

MARRIAGE UNDER PRESSURE



"I thought marriage would be breeze, living with the person I love all the time, sex without worries or guilt. No one mentioned the down side."

Ernest Hemingway was a brilliant writer, but he said, *"Life is just a dirty trick a journey from nothingness to nothingness."* He married four times, became an alcoholic and committed suicide.

Lots of people find their love has run out. Their emotions have changed. The effort just doesn't feel worth it.

Do most marriages feel like this? Probably, at some time.

Do we just change to a newer model spouse? Hemingway did. But there is another way - Here are six pointers to a good marriage; see how your marriage could be spiced up or if you are not married yet, see if this would work for you.

1) Marry your best friend, and stay best friends

Work at it. Spend enough time with each other. Talk to each other, even when it is an effort. Say something nice to each other every day, especially "I love you". Pay compliments. Most people are surprised at the changes they have to make, for marriage to work.

2) Be careful what you say; words can hurt

Disagree without being disagreeable! Be respectful and kind to your partner. You don't know how they are feeling inside. Listen! (which means stop talking while you do!) Don't sulk or withdraw. Say sorry to each other. Is your encouragement needed, or help with money worries or children?

3) Fire burns! Beware opposite sex friendships

The other man's grass often looks greener, but it still needs mowing! More second marriages break up than first, and third than second. Your own grass can be greener if it is watered! Think back to why you were keen to get married. What things can you do to restore that friendship?

4) Making love together is very good for you!

But the friendship must be restored first. Say sorry. Forgive your spouse. Don't hurry love. Discuss it. Most people crave intimacy. Don't be selfish. Don't be shy. There is an emotional VIAGRA - Very Intimate Attention Gives Rising Affection!

5) Think what life-long marriage gives you

Your children (and grandchildren!) will be glad you stay together, and will learn from you.

Marriage can stop you being lonely in old age.

You will always be glad you tried your best in your marriage.

6) Ask for help sooner rather than later

Often another person can be a referee in our difficulties. A trusted friend or couple, a Church Minister, or Marriage Counsellor can help you each see things you may not by yourselves. Or they may just help you speak to each other politely for a while and say what you really feel without interruption.

Many people have found that God can help too.

God, who invented marriage, said *"A man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one."* The Bible, Genesis 2:24

Jesus Christ added to this: *"... so they are no longer two but one. Man must not separate, then, what God has joined together."* Mark 10:8

"Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable ... love never gives up ..." St Paul in I Corinthians 13:4

If you have a marriage difficulty it may be God's opportunity to get through to you.

We often cannot control our emotions without His help. He made us to need Him, and He likes our company. God is closer than you may think, too. He is only a prayer away.

Jesus said: *"Come to me, you who are weary from carrying heavy loads, and I will refresh you."* Matthew 11:28

"Listen, I stand at the door, knocking. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come into you and eat with you, and you with me." Revelation 3:20.