

So, How Do You Stay in Love?

**Psalms 141:3: (NASB) *Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;
Keep watch over the door of my lips.***



We humans are built to long for love, commitment and longevity. We all want to be happy and for most that means being involved in a special relationship. We want "...and they all lived happily ever after!" for such an end is what dreams are made of. For a few, this may become their reality, but for most their reality sounds more like "and they lived tentatively ever after, never quite satisfied but rather they were tolerant of their lot in life." How do we avoid the tragedy of the last ending and find some of the "happily" of the first?

Today's conversation is not a scientific approach to the issues of marital life, nor is it based on human psychology. We will look at this based on some common sense driven by scriptural principle and the personal experiences of several individuals.

You have heard of TLC meaning "Tender Loving Care." Let's alter that a bit:



"Broken Together," (Verse 1) Casting Crowns

*What do you think about when you look at me
I know we're not the fairy tale you dreamed we'd be
You wore the veil, you walked the aisle, you took my hand
And we dove into a mystery
How I wish we could go back to simpler times
Before all our scars and all our secrets were in the light
Now on this hallowed ground, we've drawn the battle lines
Will we make it through the night?
It's going to take much more than promises this time
Only God can change our minds*



How do you build trust? Trust is an aspect of faith. Faith is conviction based on some measure of proof. Trust is the heart's *application* of faith, the willingness to be vulnerable and exposed as a result of your faith. To stay in love, we must trust in two things: our spouse and our marriage.

Trusting in our spouse:

Proverbs 31:11: (KJV) *The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.*

Proverbs 31:11: (NASB) *The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.*

CQ Staffers were asked to contribute what they felt are valuable principles for a strong marriage.

Loni suggests respectful and honest communication:

A pivotal moment for my husband and me in our relationship happened before we were even engaged. We sat down (face-to-face - not over email, Facebook, texting, twitter or Instagram) and had an honest discussion about "having honest discussions" in our relationship. We made a commitment that we would always be completely upfront, honest and respectful with each other, even if what we had to say was difficult. We committed never to make personal attacks and that gave us the confidence to always view the other as trying to help, not hurt. Therefore, any time we run into a difficult situation, problem or disagreement, we have a very honest and open discussion. The simple act of viewing it this way - rather than as a "fight" - intrinsically leads us to work together to find productive solutions, rather than cultivating grudges, anger or bitterness.



Respectful communication uses kind words that convey accurate thoughts and feelings. One thing my husband and I often say to each other is, "Remember, Honey, I can't read your mind." And while that is somewhat cliché, it is so true. Respect one for another is commanded in God's word.



Trusting in your spouse is reflected in your intentions:

Ephesians 4:29-32: (NASB) ²⁹*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.* ³⁰*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Trusting in your spouse is reflected in your self-control!)* ³¹*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.* ³²*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*



Broken Together, (chorus) Casting Crowns

*Maybe you and I were never meant to be complete
Could we just be broken together
If you can bring your shattered dreams and I'll bring mine
Could healing still be spoken and save us
The only way we'll last forever is broken together*



What do you have to do to trust your marriage?

Realize that to trust in your marriage is to trust in God:

Psalms 34:8: (KJV) *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*



The first marriage:

Genesis 2:20-24: (NASB) ²⁰*The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²²The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib, which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³The man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*



Observations regarding the first marriage:

- (Verse 20) The noticeable absence of the woman revealed the emptiness man had without her.
- (Verses 21-22) God's creation of woman from man gives a sense of equality and companionship.
- (Verse 22) God presents Eve to Adam to be named as his own companion and helper. "Helper" is defined as "one who helps" but certainly not one who has to be in a lesser position as shown by:

Psalms 33:20: (KJV) *Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our **help <5828>** and our shield.*

- (Verse 23) *At last, bone of my bone, etc.* Adam's deep desire for companionship was now fulfilled.
- (Verse 24) *Therefore* a man leaves his home and *clings*; implies a **LIFELONG** devotion.
- They become *one flesh* - inseparable and united in every way.



