

Men: A Marriage Bucket List

Bucket lists have been around for a long time. The idea has gained additional traction, however, since the release of the 2007 comedy-drama starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman.

We'd like to suggest an inviting, and doable, Marriage Bucket List for Men. You don't have to wait for retirement. You won't need to win the lottery. And we're quite sure a terminal diagnosis isn't required to get you motivated.

Take a look, think in terms of this coming calendar year, and try to check off this Marriage Bucket List for Men one item at a time over the next 12 months.

1. Plan, and execute, an anniversary celebration she'll never forget. Guys are notorious when it comes to not thinking ahead. The day doesn't have to be expensive, but it should demonstrate creative thinking and thoughtful planning that takes your "romance quotient" up a notch or two.

- 10 Ways to Romance Your Wife

2. Became a Servant-Leader. Many people look for change in a marriage by changing their spouse. Servant leadership always models by example. Become the husband who leads in terms of kindness, generosity, compassion, character, listening, and more.

3. Lose weight and improve your cholesterol. Want her to respect you more? Want to be around together for a longer time? Want a better sex life? Taking care of personal health is great for marriage in many ways.

4. Attend a couples' retreat. It doesn't matter how good a relationship is, there's always a lot to learn, both from one another and from the accumulated wisdom of others.

5. Add one new recreational activity to enjoy together.

Marriages benefit from shared fun. Walking the dog, karate, gardening, art classes, tennis. The possibilities are endless and the results can be re-inventive.

6. Get on the same page financially. Create and share the same goals for your family and make every financial decision with that information in mind.

7. Attend a retirement seminar and begin to plan accordingly. You may only be in your twenties, or you could be approaching retirement. Regardless, getting your retirement ducks in a row is a marriage stress saver, and any reduction in marriage stress is a good thing.

8. Begin a shared devotional life. The cliché goes, “The family that prays together, stays together.” Additionally, the family that prays together brings another source of strength into their relationships.

9. Institute a weekly date night protocol. Marriages benefit from the intentional commitment to continue dating and keeping the relationship fresh. Again, no need for expense; instead, use your imagination.

▪ 10 Ways to Save Money on Date Night

10. Eliminate criticism and harsh words. Research in education teaches, “It takes seven positives to overcome one negative.” We say, why risk it. In other words, even a one-in-seven ratio is too much. Make the commitment to be criticism free and then do it.

11. Uncover one of her lifelong dreams and then help fulfill it. This one will take some research. No worries, “Becoming a better listener” is a good goal too. Maybe she wants to take cooking classes in Italy? Maybe she wants to watch the President flip the switch on the White House Christmas Tree? Whatever it is, your opportunity is to make her dream come true.

12. Read an inspirational book together. Audio book in the car? Reading aloud together before bed? Reading chapters separately then discussing them over coffee? There are many ways to tap into inspiration together. The idea is to see your lives in the same light, then move forward into an inspired future together.

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