

10 Hardships in Marriage and How to Overcome Them

Marriage is tough. It's a given. This list covers most of the common troubles, but your situation is unique, and the key point here is to face the hardship—whatever kind of struggle it is—together with your wife.

OK, if you haven't watched the "Ian and Larissa" video, then stop reading right now, watch the video, then come back to this list. Seriously, you have to watch it.

Do you remember your marriage vows?

"For better, for worse"

"In sickness and in health"

"For richer, for poorer"

These promises presuppose tough times. We went into our marriage with our eyes open, so there's really no excuse for not bringing everything we have to the table when things—once in a while—get dicey.

Here are 10 hardships in marriage and a few ideas regarding how to overcome them:

1. Financial struggle. The stress associated with money problems can be overwhelming. But in the end, it's only money, and money has no power over your commitment to your relationship.

- Commit to a plan. (See Dave Ramsey for tools and resources.)
- Live simply.
- Never keep financial secrets from your wife.

2. Challenging children. Even the best behaved children in the

world present challenges, and the No. 1 casualty is always the relationship between mom and dad. So remember this: “The marriage comes first.” Not the kids but the marriage. Nurture your relationship with your wife, and you will be better equipped to deal with whatever it is the kids dish out.

3. Immaturity. Great relationships are supposed to mature over time. If you still relate to one another the same way you did when you first married, then it’s past time for the marriage to grow up. Get involved in a couples’ group at your faith community. Love one another out loud. Invest in the marriage as if your life depends on it—because it does.

4. Unfaithfulness. Marriages run into this hardship often. We may not sleep with other women, but we’re all guilty of being unfaithful when it comes to time, attention, priorities, the way we use our resources and so much more. One way to deal with this is to recommit yourself to your wife. Woo her all over again. Make it clear where your priorities steer your time and attention.

5. Moving. It’s a fact: Most Americans change careers several times. That often means moving across the state or across the world. Moving is a huge stress. Regardless of if it’s because of your job or if it’s hers, make the decision to be 100 percent supportive and flat-out refuse to whine. Do what it takes to get invested in the new community quickly. Find a church. Get involved. Live forward.

6. Sickness. We forget how much we rely on one another until someone breaks down physically. If you’re the one still standing, do everything in your power to be a servant to your spouse. Sure, it’s tough to do everything, but your attempt with an obvious willing spirit is going to make all the difference.

7. Depression. Everyone goes through the blues at times in their lives. Here, again, it’s about having the heart of a

servant, about going the extra mile, about putting the needs of your wife ahead of your own. Look to God for your source of happiness, be a conduit of that joy to your spouse, and seek medical attention.

8. Disinterest. Sometimes it happens the first year. Sometimes it takes a decade or so. Regardless of where we are on the time spectrum, disinterest or boredom can easily set in. Not feeling special about the relationship is a hardship for everyone. But it doesn't have to be. Our job is to be intentional about the relationship. She didn't fall for you in the first place without any effort on your part—so why stop now?

- When was the last time you took her out on a date?
- Have you told her lately how stunning she looks?
- What about a day off with the entire day devoted to her?

9. Career. We've already talked about moving, but career issues can cause hardship without a change of location. Keep her in the loop. Ask her opinion about what you're up to. Do everything in your power to protect family time and to promote a work culture that respects family values.

10. Empty nest. We invest a lot in the kids. If we're not careful, our relationship with our spouse gets neglected. First, guard against that day by investing in your wife now. Then, rather than mourn the children after they leave, try celebrating the freedom you now have to invest more time and interest in your marriage. Again, it's all about being intentional.

All Pro Dad is Family First's innovative and unique program for every father. Their aim is to interlock the hearts of the fathers with their children and, as a byproduct, the hearts of the children with their dads. At , dads in any stage of fatherhood can find helpful resources to aid in their parenting. Resources include daily emails, blogs, Top 10

*lists, articles, printable tools, videos and eBooks. From , fathers can join the highly engaged All Pro Dad social media communities on **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **YouTube** and **Instagram**.*

Scientists Create ‘Feel Fuller’ Food Ingredient

British scientists have developed an ingredient that makes foods more filling, and say initial tests in overweight people showed that it helped prevent them gaining more weight.

