

12 Ways to Make Marriage Fun Again

I previously posted this several years ago, before my wife and I were empty-nesters. I believe more in it today than I did then.

Sadly, as someone who studies marriages, I see more and more marriages that are just going through the routines of marriage without really enjoying the journey. At the same time, I do know couples who have learned how to make their marriage work for the good of both spouses and are truly enjoying life together. My wife and I want to be included in the latter group.

So, what does it take to put or keep fun in a marriage?

I first shared these tips at a pastor's retreat, so that was the original audience, but I believe they work for all of us. Here are a 12 ways to make marriage fun again:

1. Prioritize your marriage. If you want to have fun in your marriage, you have to make your marriage a priority in your life; above your hobbies, work and even your children. All of us would say that our marriage is a priority, but do we practice what we say we believe? Our marriage should take precedence over every other human relationship and every other activity. My wife knows when I am putting her first and when something else has my greatest attention.

2. Schedule time for fun. We should schedule time to simply enjoy life with our spouse. Everyone I know is busy, but we should make sure our schedule never gets so crowded that we cannot enjoy time with the love of our life. As a pastor, I am never really off work, but I try to be home when I am home. Still, I will often hear my wife, and my boys when they were home, ask me something like, "Are you really listening to me

or are you thinking about your next appointment?" We must set boundaries between our home and our work or other activities. Add to your calendar opportunities to have fun together. When is the last time you and your wife went on a date? You can be wise with your expenses and still plan for date nights.

3. Let worry go. Struggles will never completely disappear, so we should learn how to balance the need for control in our lives and the desire to live at peace and trust God through the hard times of life. It is important that we not allow struggles that come into the marriage to tear the marriage apart, but instead we should let our trials draw us closer to each other.

4. Expect surprises. Stuff happens! We know that; we see bad things happen everyday, but for some reason we are caught off guard when they happen to us. We should not be surprised when our marriage needs a little extra help because of the struggles of life. Cheryl and I have discovered the tough times bring us closer together if we allow them to work for us rather than against us.

5. Celebrate along the way. I have been told that it takes three or four positive life occurrences to offset every negative. If this is true then each of us need to look for opportunities to celebrate the good things of life. When times are especially stressful, Cheryl and I try to make sure we are remembering the positives in life. They are always there, but we have to sometimes look for them. Have you ever just taken time to reflect together how many things you have for which you are thankful? You may even have a better life than you thought you did; once you take time to celebrate.

6. Enjoy each other's interests. It's okay to have outside interests, but one of the goals of marriage is to enjoy life together. That usually involves enjoying each other's activities together. I don't like to shop necessarily, and

there are certain stores where I refuse to shop, but I go shopping regularly with Cheryl because I love her and she loves shopping. It has always amazed me that when I invest the time to shop with Cheryl she always tries to give back to me by allowing me to enjoy one of my interests—with no guilt.

7. Get away. We all need time away from all the demands of life. On a pastor's income, I can't always take fancy vacations, but I am not afraid to invest in my marriage. My wife and I love to travel. One of our more fun things to do together is to plan inexpensive day trips. There is something about physically leaving the environment in which we are comfortable that pushes us closer to the ones we love. For years, while my boys were younger, I gave Cheryl a trip for Christmas to be used sometime during the year. She looked forward to the gift and the trip every year. On bad days during the year, the thoughts of the gift or trip to come fueled her positive emotions.

8. Serve together. We have discovered that the more we serve other people together the more fun we have in our marriage. It gives us more common ground with each other. Taking mission trips have become a fun way to spend time together. Serving our church together brings us closer to each other. Sharing ministry stories and experiences helps us draw from each others' strength.

9. Little things matter. Moments in a marriage that may seem to be minor details have the potential for major impact on the marriage relationship. It is important to handle little issues or conflict before they become big things. If a husband and wife have a minor disagreement it can easily escalate into a major division in the relationship if left unattended. Keep the relationship fresh and free from minor drama.

We should also allow little pleasures to bring happiness to the marriage. One of my favorite times of day is the walk

Cheryl and I take at night. That few minutes each day keeps us close relationally, allows us to catch up from our day away from each other, and helps me to enjoy Cheryl in a fun setting.

10. Laugh at life. I read a statistic once that preschoolers laugh an average of 300 times a day and adults laugh an average of 17 times a day. The older we get the less we laugh. Laughter is good for our health and laughing together builds stronger relationships. Couples need to learn to laugh through life together. Cheryl and I laugh much!

11. Dream together. When couples are dating they seem to have fun discussing their future plans. Once we get married we tend to lose the art of dreaming. Dreaming inspires and encourages the heart. Dreaming together as a couple keeps the relationship fueled with new passions and desires. (I wrote a whole post about that [HERE](#).)

12. Spread the pain. I am trying to model my pastoral responsibilities like the Acts 6 model in the Bible. I am learning that I cannot do everything. I must be a good at delegation. Don't be afraid to say "no" in order to protect your marriage. (I wrote about that in [THIS POST](#) recently.) Many couples I know are so busy they never have time just for the two of them.

It is also important, however, to have some close friends with whom we can share life's burdens. None of us were meant to live on an island to ourselves and the same is true for married couples. Cheryl and I intentionally build relationships with other couples we can trust. (Yes, pastors, you can do this too. I wrote some tips on that [HERE](#).)

Try these steps and see if the fun comes back into your marriage. Marriage is supposed to be fun!

What tips do you have for making marriage fun again?

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