

Are You Married to Your Best Friend?

The dream for many people is to marry their best friend. That's the fairy-tale marriage, one that brings together best friends in holy matrimony.

The old adage is to be friends first before becoming lovers and that successful marriages are built on friendship.

You may have heard people talk how they married their best friend, or you may even give that advice. Well, I didn't marry my best friend, and I'd like to argue that very few people do. When my wife and I were married, we were friends but not best friends. In fact, we were probably better friends before our relationship got serious. The dynamic changed some, but I'm happy to say eventually our friendship was restored. Here are three ways marrying your best friend can become your reality.

Realize your relationship and your love grows over time. My wife and I had the pleasure and privilege of interviewing Mark and Susan (Merrill) for our "7 Rings of Marriage" web show. Mark said something simple yet profound during our chat. He said, "Love grows over time," meaning your relationship and the way you interact with your spouse today will differ than the way you interact and love your spouse five or 10 years from now. Through time, you'll experience many changes to your relationship. However, just like a plant that is watered and nurtured grows, your love for one another will also grow.

Be the friend you want your wife to be. When we teach our kids how to meet new people and develop friendships, we tell them to be friendly. If you are friendly, you will attract other people who are friendly as well. The same principle applies to our marriages. More often than not, what you give in marriage is what you will receive in return.

If we want to be married to our best friend, we need to be the friend we want our wives to be. If we want our wives to listen to us, then we should listen to them. If we want our wives to put our needs first, then we should put their needs first. The list goes on and on. Having a great friendship in marriage starts with us first being the friend we want in our wives.

Focus on intimacy. Most couples really don't know each other all that much when they first get married. I've heard it put this way: When you are dating, you are not dating each other; you are dating each other's representative. Our "representatives" portray us in our best light—showing our good qualities, looks and character traits.

Our representatives work the few hours we spend together. Then in marriage, we spend all day and every night together—when our "representatives" are not on duty. Finally, the representatives are no longer needed. That's when all our glory is revealed. We share intimate things we've never shared with anyone else.

The more intimate moments we share, moments and things we don't share with anyone else, the better we know one another. Then our friendship is tested and we have the opportunity to really know and love one another.

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