

Top 10 Secrets Behind Successful Marriages

In 2006, the *New York Times* printed an article, written by John Tierney and Garth Sundem, that gave a formula to predict the outcome of celebrity marriages.

In March 2012, the two writers redefined their formula, due to several years of results based on their predictions. Their research indicated that younger celebrity couples have a far less chance of marriage success than older couples and that the longer the courtship, the better the chances are for the pair.

For instance, in their formula, Romeo and Juliet stood a 0 percent chance of lasting five years. Britney Spears and Kevin Federline only stood a 1 percent chance of making it five years. The main variable the two researchers discovered over six years of tracking results was that the more superficial the relationship—the more “tabloid,” as they put it—the more it was doomed to an early crash. .

Celebrity marriages based on substance and quality interaction stood a far greater chance to outlast expectations. The two have also discovered that in celebrities, it is the wife’s fame that really matters. “Women initiate 70 percent of breakups.” If the female is substance over tabloid, the chances that the marriage will last are higher.

Are celebrities really that much different from us normal folk? No, they are not—just higher profile and a bit more impulsive. In the end, we all are just seeking meaningful love.

What are the variables that are found in successful marriages? What type of marriages last not only five years but until “death do us part”? Let’s examine some necessary ingredients:

1. God-centered. God must be in the center of each marriage for it to blossom and reach its full potential. Remember, you are a conduit of God's love for your spouse. When a husband and wife are tapped into the bottomless ocean of the Lord's grace, love and mercy, they are eager to have that overflow onto each other. Pray for strength, guidance and wisdom to love each other well.

2. Sense of humor and a short memory. Anyone who has been married for a lengthy period of time can tell you that a sense of humor is certainly required to get through the trials and tribulations of marriage. You had better be able to laugh together, and especially at yourself. When it comes to trouble, keep a short memory; lose the grudges and smile.

3. Conflict and tension. Say what? That's right, most healthy marriages require periods of conflict and tension in order to balance the relationship, like steam escaping from a pot so the pot does not explode. Conflict and tension also serve a role in the sexual relationship ("make-up sex") of a marriage as well. Love only grows stronger when it has endured a storm.

4. Open communication. One of the deadliest poisons to a marriage is when the couple has stopped talking. When a couple has a lack of communication, it leads to suspicion, and suspicion leads to stress and worse. Married partners should be able to share everything with each other, and through that help each other navigate life successfully.

5. Teammates and partners. Going hand in hand with communication is the spirit of teamwork and partnership. A couple should balance the best traits of each person to form the best possible team to take on the challenges of marriage, parenthood and life in general. Great teams play to each member's strengths. The same applies in marriage.

6. Rock-solid trust. Trust is hard to earn and easy to lose. It must be held as sacred. None among us are perfect, and we will make our mistakes, but in a successful marriage, trust must not be broken. It is an enormous leap of faith to align personal destiny equally with another, and without trust in that person, you will never make it. You have their back, and they have yours; never allow anything to come between. And neither spouse ever lies to the other, no matter how uncomfortable the conversation. Lies are the WMDs to trust.

7. Positive compatibility. Simply put, sex can't sustain a relationship long-term. In order to establish an environment where a marriage can reach full potential, it is essential we choose partners with whom we share many compatible traits and values. We have to actually like being with that person. We're good friends with them. We need to share the same hopes and dreams. Compatibility goes far beyond the bedroom.

8. Passion and commitment. Passion is a burning desire to be successful at a stated goal. The commitment to do whatever it takes to reach the finish line. It takes great sacrifice by both partners to reach the level of commitment necessary to make a marriage last. We are tested and tempted constantly by other options, and that will not change. Deep passion and unwavering commitment for, and to, the marriage is how you reach a golden anniversary.

9. Emotional security. This is usually an overlooked aspect of human need: the requirement we have to keep a place where we feel safe and secure from the outside world. A marriage that is working well is just that. It's the "us against the world" mentality, where we feel needed and wanted. When you listen to sports players talk after they win championships, someone will always say, "We closed ranks, and it was us against the world." A successful marriage works the same way.

10. Unbreakable respect. When two people are in love, they have a mutual respect and desire for each other that overrides any shortcomings and traits in the other person. There is an unbreakable respect and passion for that person. This should last not only when things are going great, but when the hard times come as well—when tragedy strikes or when people change. When respect leaves a marriage, the people involved will usually follow not far behind.

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