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THE BLOG

5 Stresses of Marriage and How You and Your Spouse Can Navigate Through Them

Life is filled with ups and downs and not every couple can navigate through them. Learning how to deal with stresses before they happen can increase the odds that your marriage will last. Here are five tips on handling the most common stresses you'll likely encounter in the life of your marriage.

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As wedding season begins, and so many couples are walking down the aisle, I ponder how many couples will make it last. Life is filled with ups and downs and not every couple can navigate through them. Learning how to deal with stresses even before they happen can greatly increase

the odds that your marriage will last. Here are five tips on handling the most common stresses you'll likely encounter in the life of your marriage.

1) Trauma: Emotional or Physical:

Whether it's the death of a relative, one of you losing your job or problems conceiving a child, you and your spouse are bound to face some sort of trauma. During these times, people will advise that you and your spouse should comfort each other, but when two people are going through the same emotional trauma, they'll likely deal with it in very different ways. Women often want to talk about their feelings a lot, while men may turn inward and try to deal with their feelings themselves. Neither way is better, what's important is to keep the lines of communication open with your spouse and to let them know how you're doing. Girlfriends will listen to you over and over again, but men aren't built that way and will eventually begin to tune out. When men tune out, women get hurt so to avoid that, love each other, but don't overburden each other.

2) When one partner's not happy with their life:

When one partner feels unhappy with their life that can be transferred into the marriage, even if their unhappiness has nothing to do with the marriage. For example, if their boss at work makes their life miserable, they may come home stressed and aggravated which can come out on the spouse inadvertently and affect the entire household. In order to live in a happy home, it's important to pay attention to your feelings and try to deal with them in a constructive way. Women will listen to men complain about their job incessantly, as long as they feel their husband is still happy to come home to them.

3) Parenting:

Children are a major cause of stress in a marriage. Many parents will tell you that their marriages were amazing until they had kids. That's not to say that we don't love our children and wish they weren't here, but

having children can cause more conflicts within marriage. We are products of the way we were raised and since your spouse was raised differently, they'll have different ideas of what's best for the children. With parenting there are many issues that come up on a daily basis, whether it's how to discipline or what chores the kids should have. One spouse may believe that children should work hard for their allowances; while another feels they should get allowance just for being a part of the family. There are lots of emotions that come in to raising little blank slates and these can be the biggest battles you and your spouse may have. In these cases, there has to be some compromising. Kids need to see that you're both on the same side, even if they realize the two of you don't agree on the issue, the fact that you both stick together on the result is all that matters. Undermining each other is what gives kids power and believe me, you don't want a fourteen year old to have more power in your household than you do. If they do, it will be pizza, chocolate and dirty jokes all day long,

4) Money:

Money is one of the main causes of divorce, which includes people who have it as well as people who don't. If you're a spender and your spouse isn't, there can be resentment. People have varying views on money and finding a place that you can both agree on, can be difficult. In reality, money should not be a major issue. If the bills are paid every month and you're saving for retirement as well as an emergency fund, you should each be able to spend money on "fun." In any given month one spouse will spend more than the other, but that should not be an issue as long as it's fair overall. Fairness is the most important thing, because that's really all people are striving for.

5) Sex:

When you first get married, you're having sex all the time, but as the

years pass, your sex life changes. That isn't to say it won't be even better, but the frequency will definitely change. Problems happen when one partner wants sex more than the other partner. This can make the partner who wants more sex resentful of the one who wants less. Wanting less sex doesn't mean you love the person less; it's just the way the hormones are reacting within your body. To keep the resentment out of the bedroom, each person has to compromise on their needs. We all have our signals that we use to let our partner subtly know whether we're in the mood or not so. Pay attention to those signals and try to be more understanding.

I've always hated when people say that marriage takes hard work, not because it doesn't, but because the word 'work' implies no fun and there can be, and should be, a great deal of fun within your marriage.

Marriage can be filled with stresses, but learning how to deal with them can you keep yours strong and happy.

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