

Avoid a Marital 'Functionship' With This Routine-Crushing Idea

When you get married, you intuitively sign up to have fun. You know there will be some responsibility, but you really think there should be some fun involved. After all, it took you all these years to find your ultimate playmate, your spouse.

That was my idea when I married my wife, Lisa. Actually, that's one of the things I have always loved about Lisa. She loved to do a broad range of things. She was equally beautiful riding a horse, bicycling, getting all dolled up to go to the theater or just going, in jeans and a T-shirt, to a coffee shop.

I loved dating Lisa and all the long walks and talks we had together. Countless times I remember just sitting in her car for hours at a time talking. You probably have similar memories dating your husband or wife. Remember their smiles, relaxed attitudes, dreams and brilliance that attracted you to each other. I'll bet along the way you were projecting to your future spouse that you were fun as well.

Before children, many married couples still go out on dates. They have fun, are still creative and don't think getting together takes too much effort.

It's the next stage of the marriage where couples begin to struggle with prioritizing dates. You guessed it; it is the stage of the first, second and/or third child. The couple is thrown into parenthood, and they're coping with sleepless nights, long days and working to try to afford that larger apartment, first house and probably a bigger or safer car.

Those early childrearing years are a critical period in which

dating can fall by the wayside just because of the time constraints. Couples can lose sight of the importance of maintaining an active dating lifestyle.

You can get tired just reading about what parents at this stage of life do! Yet here is where a couple needs going out the most. The demands of life are great, and if the couple isn't careful, they will move into a functionship and out of a relationship. In a functionship, couples work on completing their to-do lists but not on their relationships. They may eat together but that's often on the road, quick and with the kids. In a functionship, both parents are prone to burnout, adopt weird eating habits, skip exercise and feel like members of an assembly line—not like anyone's beloved. In a functionship the romance falls by the wayside as busyness and stress eat up a couple's relationship.

In a relationship, time together has an equal or even higher value than all of this other stuff. In a relationship, make sure that your going-out night is as sacred as going to church. In this way, you enhance your marriage and again, commit time to help your relationship grow. Like a motor, a marriage is a moving entity. Dating is like an oil or lubricant that removes the friction between moving parts so they can operate optimally. If you don't keep the oil in an engine, the engine will eventually get hotter and hotter until it's severely damaged.

The laughter, chatting, dreaming or just relaxing together is a great stress release so you can enjoy your married lifestyle. Don't take that time for granted. Marital dating will be extremely helpful for the longevity of your relationship. If you don't go out on dates, you will eventually spend more time arguing and have to see someone like myself to suggest you start dating your spouse again.
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To learn more about principles that will improve your

marriage, purchase Dr. Doug Weiss' book, The Ten-Minute Marriage Principle.

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