"Because You Loved Me," (verse one) Celine Dion

*For all those times you stood by me
For all the truth that you made me see
For all the joy you brought to my life
For all the wrong that you made right
For every dream you made come true
For all the love I found in you
I'll be forever thankful baby
You're the one who held me up
Never let me fall
You're the one who saw me through, through it all
You were my strength when I was weak
You were my voice when I couldn't speak
You were my eyes when I couldn't see
You saw the best there was in me
Lifted me up when I couldn't reach*



*You gave me faith 'cause you believed
I'm everything I am
Because you loved me*

Jesus confirms marriage as a God-based lifelong human arrangement:

Mark 10:6-9: (NASB) *“But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. ⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother ⁸and the two shall become one flesh so they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.*



What God has joined together - what does this actually mean? Pinky-swear? Cross my heart?

Too often people enter into marriage with the ability to walk away. We have to commit to our spouse and to the promise of commitment.



Marriage is a “covenant” (contract) and not just any covenant; it is a covenant of God:

Proverbs 2:11-12,16-17: (ASV) *“Discretion shall watch over thee; Understanding shall keep thee: ¹²To deliver thee from the way of evil, from the men that speak perverse things... ¹⁶To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the foreigner that flattereth with her words; ¹⁷That forsaketh the friend of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God:*

(Source: McClintock and Strong Biblical Cyclopedia) Covenant: A mutual contract or agreement between two parties, each of which is bound to fulfill certain engagements to the other.... The Hebrew word is derived...from the root...“He cut,” and taken to mean primarily “a cutting,” with reference to the custom of cutting or dividing animals in two, and passing between the parts in ratifying a covenant. ...In making such a covenant God was solemnly invoked as witness (Genesis 31:50), whence the expression “a covenant of Jehovah” in 1 Samuel 20:8; compare Jeremiah 34:18,19. ...and accordingly a breach of covenant was regarded as a very heinous sin (Ezekiel 17:12-20).

Once you have entered into that promise, you need to stay with that promise. Trust what it means and do your part.

Okay, we have a basis of trust. What role does love play?

The type of love we are focusing on is “agape” love - a benevolent, selfless love.

Men and women are wired differently (topic for another day) and as a result have different roles:

Ephesians 5:21-24: (NASB) *“²¹and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. ²²Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*



What does THIS mean? Notice the simplicity of this command and the lack of “agape” reminders.



Now the command to the husbands:

Ephesians 5:25-31: (NASB) ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also *loved* the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶so that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.



Observations:

- Women - LOVE (implied) and *be subject*.
- Men - LOVE and give yourself up for her.
- Men - LOVE and care for her as your own body. Men are to take their self-centeredness and become "wife-centered."
- Men - Your love for her becomes your way of self-preservation.
- Men - Cherish her.
- Men - Leave all other ties for her sake.



A caller from Connecticut suggests our CQ hosts have a legitimate right to talk about this subject, because they have been happily married for a combined 63 number of years!



"Broken Together," (Verse 2) Casting Crowns

*Maybe you and I were never meant to be complete
Could we just be broken together
If you can bring your shattered dreams and I'll bring mine
Could healing still be spoken and save us
The only way we'll last forever is broken together
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Debbie wrote:

Hebrews 10:24: (NASB) *and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds...*



If our mate is a fellow Christian, they would be the first one we would want to consider because they're the ones we share our life with and our most intimate conversations. If he or she were not a Christian we would still want to be sure that we take into consideration that we ourselves should be an example of love in our words and actions, taking our example from our Lord Jesus.



Ephesians 4:1-3: (Philips) ¹Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Be patient with your spouse; they see the good, the bad, and the ugly in you and have vowed to live with you anyway!



I saw that you were perfect, and so I loved you. Then I saw that you were not perfect and I loved you even more. – Angelita Lim

Cherish your spouse! We are told to do so!