The ingredient, developed by researchers at London’s Imperial College and at the University of Glasgow, contains propionate, a natural substance that stimulates the gut to release hormones that act on the brain to reduce hunger.

Propionate is produced naturally when fiber in the diet is fermented by microbes in the gut, but the new ingredient, inulin-propionate ester (IPE), provides much larger amounts of propionate than people can generate in a normal diet.

“Molecules like propionate stimulate the release of gut hormones that control appetite, but you need to eat huge amounts of fiber to achieve a strong effect,” said Gary Frost of Imperial’s department of medicine, who led the study.

“We wanted to find a more efficient way to deliver propionate to the gut.”

In a study published in the journal *Gut*, Frost’s team gave 20 volunteers either IPE or inulin, a dietary fiber and then allowed them to eat as much as they liked from a buffet.

The team found that those given IPE ate 14 percent less on

average and had higher concentrations of appetite-reducing hormones in their blood.

In a second phase, 60 overweight volunteers took part in a 24-week study in which half were given IPE powder to add to their food and half given inulin.

Only one out of 25 volunteers given IPE who completed the study gained more than 3.0 percent of their body weight, compared with six out of 24 given inulin. None of the IPE group gained more than 5.0 percent of their body weight, compared with four in the inulin group.

After 24 weeks, the IPE group also had less fat in their abdomens and livers compared with the inulin group.

Frost said that while the findings were only from a small, early-stage study, they offered “encouraging signs” that IPE might help prevent weight gain in overweight people.

He and his team are working with Imperial Innovations, a technology commercialization company focused on developing promising British academic research, on taking IPE to market.

“We’re exploring what kinds of foods it could be added to, but something like bread or fruit smoothies might work well,” he said.

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Hanukkah Menorahs: Church-

State Debate Still Rages

With the arrival of the winter holiday season, many municipalities throughout the United States are gearing up for the festive time of the year by decorating public areas with Christmas trees, snowflakes, and even Hanukkah menorahs. But the holiday displays are sometimes accompanied by not-so-festive controversies over the appearance of religious symbols in public places.

The debate over public displays of religion has been a longstanding one, despite numerous legal rulings in favor of the displays. But for Jews, the increasing inclusion of the Hanukkah menorah as well as other Jewish symbols in the pantheon of American civic and religious discourse highlights their mainstream acceptance in society.

Today, publicly displayed menorahs have become commonplace in the U.S.—largely due to the efforts of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, whose giant menorahs and even car-rooftop menorahs signal that the holiday season has arrived in any given community. (Chabad has a permanent presence in 49 of 50 U.S. states, with only South Dakota left out.)

“Chabad is out there in the world to make sure that every Jew is not forgotten. Every Jew is remembered and thought about, and that every Jew maintains a connection to their heritage, so there is an assurance for the continuity of Judaism,” said Rabbi Yisroel Rosenfeld, a Pittsburgh-based Chabad emissary who has extensive experience on this issue due to his involvement in *County of Allegheny v. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)*, the 1989 Supreme Court case on a publicly displayed nativity scene and 18-foot-tall menorah in Pittsburgh.

According to Chabad, the first public menorah lighting occurred in Philadelphia in 1974 near the Liberty Bell, and

the tradition spread when the Hasidic group's seventh leader or "Rebbe," Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, issued a directive encouraging menorah lightings in public places. In line with the movement's famous zeal and grassroots initiatives, Chabad eventually launched a global menorah campaign, and today thousands of Chabad-led menorah lightings take place in municipalities across America.

"Obviously there are always those who come up and have [taken] issue with it," Rosenfeld told . "The perspective the Rebbe gave us was that Jews should have a positive feeling about their mitzvot and their Judaism. So he encouraged us to do whatever we can to display those menorahs."

