

6 Keys to Keeping Your Marriage Fresh

September is upon us, and that means the “normal routine” is back into full swing. Whether you homeschool, public or private school, it is the time of year when everything that has been on “summer break” goes back into swing. Sports start back up, piano lessons, dance and homework/schoolwork. If you are like me, this is a welcomed time (I love the consistency of a good routine!), but it is real easy to allow your marriage to get into a routine rut as well.

Routine in marriage can be dangerous, and today we are going to talk about why that is, and how to keep yourself out of the routine rut.

I know that for many of us, routine is a good thing. As I said, for me it is. I thrive on having a schedule—and I have tons! I have a weekly schedule for my kids, cleaning schedule, cooking schedule, organization schedule, school schedule, and even a blogging schedule. I love being organized and having things flow nicely and in order.

However, I have learned that too much routine in my marriage puts us into a rut. When my husband and I just connect at the same points of time, in the same ways, doing the same things every day, week in and week out, we lose the flavor in our marriage.

Don't get me wrong—there are parts of our marriage that ARE routine. My hubby takes our kids to school in the morning. As a working mom (I work part time outside of the home) we find value in my being home, without the kids, for an hour in the morning to get dinner going, laundry started and a room or two organized. This is also when I have my personal time with the Lord. So, yes, some of your day-to-day task might be routine.

However, the way you show affection and quality time together should not be routine.

Think about when you were dating. You did things, just because, for your significant other often. He sent flowers, you sent a card. You did surprise dates and impromptu gifts. Things were done just because you wanted to show the other you were thinking about them.

But what about now?

Do you do things for your spouse just because—or is it only out of duty and routine?

Here are some simple things you can do for your spouse that will help keep you moving in a “fresh” way:

- Send a text, just to let him know you are thinking about him.
- Cook his favorite meal—without being asked.
- Buy a favorite snack and leave it in his vehicle or with his lunch.
- Leave a card under his pillow or on the mirror in the bathroom
- Leave a lipstick note on the bathroom mirror.
- Pick a night to watch a movie he would like (yes, no chick flick!)

These are just a few ways that you can do some things out of the ordinary for your husband. One other area that I think a lot of wives get stuck in is their sex life.

Yes, I said the dreaded three letter word.

As women, we are quick to just allow ourselves to do “our duty” of keeping our men satisfied. Satisfied and happy are

not the same thing. We go through the same motions every time we have an intimate moment with our husbands. It really is sex and not making love. However, it is important that we take the routine out of this very intimate and personal area of our lives.

I once knew a couple who scheduled sex. Not just for having a baby—but all the time. There were certain days when they would have sex. Now, there might be some good to this. I know it is hard to find time to be together—especially if there are kids involved. However, we need to have unscheduled times of affection too. We need to pursue our husbands sexually. Make it a priority of OUR day and surprise our husbands with a little out of the routine love-making time.

I find that the more I do the out-of-routine things I mentioned above, the more I am keeping my husband at the front of my mind—the more apt I am to make love-making a non-routine-based activity as well. It isn't as enjoyable for your spouse when he feels like making love is just a "part of the routine." I know there are seasons of life when we are in routine mode.

New babies, moves and life changes often make us go into auto pilot and we find marriages in the routine rut. It happens to us all.

The key is, when we find ourselves in the rut, or even if our husband points it out to us, that we respond with grace and make a change.

Keep your marriage as a constant priority in your life.

What are some things you do to keep your marriage the priority it should be? I would love to hear about it!

Reprinted from Rosilind Jukic's blog, "A Little R and R." **Mandy Kelly** is passionate about two things: The Word of God and the Souls of Men (and Ladies!). She is married to her

best friend, and gets the privilege to love on their three blessings (who lost their biological momma a few years ago leaving her husband widowed). She loves that the Lord has let her life be an example of delighting in Him and watching Him mold her life to make her desires match His. She spent 9 years in an early childhood classroom, and 4 years in an "in house" seminary program at her home church. Mandy blogs personally at Women of Worship, encouraging women to live out their faith in every aspect of their lives.