

One Thing Your Kids Want to See in Your Marriage

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

Parents have a significant influence on the lives of their children. Children are watching their parents, seeking to learn the ways of life. Our actions and words will mold our young children into the people they will become.

Think for a minute what kind of adults you want your children to be. Will they love Jesus and have a personal relationship with Him? Will they have a peaceful home with a loving environment? Will they respect and love their spouse as their spouse reciprocates the same?

These questions can often be answered by taking a look at our lives. How is our relationship with Christ? How is our home atmosphere? How is our marriage? Our children are watching and their future is in the balance.

I want to talk to you about the importance of dating in your marriage. Specifically, how this dating will affect your children.

Many Christian marriages fall into function-ship where the members of the marriage contract fulfill their duty and perform their tasks. However, they have failed to come up with a consistent plan to date each other. If dating is consistent, you send a very strong message of value of marriage.

Our children will duplicate what we do, not just what we say. I don't want my son, Jubal, to not celebrate and date his wife all the days of his life. Neither do I want my daughter to marry a man who is going to bore her to death and not celebrate her through dating.

If I don't want my children to end up in marriage counseling as another unfortunate case, I must demonstrate consistently how important dating is. I remember a time when my daughter was 3 years old and Lisa and I were on our way out for our date as she exclaimed, "Daddy, I want to go with you" and gave one of these desperate little faces only a daughter can have.

I bent down to look her in the eye and said something to the effect that, "Mommy has been such a good girl and Daddy loves Mommy with his whole heart, so I need to take her out tonight." Hadassah's big brown eyes lit up and she smiled big and happily walked up the stairs to be with Britney, our first baby-sitter.

I don't know exactly what Hadassah was thinking, but she never asked again to go out on our date night. If you're starting to date later in a child's development, you may face resistance upfront because this is unfamiliar to them. Weather the storm and they will normalize. My daughter and son know that this is a regular, normal part of marriage. I want them to duplicate this and have quality time with their spouse. I even hope I get the grandchildren on a weekly basis to encourage this. Remember that it's not what you believe about marriage that your children will repeat—it's what you do in your marriage

I personally feel that our children desperately need a break from us as much as we need a break from them. They need a different personality to challenge and play with. They need that time to eat pizza, popcorn and do what they want without feeling that their parents are hovering over them.

Our children Hadassah and Jubal loved their baby-sitters. When we would tell them she is coming over they would get so excited. They will ask us all day what time it is and how long until she comes. This is a special time for them and they enjoy having a time with her. And this was OK by us, because we were excited to have some time to spend together without the children.

Take time to date your spouse. Do not allow your responsibility as parents to keep you from fulfilling your duty to love and cherish your spouse. After all, your children are watching to see how their parents love each other. This is their primary example of love.

If you want your children to seek and find a spouse who celebrates them, loves them and makes them feel special, you must model this for them. Take the initiative to place a high priority on dating your spouse and you will reap many benefits from this. {eoa}

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 *Intimacy*. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, ; on his Facebook; by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.