Ephesians 5:29-31: (NASB) ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and **cherishes <2282>** it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰because we are members of His body. ³¹For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

Cherish: Strongs #2282 *thalpoo*, 1. to warm, keep warm
2. to cherish with tender love, to foster with tender care

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary:

CHERISH: 1a: to hold dear; feel or show affection for b: to keep or cultivate with care and affection: nurture 2: to entertain or harbor in the mind deeply and resolutely

To cherish a spouse can be a challenge, especially for men and especially in our time of everything being instant and replaceable. So, how do we do it? How do we truly cherish our wives?



"Cherish," (last verse) The Association (1966)

*Cherish is the word I use to describe
All the feeling
That I have hiding here for you inside
You don't know how many times
I've wished that I had told you
You don't know how many times
I've wished that I could hold you
You don't know how many times
I've wished that I could
Mold you into someone who could
Cherish me as much as I cherish you
And I do
Cherish you
And I do
Cherish you
Cherish is the word*



A caller from Connecticut suggests couples should go back physically to where they first met and have a connection. Recreate how you met.



What a wonderful idea! Sometimes we forget how to cherish one another. By going back to a special place, maybe it can stimulate the desire to love and cherish and seek the good in our partners.

1 Peter 3:7: (KJV) *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving **honour <5092>** unto the wife, as unto the **weaker <772>** vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

Honour: Strongs #5092, time (tee-may') esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself

Weaker: Strongs #772, asthenes (as-then-ace'), strengthless (in various applications, literal, figurative and moral)

Give great esteem to your wives, as you would to something that is of great value, yet fragile. Our marital instinct should be to protect, honor and respect our wives above all others - cherish! Our wives are of priceless value and deserve treatment as such.

This principle is exhibited in the following text. Although it does NOT mention men and women, the same words explain relationships within the body of Christ:

1 Corinthians 12:21-23: (ASV) *²¹And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²²Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be **more feeble <772>** are necessary: ²³and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant **honour <5092>**; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.*

The above comparisons speak volumes! For example, *eyes to hands* - both have obvious value, yet the eye directs the hand. *Head to feet* - both have obvious value, yet the head directs the feet. So, just because some in the body are not "out front," that never diminishes their worth. This is the same within a marriage. Ideally a cherished spouse should honor and appreciate in return.

An example is Christian Questions. Our listeners are familiar with the hosts, Jonathan and Rick. But CQ is not Jonathan and Rick. It is all of the other contributing individuals week-to-week and year-to-year. Are they less valuable because you do not hear their names? Not at all.

Cherishing is of great value and the idea of *weak* is not weak at all.

The world's best-kept secret for a happy marriage - hire a household servant!

It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages. — Friedrich Nietzsche

Proverbs 25:24: (NASB) *It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.*

Proverbs 21:19: (NASB) *It is better to live in a desert land than with a contentious and vexing woman.*





CQ Staffer Julie called in to discuss an unusual solution that worked for her marriage. Early on she decided she did not want to be the one who made her husband want to stay not only on the rooftop, but on the *corner* of the rooftop!

When two people who are completely different live together in marriage, it is difficult. There are household chores, bills to pay, and the love wears off a little bit and it comes down to dealing with real life. Early in our marriage, we found ourselves each feeling taken advantage of, each believing we were doing the lion's share of the household chores.

We began spitting out phrases that started with, "I ALWAYS..." and "You NEVER..." as related to cleaning, grocery shopping, taking out the garbage and so on. It became contentious but that is not helpful for the Team.

Rick: These are symptoms of life. No matter how passionately in love we are, these things create crossroads. You have to make a decision as to how to handle them. What did you do?

First we realized we had to banish certain words. ALWAYS and NEVER are really big spans of time that are very rarely accurate but are very incendiary.

If I am always doing everything and YOU are always doing everything but nothing is getting done, what better to do than hire a household servant! We hired a butler named Sinclair to do all of the work for us.

We promptly bought a special white board and hung it on a decorative hook by the back door. If anything needed to be done that we wanted the other person to do, we would write it on Sinclair's board. Something strange happened - we found the tasks were getting done and the chores were wiped off the board.



