

Marital Disciplines

You have heard of athletic disciplines, and scholastic disciplines, spiritual disciplines and yes, there are marital disciplines. Disciplines are non-negotiable (although how you do them may vary from time to time). An Olympic athlete doesn't wake up and wonder if he'll work out — there's no debate the Olympics are coming!! So it is with those who purpose to build a long and lasting marriage.

Here Are Some Disciplines That Some Couples Have Found Helpful (These are just a few!)

- A weekly meeting (which may include several disciplines and might follow a dinner or breakfast out).
- Read your couple mission statement (see example). 1-2 minutes
- Compare calendars (avoid the scheduling train wreck!) 5 minutes maximum
- Review and/or write some personal goals for the week and share with your spouse (e.g. 5 things I want to do this week..) 10 minutes maximum

Practice A Brief Communication Exercise Such As:

❖ Brief Speaker/Listener Technique

1. Ask your spouse if there were one thing you could say to me and have me really understand and hear, what would it be? And please include your feelings,
2. Next, write down what your spouse says, and yes, they must be brief (only 1 to 3 sentences). Keep your notes in a marriage notebook for future review.
3. Read back what you have written and get a “BULLS EYE” from your spouse (i.e. “Yes, that’s what I said”).
4. Switch roles and do it again - 10 minutes maximum.

❖ Feeling Words List

- Briefly share 2-4 words off a feeling list with each other as it applies to your week and as it applies to your marriage. 5 minutes maximum.

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❖ **Something Educational and Inspirational**

- Read 1-2 pages from a book on marriage and discuss 2-5 minutes.
- Listen to an audio tape or watch a video tape on marriage enrichment. Again briefly 5-10 minutes of watching.

WOW! You Can Do All the Above In Less Than an Hour!

But you may want to make it shorter. Why? Weekly meetings need to be do-able! (One couple does all but the educational part out at dinner, then returns and takes the sitter home, puts the kids to bed and then listens to or watches an educational tape). Nice job!

More Marriage Building Disciplines.

- An overnighter at a hotel every 2-4 months.
- A yearly couples' retreat.
- A class on couple communication or marriage
- A date night every week or twice a month.
- Find your vows or write new ones and read at each meeting or every overnighter.

Yearly Summit Meeting (or every quarter).

Take the same agenda as your weekly meeting, but expand the agenda, e.g.

- What will yearly vacations look like?
- The budget! Make one if you don't have one!
- Yearly calendar review.
- Yearly goals.

Write Your Own And Have Fun!

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