

5 Lessons from a Couple Married 80 Years

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Amos and Gloria Wright - Married 80 years

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If you've ever felt skeptical about whether marriage really has the potential to last, look no further than Mose and Gloria of Provo, Utah. Amos (Mose) and Gloria Wright were high school sweethearts and have been married for 80 years. You read that right, EIGHT WHOLE DECADES. Last week, our UMC Chair and I had the privilege of meeting the Wrights in their home and presenting them with some gifts to recognize their accomplishment.

During our time with the Wrights, we asked them to share their secret for such a long legacy of love and commitment. Gloria cheekily asked Mose, "Do we have any secrets?" and Mose replied, "We didn't set out to break all the records, we just wanted to be married!"

While this sweet couple didn't claim to have any secret recipe for a long-lasting marriage, their story contains all sorts of research-backed elements that suggest their love was meant to last. Here are a few lessons we can learn from Mose and Gloria about what it takes for a relationship to stand the test of time.

Strong Physical and Emotional Connection

According to Mose, the first requirement for a long marriage is a strong physical attraction to one another. "It was love at first sight for me," Gloria replied when telling us how she knew right away that she wanted to get to know this handsome musician. In fact, that same week, she dropped one of her classes and signed up for orchestra just to spend more time with him!

Now, I'm not saying you should completely rearrange your schedule to pursue your crush, but the research does show there is something to be said for making time for the person you're interested in. While a strong physical attraction can help spark initial interest, long-lasting love requires something deeper—an emotional connection that outlasts a person's physical beauty.

Investing time in their relationship didn't end with Gloria's sudden interest in the oboe. Throughout their courtship and into their marriage, the Wrights continued to find ways to learn about each other and grow together. During his time serving in the U.S. military during the Vietnam War, Mose wrote to Gloria every day. Later on, they chose to move Gloria and their children across the world to where Mose was stationed (first to Germany and then to Japan) so the couple could be together.

It takes sacrifice to build that type of connection. Long-term relationships require couples to prioritize each other again and again—sometimes through small daily efforts and sometimes through big life decisions. But those investments add up over time. When couples consistently choose to show up for one another, they create the emotional foundation that allows love to deepen and endure through the many seasons of life.

Mutual Respect

From the moment you meet them, it's very clear that the Wrights deeply respect and treasure each other. Throughout our interview, they took turns bragging about each others' accomplishments, snuggled side-by-side on their sitting room loveseat. Mose would patiently repeat phrases or questions for Gloria, who is hard of hearing. While their sense of humor and playfulness certainly shined through, the two never spoke ill of one another or

gave any indication of irritation or frustration—only love and admiration.

Now, they've been married for 80 years; I'm sure they've had their fair share of disagreements and challenges. Every couple does! But at the end of the day, the research shows that a foundation of mutual respect between partners is [crucial for relationship success](#). In practice, this looks like [avoiding contempt](#), using healthy communication skills, and repairing when you make a mistake. *And* not losing your cool when your partner leans in and asks, "Can you repeat that? I didn't hear you," for the tenth time.

Faith

A common theme that came up throughout our time with the Wrights was how their faith had strengthened their marriage. Throughout their relationship, their religion and faith community provided the couple with a strong support system as they moved from place to place, offered them shared meaning and clear values on which to build their life and raise their children, and reaffirmed their commitment to each other. These benefits are consistent with [what the research has shown](#) when it comes to couples who share religious beliefs and faith practices. While it's not required for a long-lasting relationship, Mose and Gloria both agreed that having a foundation of faith contributed to their personal relationship success.

Common Interests

Another thread that tied together the Wright's story was their mutual love for music. Mose loved to sing and Gloria was a fabulous pianist, which added another layer of compatibility to their partnership. "He never had to look for an accompanist," Gloria said while affectionately patting her husband on the arm. They passed this love of music on to their posterity (which now includes over 130 people), and it was something that brought their family together. Their children recalled one Christmas when Mose sent home a reel recording of him singing the bass part to their favorite carols so they could sing together as a family while he was overseas. They also mentioned that their parents have many other common interests including art and history.

Research suggests that couples who regularly engage in activities together—[especially ones that are enjoyable or meaningful](#)—tend to feel closer and more connected over time. Shared interests create opportunities for couples to spend quality time together, develop inside jokes and traditions, and build a shared identity as partners. For Mose and Gloria, music wasn't just a hobby—it became a thread woven throughout their family life, strengthening

their bond and creating memories that have lasted generations.

Bids for Connection

We had the privilege of visiting with the Wrights for a full hour. As we all stood up to leave, and the other visitors began to chat together, I quietly observed Mose help his sweetheart up from her position on the loveseat. As she came to full height, Gloria whispered "hug me," in his ear, and he lovingly obliged. I was particularly moved by this tender, everyday moment that no one else was watching. This seemed to me like a well-worn routine for these two, whose every action was full of love and care for each other.

When I came home to my husband that day, I resolved to take advantage of more of these quiet moments. More than anything, it seems that long-lasting love is made up of these small, intentional calls and responses for connection and tenderness. Each time we notice and respond positively to our partner's requests for attention and care, it acts as an investment into our relationship's [emotional bank account](#). The more we invest, the stronger our relationship becomes, with connection serving as the foundation for trust, friendship, and resilience in a relationship.

Love that Lasts

When Mose said, "We didn't set out to break all the records—we just wanted to be married," he may not have realized how profound that statement really was. Strong marriages are rarely built on grand gestures alone. Instead, they are created through thousands of small choices made day after day: choosing connection over distraction, respect over criticism, commitment over convenience.

The Wrights didn't follow a magic formula. They simply built their life together around love, faith, shared interests, and a deep respect for one another. Over time, those small choices added up to something extraordinary—80 years of marriage, a legacy of more than 130 family members, and a love story that continues to inspire everyone who meets them.

Most of us may not reach eight decades of marriage. But every couple has the opportunity to build the kind of relationship that grows stronger with time—one small moment of connection at a time.