

10 Strategies to Help Solve Your Marriage Problems

Many good marriages slip into crisis because we don't or won't believe how much work it takes to keep relationships humming at optimal levels. Another reason is a simple failure in imagination.

But—if successful courting requires commitment, hard work and imagination to pull off ... then why does it surprise us when neglect hurts relationships after we walk down the aisle? She wouldn't have married you if you took her for granted—why risk everything now?

There are many good strategies if we want to restore a problematic—or “under the weather”—marriage. All Pro Dad suggests the following 10 for men who want to get the ball rolling:

- 1. Pray for your spouse.** Chances are you launched your marriage with both promises and prayers. Pray for your spouse, and ask for guidance as you pledge to make the kind of effort that simply won't float without turning to God every day.
- 2. Surround yourselves with people in healthy relationships.** Some of those negative patterns involved friends. Hook up with a faith community where marriage is valued and there's widespread support for making yours work.
- 3. Choose to love.** Love may have come easy when it was brand new. But love over the long haul is as much a choice as it is an emotion. Choice is an act of maturity and it has a much better track record than emotion left to make its way on its own.
- 4. Act as if your spouse's happiness is more important than your own.** Putting our spouse first nurtures trust, gratitude,

generosity and affection. It can also lead to kissing!

5. Put the relationship ahead of everything, including your children. It's unfortunate, but time has a way of eating away at our priorities. "You're the most important thing in my life" gives way to "My work ... the family business ... the children ... my aging parents ... even golf, football or drinking ..." Marriages don't work well when our partner plays second fiddle to anything – even the children. It's a fact – the happiest kids are those with parents who love one-another best.

6. Start over from scratch. Ask her out. Make sure you remember why you did the first time and build from there. When did you last talk for hours, hold hands at a movie, or smooch behind a plant in the mall? Get silly about one-another. If you don't feel like it, do it anyway- then you'll remember why.

7. Stop taking one-another for granted. Say "thank you" for that cup of coffee. Celebrate obscure anniversaries. Tell her how much it means to you that she cooks a great meal—or vice versa. Notice the haircut. Ask her out. Clean her car. Pay attention to the little things and act like someone who values the relationship.

8. Get counseling. You say you can't afford it? Believe us, it's cheaper than divorce! Most counseling simply involves a few sessions to get the communication flowing again. For guys, a willingness to talk in that context sends a huge positive message to your spouse.

9. Follow the counseling with an action plan. Just like a personal fitness program, counseling comes with homework and an action plan over time. Draw up the plan, ask friends you trust to help hold you accountable, then follow through. When both spouses take responsibility, anything is possible.

10. Change the patterns. Do you always come home angry? Then

stop the car a block away and pray about it first. Does she always nag you when you leave dirty clothes on the floor? Try getting changed in a different room and initiate a new reflex. Do you always fight about discipline? Try agreeing with her decisions and supporting her 100 percent—you may find the kids act better because you're not fighting. You've heard the old joke:

– *Patient*: “Doctor, it hurts when I do that ...”

– *Doctor*: “Well, don't do that anymore!”

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**.