

## Work together as a team

Every marriage will face challenges of one sort or another – anything from everyday household worries and managing finances, to more serious issues such as illness or painful times with children. At these times, couples can find themselves drifting apart, but it is then that it's important to choose to pull together and work as a team.

Disagreements and sometimes arguments are inevitable in married life, but it's vital that they are handled in a healthy way. Focus on resolving the issue together rather than winning the argument – that way you can face the challenges thrown at you as one unit.



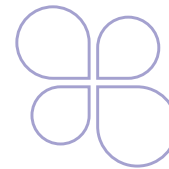
## Support for couples at every stage of their relationship



For more information, articles and tips on family life visit [www.careforthefamily.org.uk](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk)

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- Listen to our regular *Marriage Challenge Podcast* [www.careforthefamily.org.uk/marriagechallenge](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/marriagechallenge)
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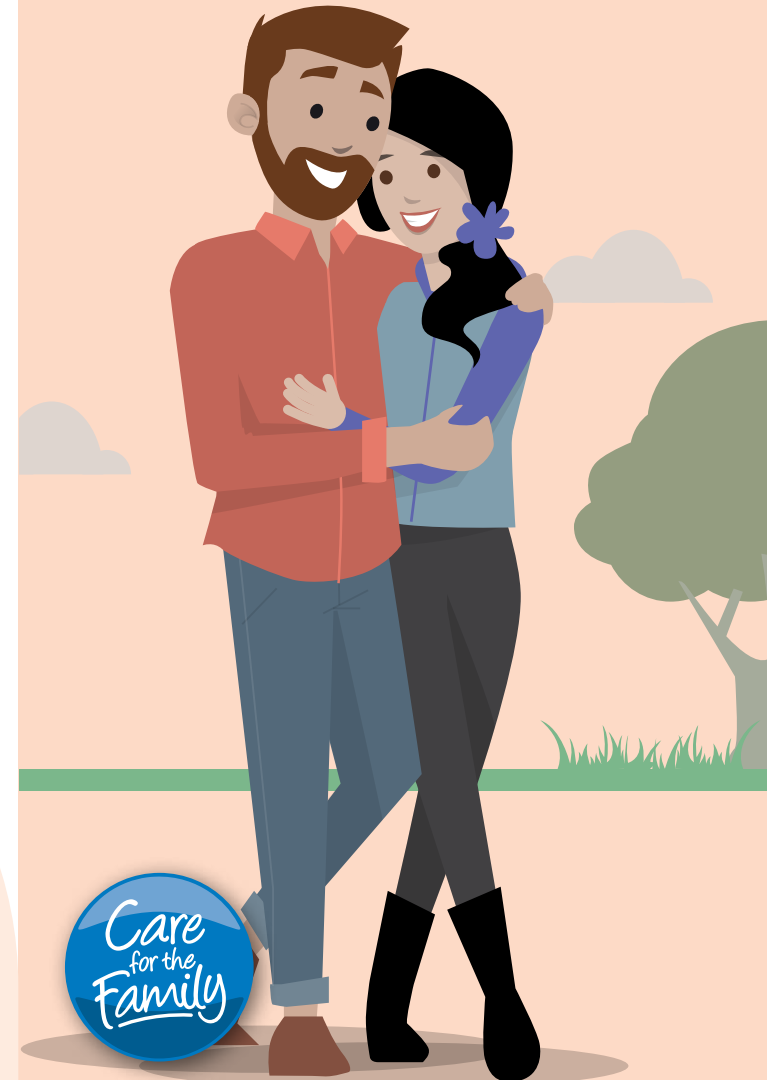
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# Top Tips For Marriage

## Habits for a Happy Marriage



Every marriage is different because it is made up of two people with different backgrounds and experiences. There will be times of joy, fun and excitement in married life, but inevitably there will be ups and downs as well. So how can we make sure that we develop a strong, lasting relationship that will weather the storms as well as enjoy the good times? Here are some habits that we can put in place to make our partner feel loved and secure.

## Spend time together

It might sound obvious but couples thrive when they are able to spend time together. For some couples this happens without too much thought, but for others you might need to make it happen. Plan when and where you will spend time with each other and make this a priority. Get dates in the diary and protect them – you'll be amazed how many things will compete for this time!

More important than what you actually do, the key thing about spending time with each other is consistency. Yes, there will be times when it's good to do something more romantic or extravagant, but over the long haul your relationship will benefit most from regularly setting time aside to be together – even if the activities are more mundane, such as sharing a meal or going for a walk.

## Tell each other how you feel

In a relationship, we cannot expect our partners to be mind readers no matter how well we know each other. On a day-to-day basis it's usually easy to talk about what we're doing, who we are going to see and even what we're having for dinner! But the best relationships are between couples who are willing and able to talk about the deeper issues, who share with each other their hopes, hurts and fears.

The idea of being vulnerable and sharing our feelings can be daunting for some of us, so to make this easier it's important to give each other a sense of togetherness and trust. Listening without interrupting or getting distracted, avoiding judgemental responses and never prematurely assuming you know what your partner is feeling will all help. It may take time and won't necessarily be easy at first, but persisting in having open and honest conversations will ultimately build a stronger connection and a more loving relationship.

## Put helpful boundaries in place

It may not feel terribly romantic, but it's a good idea to consider how best to protect your relationship. Talk with each other about any boundaries you think you might need to put in place. This isn't a sign that you don't have faith in your relationship; in fact, it's the opposite – the happiest couples tend to be those who are open about keeping their relationship on track.

Some things to consider might include thinking about who else you spend time with, how much focus you have

on your work or family life, what your online activity is, or how you spend your money. No matter what boundaries you put in place, the most important thing is to keep short accounts with each other. This will grow trust and deepen your relationship.

## Show your partner what they mean to you

It's easy to forget to communicate to our partner how we feel about them, but it's vital that we do – even if it doesn't come naturally to us. Discover what communicates love to your partner best. Perhaps it's kind or encouraging words, thoughtful and considerate acts together,

of service, time spent or even receiving gifts. Expressing our love in the way they value most will show our partner we are thinking of them, that we care how they feel, and that we are putting them first.

