

Marriage Week USA

February 7-14, 2006

A committed, permanent, faithful relationship of husband and wife is the root of a family. It strengthens all the members, provides best for the needs of children, and causes the church of the home to be an effective sign of Christ in the world.

“Follow the Way of Love/A Pastoral Message to Families” by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. 1994

Cohabitation just isn't the same...

Here are some common myths (and the facts) about cohabitation:

Myth #1

Living together is an easy way to “try out” the relationship before committing to marriage.

FACT: Couples who live together typically have attitudes like “I can leave any time” and “it’s ‘my’ money versus ‘your’ money.” They are **not emotionally invested** in the permanence of the relationship.

Myth #2

Living together will give us a stronger marriage.

FACT: Many couples think that living together gives them a “head start” when in fact it can harm a marriage. **Cohabiting couples who go on to marry have a divorce rate 50% higher than those who don’t.**

Myth #3

Sharing finances will make things easier on our relationship.

FACT: At first it might seem as if money saved from combining households will reduce conflicts, but **the inevitable money problems are much more complicated** over who is responsible for “our” bills.

Myth #4

Marriage is just a piece of paper.

FACT: Legally, marriage is paperwork... but **emotionally, physically, and spiritually, marriage is a meaningful contract of commitment.**

Myth #5

Your sex life ends when you get married.

FACT: Studies show that the level of satisfaction is actually lower among cohabiting couples than married couples. Cohabitors also tend to be less faithful to their partners.

Myth #6

Cohabitation is only temporary—marriage will soon follow.

FACT: Often one partner or both expects to be married after moving in together, but research shows that **60% of cohabiting couples do not go on to marry.**

Myth #7

Living together is a good idea if there are children.

FACT: Cohabitation puts children at risk of emotional and social difficulties, poor school performance, early premarital sex, and difficulty forming permanent emotional attachments in adulthood. If the man in the household is not the biological father, children are at greater risk of experiencing physical and sexual abuse.

A vow of permanence distinguishes marriage from cohabitation. Partners promise that no matter what happens they will be there to take care of and support one another. Commitment is the heart of marriage.

From “What You Need to Know About Living Together” by First Things First.



Essentials for Creating a Fulfilling and Lasting Marriage

- ♥ Get to know each other's inner world: likes, dislikes, values, needs, hopes, desires, and vulnerabilities so you can respond lovingly.
- ♥ Be sensitive and kind.
- ♥ Take time to make each other feel special.
- ♥ Listen to emotions as well as words.
- ♥ Respect each other's differences.
- ♥ Avoid being defensive and placing each other on the defensive.
- ♥ Resolve problems promptly.
- ♥ Never take each other for granted.

From After the Wedding—A Postnuptial Recipe for Creating a Healthy, Happy Marriage by Jack H. Grossman, Ph.D.

When is the last time you prayed with your spouse? Studies prove that “couples who pray together, stay together.” If it feels awkward at first, that’s ok... soon it will be an important part of your day.



Recommended Reads

If you're one who loves to learn by reading, there's no shortage of great books that offer helpful tips, educate in skills, and provide insight in creating a successful, lasting marriage of your own. Check these out:

The Five Love Languages/How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate by Gary Chapman. © 1996 Northfield Publishing.

The Power of Commitment by Scott M. Stanley. © 2005 Jossey-Bass.

The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work/A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert by John M. Gottman, Ph.D. and Nan Silver. © 1999 Three Rivers Press.

The Seven Spiritual Practices of Marriage/Your Guide to Creating a Deep & Lasting Love by Kevin Anderson, Ph.D. © 2005 CLB Press.

Nine Ways to Nurture Your Marriage by William E. and Susan C. Rabior. © 2000 Liguori Publications.

Relationships/An Open & Honest Guide to Making Bad Relationships Better and Good Relationships Great and Relationships Workbook/An Open & Honest Guide to Making Bad Relationships Better and Good Relationships Great by Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott. © 1998 Zondervan Publishing House.

Little things that can make a **BIG** difference

With work, children, and other responsibilities, sometimes it's easy to take your spouse for granted or forget to do the things that strengthen marriage. Here are some "little" things that can make a big difference:

Give your spouse a compliment—especially to others.

Find something to laugh about. Laughter helps us cope with stress. A sense of humor can help beat problems, large and small.

Have a shared activity you both enjoy. Be it gardening or dancing, this is a great way to keep intimacy alive and well.

Treat your spouse the way you want to be treated. This helps establish the fact that you both have responsibility in the marriage.

Take time to touch. The value of touch cannot be overestimated, and helps you maintain physical and emotional health.

Be willing to compromise.

Give a smile. An easy but powerful way to value your spouse is to smile and say how you feel.

Discuss the things that bother you. Anger and resentment easily build up when issues are not discussed and resolved.

Communication is key. It is crucial to communicate your thoughts, plans, ideas, opinions and feelings.

Adapted from www.smartmarriages.com and www.okmarriage.org

Is surfing more your style?



Then browse the Internet and subscribe to newsletters, print resources, locate local groups, or purchase DVD's and books that will educate and support you in creating a successful marriage. Try these sites for starters:

www.nire.org

National Institute for Relationship Enhancement develops, teaches, and disseminates information on enhancing relationship skills.

www.smartmarriages.com

The Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education (CMFCE), an interest group for strengthening marriages and families.

www.firstthings.org

First Things First, an online resource center for marriage and family.

www.wmecolumbus.org

Columbus Worldwide Marriage Encounter, sponsor of weekend retreats to enrich healthy marriages.

www.cfm.org

Christian Family Movement, a Catholic organization of families for the promotion of marriage and family life.

www.marriagealive.org

Marriage Alive, the website of marriage and family educators David and Claudia Arp; source for books and programs for all stages of the life of a marriage.