

# Surviving Marriage?

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There's no shortage of marriage advice...and maybe that's the problem. Maybe...there's too much. Let's keep it simple this week. Here are four short, great tips for surviving marriage (if you're newly married, pay attention :)

## **Keep your expectations in check**

Guess what? You're not perfect! Wanna know something else? Life isn't perfect either.

Expect your marriage to be stress-tested by external pressures.

Some of the top pressures are jobs, finances, friends, family, religion, and sex (physical and emotional intimacy).

You have a choice, you and your partner can take charge and shape your marriage, or you can let external forces shape your marriage. What will it be?

## **Keep your lines of communication open even when it hurts**

Listen: Be honest and upfront with your partner. Confront issues that you feel could threaten your relationship. Much of what you think will go away and take care of itself on its own.

I'm not sure if you can have too much communication in your marriage, but I know you can have too little. When communicating, realize that you and your spouse are wired differently. You don't think, act, see, or even believe the same way sometimes.

You must allow for differences of opinions AND disagreements. You're not striving for conformity and control. You're aiming for unity and collaboration, which often leads to healthy compromise.

## **Keep your battles few**

I've learned over time that most things just aren't worth fighting about. Feel free to disagree with me. But I've reached a point where I'm okay living with something being less than "optimal" or "perfect" than I'd prefer. That's not a sign of giving up; it's a sign of being wise. Don't wage war over something that's just a preference. When you take time to think things through, you might be surprised how many "issues" are really nothing more than personal preferences.

Constant nagging and complaining about small things, or being passive aggressive and withdrawing all the time when you're unhappy, sets a negative tone for the marriage.

Just stop it.

One of the best way to decide whether you should bring up a certain issue is to ask yourself, "Will this issue still bother me next week? Next month? Six months from now?" If the answer is yes, bring it up.

## **Keep showing gratitude**

Don't take your spouse for granted. Ever. Even when they do something that's their "job," say thank you, and express appreciation.

Build them up. Make them feel special. If you don't, someone else will.

How many of these tips do you practice in your marriage? I bet there was a time in your relationship when you practiced all four regularly: When you first started dating.

Things were pretty good back then, weren't they? Just something to think about...

*Until next time, this is Mike Tucker and I want YOU to be mad about marriage!*