Sinclair was metaphorical - we were both "Sinclair," working together for the ultimate good and peace of the household. For some reason, this crazy idea worked because when we saw the list of chores without the other person nagging us to do them, it became competition. We wanted to secretly get down there and wipe the task off the board and see the other person come down, excited and happy that another one was off the list. Thank you, Sinclair!

Rick: You did not hire a real life butler named Sinclair but instead got a white board. How long ago was this?

About a year into our marriage, but he still "works" for us.

Rick: Talk about the emotional changes that happened from ALWAYS and NEVER to "Let Sinclair do it!"

Sometimes a creative and fun solution can work. These can lead to inside jokes and knowing smiles between spouses, building the relationship



stronger. It shifted our paradigm to "What can I do to contribute?" and "How can I make my spouse's day better today?"

Rick: It helps you cherish your spouse because it gives you the freedom to "step up" in a very positive way. Also, it is a gentle way of not nagging but reminding.

Marriage done right is so good that it is worth finding any little thing that makes it a better experience.

Rick: You banished ALWAYS and NEVER, but you really did not banish them entirely, right?

We banished them if they are negative. They are only allowed to be used in a positive way: "I ALWAYS look forward to seeing you each day," or "I NEVER want to be without you." The negative becomes too overwhelming for a person to hear.

Rick: There is a tremendous principle in that: one negative statement can undo a hundred positive statements. If you take those overt statements ALWAYS and NEVER and promise to make them only positive, you make deposits into your emotional bank account.



Jonathan: Early in our marriage we had a gravel driveway. When one of us was home and heard the gravel because the car pulled in, it was like, "Oh boy! She is here! She is home!" It was excitement - now the evening is going to be great. I was alone and "half" but now I am whole because she is back or vice versa. She gets excited because I am home. After 28 years, we still have that cherishing feeling of expectation. Now it is going to be a good night!

Rick: This fits together with the concept of looking at your spouse with the very best possible eyes. Life does get in the way and it creates a difficulty to perceive what is really there.

Although this next text was written for the body of Christ and not for the sake of married couples, let's read it with marriage in mind, for it certainly emphasizes the lessons of "Sinclair."

Philippians 2:1-4: (NASB) ¹Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ²make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. ³Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

When we look at the trials and trauma of life, we see the world is full of temptations bigger than ever. We need to have places to go in our hearts and minds to refocus and be on the right page.

To sum up, do not let the common become common. These little things can get in the way and take a lot of time away from your spiritual life. If you can clear the clutter out, you have more time to be together and serve the Lord together.



"Happily ever after is not a fairy tale. It's a choice." — Fawn Weaver



A caller left us this message: When someone else's happiness is more important than your own, that is love.

How do we go about cherishing not only our spouse but our very marriage as well?



When you truly cherish someone or something, it is always on your mind and your most basic instinct is to protect it. Staying in love means feeding that protective instinct for not only your spouse, but for your actual marriage covenant as well.

Generally it is pride that is behind our destructive behaviors in marriage:

Proverbs 16:18-20,24-25: (NKJV) ¹⁸Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. ¹⁹Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. ²⁰He who heeds the word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he.... ²⁴Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones. ²⁵There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Often we get stuck in the emotions and temptations of the moment. When we allow that to draw us away, we stop cherishing the covenant of marriage. Thoughts can come into your mind, but what do you do once they get there?

CQ Staffer Becca wrote: For myself and my marriage, I think one of the biggest pieces of advice I would give to any Christian would be to have a spirit of thankfulness. (Thankfulness stimulates protection!) This works in two really major ways: First, thankfulness towards God through prayer is a wonderful unifying action that makes me feel like we, (God, my husband David and I) are all on the same page talking together. It is important to thank God daily for all of the things He does for us in our lives and for that to be a constant habit. It is also the best way to deal with difficult experiences - especially for me - I am a very "action" oriented person and I want to do, to fix, to make better and come up with a plan to help, and the best plan is ALWAYS when David and I stop and pray together. Whether it's for a particular problem that one of us is specifically dealing with or if it's something that is affecting both of us, praying together is unifying and comforting to feel like God is working to help both of us in our walks. It's also a good reminder for myself that I need to give things up to God more often and stop trying to control things.



