

# 6 simple steps to a HEALTHIER MARRIAGE

Having a healthy, supportive marriage is important to your overall well-being. But the stresses of life, work, family, and day-to-day problems can put a strain on even the best marriage at times.

Fortunately, there are some ways you can help keep your marriage strong – or work on problems before they become major issues. Here are some tips from the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center:

## 1. Make every effort to keep your commitment.

Marriage will have “good times and bad,” and you need to realize that challenges will happen. The key is to work through them and be aware that everyone has disagreements and difficulties. No marriage is perfect, but with extra effort from both partners, you can make yours last.

## 2. Make time for each other.

Even when you’re overwhelmed with work, children, or other tasks, don’t forget about your marriage. Set aside time for a dinner alone or even a weekend getaway if you can. If that’s not possible, have 15 to 30 minutes of time to talk and connect each day – without TV or cell phones.

## 3. Have a sense of humor.

Life’s little mishaps are easier to take when you can laugh at them. Mistakes that don’t really hurt anyone don’t have to turn into arguments. Don’t focus on who’s to blame. Laugh at it if you can, and work on a solution together. Forgive your spouse (and yourself!) and try to find the humor in the situation.

## 4. Communication is key.

This is an important aspect of any marriage. Talk about what’s bothering you – and what you love. Listen to what your spouse is saying, and don’t be quick to defend yourself. No one has to “win” an argument. If you both listen and respect each other, a solution or compromise can usually be found.

## 5. Do “little” things for your spouse.

Make a favorite meal for the other person, do the dishes without being asked, or leave a love note. These small things can add up to big happiness. Just showing your spouse that you care about him or her will help build your marriage each day.

## 6. Choose your battles.

Before you get angry about something, ask yourself if it’s worth an argument. If it’s important to you, approach the subject calmly and be honest. If not, take a deep breath and focus your energy on better things.

*Marriage isn’t always easy, but working to keep it strong and healthy can have big payoffs. People in healthy marriages have better mental health and may even live longer. Give your marriage the attention it deserves, and you’ll both enjoy the benefits.*