The public display of religious symbols is anchored in the First Amendment of the Constitution in the so-called "Religious Clauses" of the Establishment and Free Exercise Clause. The Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion" in a portion known as the Establishment Clause, but proceeds to also ban "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion in a portion known as the Free Exercise Clause. The discourse surrounding these clauses has become one of the most controversial debates in America, yielding numerous legal battles being waged over the display of religious symbols in public areas.

Most of these issues stem from a concept known as separation of church and state, which was attributed to founding father Thomas Jefferson in a letter he wrote to the Danbury Baptist Association in 1802 and has been used as an argument against the use of religion in public places, despite the church-state concept not being explicitly spelled out in the Constitution.

Noted civil rights attorney Nathan Lewin, who argued the *Allegheny v. ACLU* case and many other cases involving public menorahs over the years, explained that the Supreme Court agreed in *Allegheny v. ACLU* that a public menorah display does not violate the Establishment Clause.

“The ACLU argued that having a menorah on public property seemed like the city of Pittsburgh was endorsing the Jewish religion and encouraging people to follow the religion,” Lewin told . “[But] the Supreme Court was clear in this case that a total display with a Christmas tree and a menorah does not do that and shows the diversity of religion in the U.S.”

Following the case in Pittsburgh, numerous legal battles were fought over this issue in cities like Grand Rapids, Mich., and Atlanta. In 2002, Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens—who had dissented on the Pittsburgh decision—overruled an appeals court order and allowed Chabad to display a menorah in Cincinnati’s Fountain Square. Stevens said that due to the square’s “historic character as a public forum,” the city could not limit access to the area during the holiday season.

The Cincinnati case helped clarify what cities can and cannot do concerning access to public places.

“By now it has been established that there is a constitutional right to put menorahs in public places,” Lewin told .

Nevertheless, the public display of religious symbols continues to be contested in some local communities, with new cases emerging every year—though most don’t end up going to litigation. For instance, the University of Maine this week ignited a controversy by banning Christmas trees, wreaths, and menorahs in public areas. The school said in a statement that it “makes every effort to ensure that all members—students, employees, alumni and the public—feel included and welcome on campus,” and that banning decorations of particular religions would help promote diversity.

In October, a group of Jewish high school students in suburban Milwaukee were barred from erecting a sukkah on school property for the holiday of Sukkot. It was actually Jewish parents and local Jewish officials who advocated the sukkah ban, citing the separation of church and state.

“The challenge of our public high schools is to find the balance between those two principles,” said Elana Kahn-Oren, director of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation’s Jewish Community Relations Council, *The Forward* reported.

“Schools must give students the ability to practice their religion without having school-sanctioned religious observance,” Kahn-Oren said. “We know that the presence of a sukkah on school property may herald the presence of other religious symbols. We must ask ourselves: How would we feel if there was a nativity scene at school? How would we feel if our children’s friends invited them to a warm meal and religious teaching during lunchtime at the crèche?”

Lewin told that Kahn-Oren’s stance has been a common one taken by Jewish organizations and leaders, tracing back to a time when Jews faced greater intolerance in America than they do now.

“They are simply following the traditional view that Jewish organizations took years ago, that any display of religion on public property ends up proselytizing people,” he said. “Since they do not want to see nativity scenes or crosses, they thought that in fairness they should not have menorahs or other Jewish symbols either.”

But according to Lewin, “this is an outdated view by Jewish institutions that has been rejected by the courts repeatedly.”

“Those who raise these issues today are by and large senior citizens like me,” he joked.

Indeed, many of today’s younger Jews grew up in a country where public Jewish symbols are commonplace—particularly menorahs during the winter holiday season. This includes the famous “National Menorah” on the Ellipse, just across the street from the White House. The annual lighting of what is called the “world’s largest menorah,” launched by Chabad in 1979, is attended by thousands of people and is broadcast to

millions of viewers across the world. This year, Vice President Joe Biden is slated to attend the menorah lighting.

