

You Asked For It How To Have A Emotionally Healthy Marriage

No marriage that is a good is good because of chemistry or because you married your soulmate or good luck. All marriage requires work.

In **Genesis 2:24** God gives us a few principles concerning marriage. Let's take a look: ***"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife."***

There are couple things I want to draw out of the scripture. First:

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother." This is the **Law Of Priority**. For example: if your work comes before your marriage, your marriage will not work. If your children come before your marriage it will not work. If anything except Jesus comes before your marriage it will not work. This is the law of priority.

Second thing I want to draw out of this piece of scripture is this: ***"and cleave to his wife."***

This is the term we really don't use anymore but it has powerful implications. The definition of Cleave means ***"To pursue with all your energy."*** You're going to have to pursue your spouse with energy! In other words, it's going to take work! To be honest, every part of your marriage requires, even the man's a pursuit with all your energy.

So here are a few things Dana and I have learned over 20 years of marriage.

1. Praying and trusting God together.

I'm not saying that you have to pray every single day together. But if your spouse asks you to pray with them and you feel too weird because you've never done that before that's a problem. Don't try to walk by faith separately walk by faith together. You're never closer as a couple then you are when you're praying and trusting God together.

2. Resolve negative feelings quickly.

Ephesians 4:26-27 "In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry and do not give the devil a foothold."

First of all it's OK to be angry. God even gets angry. But yesterday's anger is a problem. If you do not deal with it you will give the devil a foothold.

If you leave yesterday's anger festering in your spirit and undealt with for a long period of time, (Listen closely to what I'm about to say) you allow the devil to interpret your spouse's behavior. You will be convinced that your spouse is the problem and getting out of the relationship is the solution. Good marriages aren't good marriages because they are without anger. Everybody gets angry.

Good marriages are marriages where you can process it quickly. How can you do that?

Give your spouse the right to complain. I'm not talking about criticizing or accusing. There is a difference between complaining and criticizing. The two are completely opposite.

Let me explain. Criticizing is pointing your finger and making accusations like, "You did this and you never do that." And the fruit of that is, the defenses go up.

Complaining on the other hand is not about you. Complaining is about me. Let's say Dana says something that hurt my feelings and I say, "Dana you said something that bothered me and I want to know what

you meant by that?" See, I'm not leveling any accusations at you, I'm not attacking your character or demeaning you. I might be feeling this way because I'm immature, (which is usually the case) or that I simply misunderstood what you were saying.

Here's what criticizing sounds like. "Dana you said something that hurt my feelings and I know exactly what you meant by it because you are evil just like your mother. If you tell me the truth now I'll go easy on you." That will calm things right down. We need to get in a healthy habit of processing angry quickly so that anger goes and love stays. And what you tell your spouse when you are walking in this principle is, I value our relationship over this current conflict.

3. Have fun together.

This is how you fell in love right?! You are never better when you're having fun together. Out of the top five things men value in marriage fun with their wives is at the top of the list.

Men do not want to be mothered by their wives. We got a mother! I am a different person at home when I'm with my wife. Dana always says, "if people only knew what goes on in this house." I am extremely goofy at home because I value laughter and having fun with my wife. You take sex and fun out of a marriage and you have a business relationship. Let nothing drain the fun out of your marriage.

4. Build close relationships individually and as a couple with other believers.

1 Corinthians 15:33 "Do not be deceived. Evil company corrupts good character. Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

If there is ever a time to actively pursue healthy Christian relationships it's right here, right now. The days we are living in is increasingly evil.

Your friends are your future!

Sometimes this cannot be accomplished without letting go of unhealthy relationships from our past. Be vigilant and be on your guard about who you allow in your life to influence you and your spouse. Do not let anyone entangle you once Again to the sin that once crippled you.

These are the principles we have learned over the course of 20 years in our relationship and I hope and pray it's been a blessing to you today. We haven't mastered any of them but we are working hard to allow the Lord to perfect these principles in our lives.