

Improving your Marital Friendship: 10 Simple Actions that Can Increase Your Happiness

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Keeping your marriage strong over the years is dependent upon your ability to develop and maintain a vibrant friendship. While each partner changes through the years and conflicts inevitably arise, your greatest defense of decreasing marital satisfaction is a strong friendship in which you value and enjoy each other. Adding or increasing the following actions can make a big difference in how happy and long-lasting your marriage is.

1. Take 5 minutes in the morning to say hello and express thankfulness for each other.
2. Do not leave each other in the morning without knowing one thing that is going to happen in your partner's day.
3. Think about 3 things you are thankful for that your partner brings into your life on your way to work or before you start your tasks for the day. Train yourself to think positive thoughts throughout the day, when you are away from your partner.
4. Discuss the events that happened during the day. Take at least 10 minutes in the evening to share what happened that day.
5. Express affection each time you separate and rejoin each other. It may just be a touch on the shoulder or a kiss hello or good-bye.
6. Share one reason per day that you are glad you married your partner.
7. Come together at mealtimes. Share the events of the day, each person taking a turn to share what happened that day. Ask questions so you understand what that person's day was like.
8. Go on a date, just the two of you, at least monthly—no discussion of kids!
9. Turn off the TV and computer and play a card or board game at least weekly.
10. Never go to bed without saying good night and sharing how your partner made you smile that day.

If you incorporate these 10 simple actions into your routine—really making them a priority—your marriage and family will be stronger and happier!