offer a solution.

## 4. Don't neglect intimacy.



- In our busy lives, it can be hard to find time for intimacy, but if we neglect this very important aspect of a marriage, we become roommates. This leaves both parties vulnerable to emotional and physical affairs outside of the marriage.
- Schedule time to be together without kids, phones, television, computers, etc. We schedule time for other things that are important to us -- so schedule time for romance.

## 5. Take care of your physical/emotional/ spiritual/intellectual/sexual self.



- Nothing is more appealing than a person who is full of life, love, and interests. We have to be interested in ourselves first in order to be interesting to others.
- Make time in your life to exercise and pursue interests and hobbies that you enjoy.

## 6. Look at your relationship as an entity in and of itself.



- In every marriage, there is you, your partner, and your relationship. If you neglect to care for your relationship with the same devotion you give to caring for yourself, it will atrophy.
- Make time for each other, such as a date night each week. Take walks together and find things you enjoy together. Make sure that you are checking in with each other regularly about relationship issues and dealing with problems as they arise. Don't neglect to nourish your relationship.

## 7. Focus on the positives.



- We all have our foibles and endearing idiosyncrasies. If we stay focused on the minor irritations, the small stuff, we will miss appreciating the bigger things. Leaving the toothpaste cap off pales in comparison to bringing your morning coffee with a smile.
- Appreciate your partner when they do something for you or the relationship. Remember that we all show love in different ways -- be alert for how your partner shows his/her love, and say thank you for that.



## 8. Don't go online to find understanding or anything else your partner should be providing.



- If something is lacking in your marriage, talk to your partner about it. Don't go online to find companionship. It is a very slippery slope and will likely end with the destruction of your marriage.
- If talking with your partner isn't working, seek marriage counseling to enable you both to make sure your needs are being met.

## 9. Find balance in your work and home life.



- This is more difficult now than ever. Technology allows us to essentially bring our office into our bedrooms, all in the form of a three by five inch rectangle. This can harm your relationship, not to mention your own happiness.
- Turn off and unplug when you are together. Period.

## 10. Have fun!



- As the years go by in a marriage, we can get so focused on work, kids, in-laws, and financial concerns that we forget to have fun together. Laughter and love go hand in hand. We share our sorrows in marriage, so don't forget to share the joys.
- Make time together to do fun things. If you can't afford to go away together, pack a picnic lunch and go for a hike. Talk about the things you love about each other and things that make you laugh. Have fun!

# Maria Droste Counseling Center



For more information about Marriage Counseling  
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