

Does Your Calendar Prove Your Spouse Is a Priority?

I'm in social situations on a regular basis, just as you are. I'll meet people I already know or meet someone that I would like to get together with to discuss something further.

The "Let's get together" topic comes up, and we both think this would be a great idea. They ask when, and I say, "I have to check my calendar, and then we can schedule it." Once it's on my calendar I consider it put in "stone." They laugh and expect me to pull out my phone.

I see clients during the day up to a certain time, but that fluctuates depending on the week. I do have a real calendar. I'm talking a paper kind that you write in with a pencil or pen.

So we'll usually exchange contact information, or they'll call my office, and we'll set a time. One of my amazing administration team will put it on my calendar, and the meeting is set, practically in stone.

You might ask why would I have an old-fashioned calendar? First, I was born in that era, so I'm comfortable with one. But I also have to be mindful because my clients' names are confidential, and I've never risked that by keeping an electronic calendar.

Now, you might be asking yourself why all this talk about a calendar? Because anything of importance, including dentist, workouts and hair appointments are all on my calendar. Putting anything on my calendar, even a block that says "write lover-spouse book" means it's more likely that I'll then actually do it.

I've seen great success with clients who put dates and other

things on their electronic devices to remind them to get things done. When they are purposeful in putting it in their calendar, they're more likely to do it.

As a lover-spouse, some of us just intuitively flow in being a lover. It's like a gift. If this has been a challenge for you, then you'll need to be intentional and structure your loverness to manifest toward your spouse. Either way is fine. Intentionally structuring your lover activities isn't a sign you don't love, rather it's a sign that you need to organize and structure important things to get them accomplished.

You'll need to be able to use your phone calendar or buy a hard copy calendar and make it your "lover calendar." If your electronic calendar has a reminder alarm feature, definitely use it to help you along the way.

There are definite daily things you might want to do as a lover, so put this on a daily schedule and try to set a specific time so both of you get into a habit of these behaviors. Remember, structure precedes life in God's order.

Suggestions for daily calendar items:

–Do dailies (two feelings, two praises, pray).

–Pray to be a great lover to your spouse.

–Keep your word to your spouse.

–Write down what you agreed you'd do.

–Hug them.

–Kiss them.

–Check in during the day.

–Smile.

I want to share something with you that can definitely improve

your ability to capitalize on your calendar. It will also improve the likelihood that you will actually complete the items on your calendar.

We all know people who write things down and just don't do them. I don't want you to be one of those lover-spouses. I want you to actually cross the finish line and hear "well done."

Any area of life you want to accelerate in will always have a person or people you'll be accountable to. This person is always the same gender as you. Often, this person has genuine affection for you, and depending on the area of life, they might have more expertise in the area than you currently do.

Who could this person be that you could be honest with about your journey to follow through with your lover goals? They don't need to know the specific behaviors but maybe the percentage you've accomplished. You can meet, call or text this person weekly to report the status or your shortcomings the previous week.

Accountability with someone of the same gender raises the bar. Now you've taken this lover thing to a whole other level because you're not only being respectful toward your spouse but finding someone off whom you can bounce ideas. As you talk over your situation and ideas with this person, you're much more likely to be a great lover-spouse.

Sadly, Christians will make promises to themselves, even God or their spouse, and be less successful than if they make themselves accountable to someone of the same gender who is *not* a family member.

To add another principle to aid in your calendar success, you can follow a principle of reward or consequence. Give yourself a time period a week, month or quarter. If you're 80 to 90 percent on the lover objectives you put on your calendar, assign a personal reward for yourself.

However, if you fall below 80 percent, you can assign a consequence for yourself (for example, rake leaves, give up something, do more chores or something kind to your spouse that isn't fun for you).

The consequence acts as a guardrail. If you haven't been a great lover-spouse, your spouse has 100 percent paid the emotional, sexual and romantic cost for your lack of responsibility. You won't ever have to take an aspirin for your spouse's headache because you're not feeling the pain. You might not even believe the pain exists.

When you set up a consequence, you're saying to yourself and to them, "I'll pay my own bill if I'm an irresponsible lover." Stepping up to the plate like an adult can yield everlasting change. {eo}

Doug Weiss, Ph.D., is a nationally known author, speaker and licensed psychologist. He is the executive director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the author of several books including, *Emotional Fitness*. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, or on his Facebook, by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.