1 Thessalonians 4:3-5: (NRSV) ³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; ⁴that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, ⁵not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

Holiness and honor - when we lose this basis for our lives, we lose the foundation on which to build, cherish and protect a successful marriage.

Honor means certain things are not allowed to remain in your thoughts - not entertained at all. This is necessary as temptations in the world get worse and worse.



Do we fall into the old "the grass is greener elsewhere" thinking?

Proverbs 5:15,17-18: (NASB) ¹⁵*Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well...* ¹⁷*Let them be yours alone and not for strangers with you.* ¹⁸*Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth.*

Cherish and protect your spouse and your covenant!

Holding grudges and constant complaining are never good things:

Proverbs 19:11,13: (NASB) ¹¹*A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression.* ¹³*A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.*

Cherish and protect your spouse and your covenant!

Letting anger or resentment fester - that is going to hurt tomorrow!

Ephesians 4:25-27: (NASB) ²⁵*Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.* ²⁶*Be angry and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,* ²⁷*and do not give the devil an opportunity.*

Cherish and protect your spouse and your covenant!



"Because You Loved Me," (last verse) Celine Dion

*You were always there for me
The tender wind that carried me
A light in the dark shining your love into my life
You've been my inspiration
Through the lies you were the truth
My world is a better place because of you
You were my strength when I was weak
You were my voice when I couldn't speak
You were my eyes when I couldn't see
You saw the best there was in me
Lifted me up when I couldn't reach
You gave me faith 'cause you believed
I'm everything I am
Because you loved me
I'm everything I am
Because you loved me*



Another way to cherish and protect a spouse is to not put them down or complain about them to others.

How can we do better? We can use "TLC" - Trust - Love - Cherish - to help change the way we look at things. "Happily ever after" becomes a distinct possibility.

*So, how do you stay in love?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*





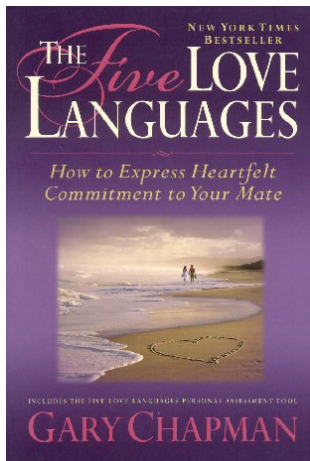
Here are several miscellaneous yet powerful suggestions and points from our CQ staffers:

- Make time for your spouse. Give them attention.
- Express your appreciation.
- Show affection.
- Reinforce the positive qualities and overlook the negative ones. If the negative ones do need to be addressed, communicate honestly and tactfully with each other for a solution.
- Respect one another.
- Find something to admire about them. (You can tell them about it too - they will probably appreciate it.)
- If you see an opportunity and have the ability, offer to help them with something.

Scriptures on some do's and don'ts of being a friend:

- A friend's love is constant. Proverbs 17:17
- A distorted heart finds no good. Proverbs 17:20
- A happy heart makes well, like a cure: but an afflicted or wounded attitude dries up the strength and vitality. Proverbs 17:22
- He that has knowledge restrains his mouth; a person of intelligence has a cool and quiet attitude. Proverbs 17:27

Other input from our staff:



The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts, a New York Times bestseller. Dr. Gary Chapman has been a marriage counselor for more than 30 years and in his book, he described five different ways that people express (and receive!) love emotionally. Each person has his or her own love language and therefore what makes one person feel loved emotionally is not always the thing that makes another person feel loved emotionally. Not understanding that your spouse's love language is different from yours can create many problems. And more positively, if you and your spouse understand each other's primary love language, you will be more able to express and receive love to and from your spouse that each can understand and appreciate. The five languages are as follows:

Words of Affirmation - One way to express love emotionally is to use words that build up. King Solomon even said, *The tongue has the power of life and death.* If this is your spouse's love language, then they will feel loved if you frequently give compliments, say thank you or any other positive, encouraging things.



