

9 Ways to Divorce-Proof Your Marriage

John and I haven't had a perfect marriage. Far from it! There have been struggles over the years, but I'm so happy that we decided to fight FOR our marriage instead of fighting against each other. Here's a few things I've learned along the way:

- Greet each other with a welcome kiss after every work day, even if that means putting down the paper or turning off the television.
- If you feel cranky, that is not a time to talk about the things the other person does that bother you—even if those things are in the forefront of your mind at that moment.
- Talk about your expectations. Do you expect a home-cooked meal every night or are pizza and TV dinners OK? Do you want to spend Saturday evenings with your parents? Do you like your socks folded a certain way? Would you like one night a week to go out with friends?
- Spend time with God alone and together. Find a special time for you to connect with God. Design a time when you can come before Him together. Read 1-2 chapters from the Bible each day. Take a few minutes to pray for each other.
- Think about one thing you can do that will put a smile on your spouse's face that day. Then do it.
- If your spouse asks you to do something for him/her, write it down. Then do that too.
- Do not talk bad about your spouse to your friends or your parents ... even if he/she has really made you mad. You will have an easy time forgiving your spouse, those other people will have a harder time.
- Keep your thoughts pure. Guard your mind and your heart.
- Have fun! Do the same things you did when you were

dating. Laugh. Play. Love.

What advice would you give your younger married self?

I reached out to my Facebook followers and asked what advice they would give to their younger married selves. Here are some of their nuggets of wisdom:

1. It doesn't matter how the towels are folded. Or who folds them. –Pam
2. Look to Christ to fulfill your needs. Don't expect Hubby to read your mind or be able to do that. –Jamie
3. Ditch the expectations, learn to compromise more, and honor God with your actions and words every step of the way. And respect. Always, always respect him. –Jenny
4. NEVER, and I mean NEVER, discuss my marital problems to anyone other than my spouse!!! Especially not family –Kate
5. Expect your husband to be human. He's not perfect, you're not perfect, which is why God needs to be in there. Grace is a constant companion in marriage. –Meg
6. Don't take yourself too seriously. Laugh and laugh some more. Focus on the positive and his strengths. Be thankful for what you have! –Valerie
7. Don't take your hubby for granted, that he'll always be there—kiss him goodnight every night, because in a flash he could be gone and you'll live with regrets and what ifs. –Sarah
8. Read the *Power of a Praying Wife* by Stormie O'Martian and really pray for your husband. Also, don't talk bad on him to anyone, including your kids. –Heather
9. Think about things harder, and wait a little longer to do them. –Deborah

10. The cleaning will always be there! Cherish your family first, after time spent with God!!! And chill out! No need to be so neurotic! –Alonna
11. Marry someone you truly like as a friend. Always have each other's back, even if they're wrong ... support them anyway. Say I love you as often as possible. Make the time to really kiss each other. Place your marriage above every other relationship except the one you have with God. And don't keep a record of wrongs. Forgive, forget and move on. –Kristi
12. Emotions aren't right or wrong, and they change. Do be easily offended. Let offenses go. –Kate
13. Pray over everything! Give God the chance to work in both our lives and then pray constantly over our children. –Kathy
14. Some things are so minor to fuss about, let it go. –Gail
15. Save more money! –Norma
16. Write down where you see yourselves at each anniversary. Example: How many children? Where you will be living? Type of home? Job? Grandchildren? –Chris
17. Communication is the key to a happy marriage. Pick my battles carefully. –Angie
18. Today's mountains are tomorrow's molecules. Remember that time will change our perspective but not our love, so be nice. –Shirley
19. Don't give up! Too many people give up before the miracle, stating irreconcilable differences as a reason for divorce. Remember the reasons you fell in love, especially during the hard times. The grass is only greener where you water it, feed it and nurture it. God will bless you like no one else can, and I am a recipient of one of those blessings! –Melissa

20. Don't let things pile up and unload everything on your spouse at once. –Voni
21. You are stronger than you think. Remember that your husband loves you, so trust in him. God has given you a wonderful person ... Pray more often, listen more often. –Melissa
22. Different isn't wrong! –Laura
23. Sometimes it's important to share something that is bugging you even if you know it will hurt. It's much better to get it out in the open than let it become a burr in your marriage. Just remember to say it in love. –Tina
24. Focus your energy on serving one another not trying to keep everything "fair" and "even" ... You are not in competition with each other but are to sacrifice for each other. –Katie
25. Pray together. It is not something that comes naturally and is really difficult habit to form. It will bring you closer to the two that matter most, the Lord and your spouse. –Kari

Tricia Goyer *has written more than 35 books, including both novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as Guideposts, Thriving Family, Proverbs 31, and HomeLife Magazine.*