Despite the episode in Milwaukee, most national Jewish organizations today do not take issue with the display of Jewish symbols in public. They consider the legal debate to be settled because the Supreme Court has allowed religious symbols to be publicly displayed as long as they don't stand alone.

"Most organized American Jewish organizations, including the American Jewish Committee, have historically opposed placing menorah in public spaces. But the case law has now developed to the point where that position is no longer viable," Marc Stern, general counsel for the American Jewish Committee, told .

Similarly, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) said in a statement provided to that while it views the menorah as a religious symbol, the Supreme Court "has ruled that it can be publicly displayed alongside secular symbols like Christmas trees."

"Therefore, we believe that the primary concern for government officials should be to respect our nation's religious diversity by ensuring that whatever displays they authorize do not convey a preference for a particular faith or holiday," ADL said.

Chabad's Rosenfeld said it is a matter of pride that a Jewish American can now walk down the street and see the menorah displayed alongside other popular symbols.

"I can walk down the street knowing that I am proud to be a Jew," he said. "And in fact the government does whatever they can to help us and encourages us to practice our faith. [We have] freedom of religion, meaning freedom to practice whatever religion we want, and freedom to do that and be proud of it."

For the original article, visit .

Here's Some Solid Advice in Dealing With Unruly Kids

The moment you held your baby for the first time was beautiful. It was a clean slate.

As you projected into the future, all you could see were positive times ahead. You may have foreseen the typical problems in parenting, but you knew how you were going to handle it. The future was bright.

You weren't expecting your child to one day ignore your rules, show little respect for you or others, throw tantrums to get their way, and display a consistent attitude of entitlement and lack of gratitude.

As you experience consistent bad behavior, you may be concerned that you are raising a brat. Do you feel powerless as they slip out of control? In the middle of a battle, do you feel unsure of what to do? Are you at your wit's end?

You can turn that around by following a couple of easy principles. Here's advice for bratty kids.

Consistency

A lack of consistency will bring confusion and anxiety for both of you. For younger kids, dos and don'ts are black and white. Do not be vague, ambiguous, or uncertain. You need to give them clear boundaries. "These are the things you can do and these are the things you can't." Have good and solid reasons for the boundaries you are setting.

Work them out in your mind, write them down, and practice explaining them. That doesn't matter as much when kids are young but will as they get older. Boundaries need to be held consistently. In other words, you always have to be on your game. Every minute of every day is an opportunity to mold and shape their attitude.

Consequences and Explanations

Reinforce the boundaries you set with consequences. Never threaten them with a consequence you will not follow-through on. If you say you are going to take something away, cancel a fun trip, or administer a spanking, then you need be ready to do it. I would say, you need to almost welcome it. The moment they cross the line, enforce the warning. Be quick, decisive, and calm. If they throw a tantrum or speak to you disrespectfully, add another consequence. They need to know that anything you say will be followed-through.

You are doing more than punishing bad attitudes and behavior. You are showing them that you are trustworthy which will actually make them feel more secure. Then give them an explanation of why they are receiving a consequence so it is understood clearly. Have them repeat back to you what they heard so you can clarify further if needs be.

Practice Appropriate Behavior

If they have treated anyone, particularly adults, with rudeness or disrespect, practice with them. Teach them how they are to act when meeting an adult. Show them proper eye contact, manners, what to say and what not to say. Then have them practice. If they ask you for something and don't say, "please", make them ask again or simply deny the request. If they don't say "thank you" when giving them dessert, or perhaps dinner, don't give it to them until they do.

Personal Responsibility

Make them earn toys and money rather than just giving it to them. Use them as a reward system for good attitudes, noble treatment of others, and chores completed. Don't give an allowance that hasn't been earned in some way. The only thing it will create is a sense of entitlement. Create a checklist of things they need to do to earn money or things.

You are teaching them practical things that will help them in the real world. If they do not display a strong work ethic, appropriate manners, and a grateful attitude, they will not be hired for a job or promoted within a company.

What do you do when your child is disrespectful? Huddle up with your kids and ask, "What does it mean to be respectful?"

