

## Five of the most important lessons learned in our first year of marriage. Shared by four couples.

- Share chores; just because they're good at one thing (ex. cooking) or like doing it, doesn't mean they want to always be the only one.
  - Communication is important with everything!
  - The little things you do for one another matter. Do something nice for the other just because. It doesn't have to be big.
  - Be quick to say "I'm sorry, you're right." And say "I love you" often.
  - Make the mundane things fun. Like play rock, paper, scissors to see who pays for the groceries.
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- How to “fight” properly; how to have the “heated fellowship” and still be respectful and kind to your partner.
  - Budgeting and working through finances as a couple, a dual income turned to one single income and how to properly use it and budget it comfortably together.
  - Delegating responsibilities and being responsible and respectful of the chores, jobs, and financial responsibilities like bills.
  - Personal space and time management: it's still good to keep your distance and be your own person and not let your relationship define you and keep the relationship healthy.
  - Realize that your partner is always acting with your best intentions in mind, not the worst, they never mean to do anything that will upset or hurt you and solving this only takes some proper communication.
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- God is the center of our marriage. If we didn't put him first, then our marriage would have been in shambles, even in the first year. We continue to use prayer and grace to help, when we don't always want to be with each other. We openly discuss our faith and faith struggles with each other.
- Communication is definitely something that will always be a struggle. We've both learned we communicate very differently and we don't always respond well to each other. But, we know we have to talk it out, even if it means we don't talk it all out right then and there. Being vulnerable, admitting when we are hurting, and talking through the hurt has brought us closer together.
- We've also learned, that it's important for us to have our own time. With COVID, we were stuck with each other, and it was quite the struggle at first for a couple of introverts. While we cherished our time together before, now we had too much. Balancing our time together and apart was a difficult lesson to learn. We don't always have to be together and have the same hobbies. On the other hand, it's also important to find new things together and sometimes to do things one of us wants to do even if the other doesn't want to!
- Sometimes our joking can go too far. We both appreciate a good joke and we both like to kid each other, but we've definitely hurt each other with our jokes. It's easy because we feel very comfortable with each other, but when we joke it can still sometimes hurt a lot. Just being mindful with our words, recognizing when we've gone too far, and being humble enough to apologize. These three things can go a long way.

- Family is important to both of us. We have good relationships with our family and it can be really hard for us to make time for the both of them. We both are prone to give preference to our own family. It might be easier to manage time if we didn't have such good relationships with our family! However, family ties has kept our relationship very strong. Learning to balance our time with both families, but not keep a tally has been crucial.
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Listed below are the vital ingredients that led to the success of our fifty-year marriage.

- Keep your marriage Christ-centered:
  - Honor the commitment to your marriage vows.
  - Maintain complete confidence and trust in one another.
  - Make it a regular habit of attending worship together.
- Disagreements are bound to occur. When that happens:
  - Accept differences.
  - Be gentle with words.
  - Be willing to look at issues from the other's perspective.
  - Quickly find ways to forgive, apologize and forget.
- Dream, plan and set goals together.
- Be generous with affection, praise and compliments:
  - Look for the best in each other.
  - Intentionally try to be thoughtful, cheerful and kind.
  - Be patient with each other.
  - Always greet each other with genuine enthusiasm and love.
- Nurture an ever-deepening friendship:
  - Make self a haven of support, comfort and understanding.
  - Make life together fun, fresh and filled with team spirit.
- Think of loving way to give little surprises to the other, planning to give more than you expect to receive. It could be as simple as a "sure to be found not of love. Maintain the fascination!