Parenting can be challenging

• “All marriages struggle to some extent; some struggle to a great extent.”
• Satisfaction & Passion Wane
  • Money, Parenting, Chores
  • Communication, Sex

Where are you now?
Where do you want to be?
What will signal to you that you’re getting closer to your goal?
How will you know when you get there?

GPS: Global Positioning System

Couple Rituals
“If you don’t lean toward your marriage, you will under-feed your marriage.” – Doherty
  • 35 minutes a day for friendship conversation
  • Date every other week
  • Weekend once a year

Make time to connect
  • Mutual self disclosure builds friendship
  • We feel more intimate when we share

G: GIVE (time)

G: GIVE (attention)

Turning Toward (Gottman)
  • Do we receive Bids for Connection?
  • Do we Laugh at shared jokes?
  • Do we recognize Support?

Marriage Masters: 86% of the time they receive it, much of the time with enthusiasm
Higher levels of non-sarcastic humor and shared laughter

G: GIVE (yourself)

Are you there for me? (Johnson)
  • Accessible
  • Responsive
  • Emotionally Engaged

“Nothing grows people like love. When we are loved we blossom.”
Can we be a secure base for one another, risk, and support in “hold me tight” moments?
Love rejoices in itself. It is playful, silly, and full of laughter. Love is fun. This is the air of relationship – light, easygoing, and sustaining in an imaginative, sometimes mischievous way.”

Dee Watts-Jones

Couples need to Play Together (Brown)

• Playing together helps couples rekindle their relationship and explore other forms of emotional intimacy.

“The couples who sustain a sense of mutual playfulness with each other tend to work out the wrinkles in their relationships much better than those who are really serious.”

“Play is the purest expression of love.”

The worst enemy of intimacy is stagnation. (Sternberg)

• Keep the relationship growing
  • New mutual interests
  • New behavioral patterns

We increase passion when we experience new things together and see each other in new ways. (Orbach)

• Do what you did in the beginning

Sensual experiences set the stage for better Sexual experiences (PREP)

• Enjoy touching: Holding hands, hugging, cuddling, back rubs
• Romantic Talk: About how much you care, about how much you enjoy touching your partner, about what you want to do when you’re alone together
• Be thoughtful: Think of your partner’s needs, desires, wishes, and dreams

Couples who are having great sex are able to risk rejection and express wants, needs, desires and fantasies.

Communicate:
• What do you enjoy?
• What do you want to do more/less often?
• What do you want to try?

What’s your plan?

Over the years, couples take less and less time for this important kind of bonding

• Schedule Time for physical intimacy
• Protect the time from conflict

“Sexual intimacy, as an organic and ordinary part of our routine lives, increases connection, forgiveness, and generosity, reduces tension, and helps us face life’s challenges as a team.” (Hawkins)