



## Steps for Succeeding as Newlyweds

Newlyweds can expect a certain number of ups and downs during their first year of marriage. Below are some steps to take to make it through the first year of your lives together, happy and intact.

### **Plan for the marriage, not just the wedding.**

You've probably spent many hours deciding what kind of china you want to register for, the flowers you want to use and the type of cake you want to eat, but there's more at stake than just the wedding day. If you haven't already, decide who will take which responsibilities once you are actually married. Discuss the division of labor within the marriage and around the house. Negotiate things like how you're going to spend your time. Talk about having kids. Discuss finances. Talk about long-term planning and goals and what each of you wants the other to support. Come up with a plan that you can both be excited about.

### **Have reasonable expectations.**

Courtship and marriage are not always the same. Falling in love is not the same thing as being in love. There's an adjustment when you merge two lives together. It's give and take. Embrace the change and know that it takes work. You are both responsible for contributing to the success of the marriage.

### **Create a strong foundation.**

Marriage is a partnership. Commit to each other and to your marriage from day one, and work on your relationship every day. Wake up every morning and ask yourself, "What can I do today to make my spouse's life better?" Deal with your spouse in a way that protects and enhances his/her self-esteem. Let your spouse know that you are proud of him/her. Instead of badgering, inspire your spouse to be the partner you want to be with. Build a partnership of love, mutual support and commitment to each other. Have balance and make time for each other. Don't be too absorbed in work or other activities that take you outside of the house. Make sure you are spending enough quality time with your spouse and family.

### **Communicate at a mature level.**

Be honest with yourselves about what you need in your relationship. When there are problems, go back to the beginning and start over; remember the reasons you started your relationship in the first place. Talk with each other and decide how you are going to get your relationship back on track. Instead of just complaining, be specific about what it is that you want. No one's a mind reader, so don't expect your spouse to be able to figure out how you're feeling.

"You don't ever solve a relationship problem by turning away from your partner," Dr. Phil says. Turn toward each other to fix what's wrong, don't look outside the marriage. Any time you turn away from your partner to fulfill your needs instead of toward him/her, it's a betrayal. Want to know if some behavior is cheating? If you wouldn't do it with your spouse right next to you, it's cheating. If you've cheated, rebuild trust by generating a new history that is not marked with infidelity and deception. Sit down with your partner and negotiate a new plan. Discuss each of your needs in your marriage. And if you agree to something, have enough emotional integrity to stick to your promises. If you know you can't stick to it, don't agree to it.

### **Learn to fight fair.**

The number one predictor of divorce is how you end a fight. Learn [How to Fight Fair](#) to keep your marriage healthy.

### **Ask yourself: How much fun are you to live with?**

You either contribute to your relationship, or you [contaminate](#) it. Go into your relationship with a spirit of acceptance, not criticism. If all you ever do is nit-pick, nag and criticize, you'll create a parent/child relationship, rather than one of love, laughter and mutual respect. People generate the results they think they deserve. If all you ever put out is negativity and pessimism, that's all you'll get in return.

### **Be patient and be willing to make sacrifices.**

"When you grow up, you realize that you don't get to do everything you want to do whenever you want to do it. You have to make sacrifices," Dr. Phil explains. If there are financial problems, you must be willing to forgo some of the things you are used to, so that you can get out of debt and start saving for your future and the future of your children. Find happiness among yourselves and your children. Value things you can create within your lifestyle and budget.