

These 5 Daily Habits Contribute to a Healthy Marriage

My wife Kay and I are closing in on 30 years of marriage. I must admit that our marriage is better than I ever expected it to be and seems to get better with age.

There are many factors that make for a good marriage. Some are tangible, like provision (shelter, food) and protection (financial security, safety). Other factors are less tangible but just as real, such as understanding, respect and empathy.

While the aforementioned factors are important, there is also a very practical approach men can use to ensure happiness in marriage.

Here are five practical habits of men in the happiest marriages:

1. Grooming. Do you remember what it was like to go on your first dates? You probably put a lot of effort into making yourself as presentable as possible. Unfortunately, somewhere in the daily grind, men seem to lower their standard of physical presentation. It doesn't have to be that way. I strongly recommend that you present your body to your wife as a reasonable service. Don't brush this off like it doesn't matter.

I've seen an evil under the sun. A middle-aged man goes into a marriage crisis and finds himself alone. What does he do? He goes on a diet, updates his clothing, goes to the barber, joins a fitness center, gets a new car. Why? Because he is trying to reclaim his manhood. I recommend you do these things while you're married.

2. Cleaning. One of the first principles my wife and I implemented in our marriage was not going to bed with the house in disarray. It was uncomfortable and made for a restless night for me if the house wasn't in order. I always help around the house. I have a habit of picking up after myself. If I see a need, I fulfill it. If there are dishes that need to be cleaned or put in the dishwasher, I do it without thinking. We're in this together and we want our house to be comfortable. Amazingly, we've found that this simple habit helps keep strife out of our home.

3. Attention. We're living in a very distracted culture. Take a look around the restaurant the next time you're out. How many couples are looking at their phones rather than at each other? We are very connected without being intimate.

I've made it a habit to leave my phone off or on silent when I am with my wife. When we talk, I look at her and make eye contact. I listen and really engage in the conversation, regardless of what we're talking about. I am blessed that my wife is one of the smartest people that I've ever met—and I've met a lot of really smart people. After 30 years of marriage, she is still intriguing to me.

4. Affection. Affection is emotional and physical attention. Giving affection is something a man should be proactive in doing. Some men get out of the habit of pursuing their wife. They allow their hands to become cold, their words to become boring and their heart to become hardened.

Couples who are very active and proactive in affection have the happiest marriages. Again, it gets better with age. The longer your marriage endures, the more precious and esoteric it becomes.

5. Prayer. I am not sure why it was difficult for me to start this habit but once I did, it brought us together closer than anything else. I want my prayer time with my wife to be

authentic, private and intimate. I started preparing and having communion and prayer with my wife when we set aside the tithe to be paid to our church. It really has become one of our most cherished times. We celebrate the goodness of God in our lives, for our families, and in the provision of our household. Prayer is a difference maker in happy marriages.

In the last five years, our three children have all gotten married. It is interesting to see them navigate their young marriages and develop their habits within their relationships. It really is a miracle when two people come together in covenant to embark on their joint venture. Developing a few good practical habits early on will help their marriages remain strong and exciting.

*Fivestarman was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. Kennedy has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.*

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