Acts of Service - This means to do things that you know your spouse would like you to do. You seek to please your spouse by serving them, to express your love for them by doing things for them.

Receiving Gifts - Those, whose primary love language is receiving gifts, feel loved when they receive any sort of gift and alternatively like to give gifts to people that they love. It doesn't necessarily have to be something expensive, but often something thoughtful will do the trick.

Quality Time - Another way to express and receive love is to spend uninterrupted time together, pay attention to your spouse, focus on things that are important to them, do things together etc. Give them your undivided attention.

Physical Touch - this can come in many forms, including holding hands, kissing, embracing and sexual intercourse. For those whose primary love language is physical touch, they will feel unloved without it.

You don't love someone because they're perfect, you love them in spite of the fact that they're not.
— Jodi Picoult, *My Sister's Keeper*

I would rather spend one lifetime with you, than face all the ages of this world alone. — Lord of The Rings

It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages. — Friedrich Nietzsche

My most brilliant achievement was my ability to be able to persuade my wife to marry me.
— Winston Churchill

A good husband makes a good wife. — John Florio

Love is friendship that has caught fire. It is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. It is loyalty through good and bad times. It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses. — Ann Landers

(Source: eharmony.com) Seven Things Madly-in-love Couples Do to Stay That Way, eHarmony Staff

1. Listen: Listening to your partner reaps benefits in every area of your life together. When you listen, you'll learn things that will help you love the other person more deeply. You'll catch a glimpse of your partner's hopes and dreams, hurts and fears. You'll hear about things you do that make your partner want to withdraw. You'll discover ideas and thoughts previously unknown to you. If you're not in the habit of listening—really listening—you'll miss all these things and more.

2. Value each other: When you value someone, you won't want to belittle or tear down that person. You'll also be less inclined to take that person for granted. And you definitely won't be careless with his or her heart. When you truly value someone, you'll see and appreciate what that person brings into your life on a daily basis. Even better, you will find ways to communicate that appreciation every chance you get.

3. Forgive: No matter how deeply in love, two human beings are bound to hurt each other with thoughtless words, selfish actions or inconsiderate neglect.



Forgiving each other for those hurtful acts is the cornerstone of any lasting, harmonious relationship. Without forgiveness, slights and offenses accumulate like boulders on a highway. Devote yourself to clearing obstructions in your relationship through forgiveness.

4. Laugh together: Laughing reduces stress, improves communication, gets past facades, and releases feel-good hormones in the brain. It creates great memories, helps grudges fade, and knits hearts together. Maybe your partner is always cracking you up. Or maybe neither one of you is all that funny, but you both laugh-until-you-cry at the same movies. Wherever you find it, laughter is good for love.

5. Be kind: When it comes to keeping love alive, kindness is essential. For one thing, it breeds appreciation. It also builds trust. It's hard to stay in love with someone around whom you walk on eggshells because you never know when the next criticism or putdown is coming. In this manner, kindness is the antithesis of abuse and mistreatment.

6. Flirt: Flirting helped you fall in love, and it can help you stay in love. And don't just flirt with your words—some of the flirtiest things can be said best with body language. Flirting says to your partner, "I'm still attracted to you and still crazy about you!"

7. Protect: Couples stay in love because they value the love they have. That means they do whatever is necessary to defend and safeguard their relationship. All kinds of unwise behaviors—addictions, affairs, lying, misplaced priorities—can jeopardize your unity and undermine your intimacy. That's why it's critical to be intentional about protecting what you have together.

Falling in love is one thing. Staying in love is another thing altogether. Practice these strategies on a daily basis, and you'll definitely increase your odds of staying in love for the long run.