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Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit [.](#)

Family Dinners Can Improve Mental, Spiritual and Physical Health

We desperately need to bring back the family dinner. Most families just don't have the time, or the desire, to sit together around a table and eat at the same time with no electronics in the way.

That sad trend has led to a number of troubling consequences that we need to reverse.

Dr. Anne Fishel is a family therapist at the prestigious Massachusetts General Hospital and a professor at Harvard Medical School. She's also a wife and mother.

In her new book, *Home For Dinner: Mixing Food, Fun, and Conversation for a Happier Family and Healthier Kids*, she uses scientific studies to build a solid case for making the effort to eat together as a family ... whatever your family happens to look like at the moment.

Regardless of whether you have babies and toddlers who are difficult to keep sitting still, school-age kids loaded down with homework and extra-curricular activities, sullen teenagers who don't want to participate in anything, or perhaps you are empty nesters, the scenario is the same: Eating together around a table will improve your health in a variety of ways.

Researchers considered a family that "eats together" as one that gathers around the table with food, without electronics, at a minimum of five meals per week. That can be breakfast, lunch or dinner. More is better than less. Here's what they found:

Family Dinners Are Good for the Brain, the Spirit and the Body

Over the past 30 years, researchers at the Harvard School of Education have found consistently that as a way to boost children's vocabulary, talking to them during dinner is even better than reading to them. Children with well-developed vocabularies will have an easier time learning to read.

Studies of school-aged children found children who have regular family dinners perform better academically in school. This is true for children of all socioeconomic levels.

Furthermore, teenagers who regularly ate family dinners were twice as likely to get A's than those who didn't.

Family Dinners Are Good for Mental Health

A number of studies have found a correlation between regular family dinners and a reduction of high-risk behaviors, especially among teenagers. This includes smoking, binge drinking, marijuana use, violence and sexual activity.

Family Dinners Are Good for Physical Health

The research shows profound evidence that people who regularly eat family dinners have better weight control, better nutritional intake and better eating habits than those who don't.

The reasons family dinners are so important are numerous. Topping the list is the fact that sitting around the table talking is one of the few ways family members can connect meaningfully with each other. It's a ritual that conveys meaning and stability that are vital for the emotional well-being of every family member.

Another key point is the fact that when you and your kids are sitting together enjoying a meal you—and more importantly they—are *not* doing other things that can be troublesome, such as spending time in front of some type of screen.

Don't worry if the idea of eating a family dinner makes you feel intimidated. In her book, Dr. Fishel explains how to manage dinner conversations in a way that makes them the most productive and conflict-free.

For example, she suggests avoiding asking a family member an open-ended question such as, "How was your day?" which is bound to illicit a single word response such as, "Fine."

Instead, she suggests asking a question that requires explanation, such as "What was the funniest thing that happened to you today?"

If you're a busy person who also happens to be clumsy in the

kitchen, don't fret. Dr. Fishel explains how to ditch those unhealthy drive-thrus and make your own nutritious dinners in a flash.

As an added bonus, she suggests ways to get the whole family involved in meal preparation (and clean-up) no matter what ages you're dealing with. She includes a number of delicious, affordable recipes such as this vegetable soup, which sounds delightful this time of year:

For the original article, visit .

Author Jane Kirkpatrick Celebrates Sales Milestone

Award-winning author Jane Kirkpatrick now has more than 1 million copies in print, WaterBrook Multnomah announced Dec. 11. Kirkpatrick has written more than 25 books with seven publishers.

Many of her historical novels have been set in the American West, with her first, *A Sweetness to the Soul*, winning the prestigious Western Heritage Wrangler Award in 1995.

Ron Cantor: Has God Rejected

Israel?

Replacement Theology teaches that God has replaced Israel with the church. Fulfillment Theology teaches that all of God's promises to Israel were fulfilled in Yeshua and now have a new meaning.

They both agree the land of Israel is not a fulfillment of prophecy. Is this what the Bible teaches?