

10 Marriage Trials and How to Survive 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. My wife and I 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 ways to overcoming hardships in marriage. Remember first and foremost, however, that prayer is the biggest key. You and your spouse should be praying together every day and trusting that you can overcome anything if you trust in the Lord.

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 number one 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, 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 (the entire thing) 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.

Huddle up with your wife tonight and say: “I want you to know that I still am committed to my marriage vow and I will love you for the rest of my life.”

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