

Surviving Marriage in a Pandemic

The following are suggestions on surviving the pandemic and its accompanying stressors, as a married couple. These were given during our mature married pastoral conversation a few days ago.

These suggestions come from three sources:

1. My own experience of being married for forty years.
2. From years of providing marital counseling
3. From the work and writings of Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott

1. Play together. In all times, especially difficult ones like these, it's necessary to stay connected with spirit of fun and play. [You are never too old to play and have fun.](#)

2. Take a walk outside or go for a drive. Take advantage of the abundance of open spaces we have in the Bay Area to safely walk and enjoy the change of pace. Coyote Point, Golden Gate Park, Lands End, the reservoirs parks and trails in San Mateo, and Half Moon Bay all come to mind.

3. Take the to reflect, be grateful, and dream together. Reflect on the past months, be grateful for your blessings, and dream of the future together. Set aside some time to connect and discuss the year behind and the months ahead. [Don't be afraid to dream again.](#) Make lists of the good things that have happened, what you're thankful for, and your dreams, then read them to each other.

4. Take time for each other. Do a daily debrief, about how you feeling and things that happened during the day. [Find some alone time and make it happen.](#)

5. Getting out of sync with each other. Life can throw us out of sync with one another from time to time. Remember: Always go back to basics when you find yourselves out of sync. Recall all the reasons you fell in love with your spouse and open yourself up to a renewed understanding of them. [Remember, keep short accounts with each other.](#)

6. Losing patience over simple annoyances. It's easy to become irritated and angry with the people we're closest to. We often lose patience and lash out at our spouses when we're annoyed or on edge. So when this happens take a time out. Even though this might seem like a little, inconsequential thing in the moment, the little things add up to a lasting negative impact over time. [Remember, have a conversation not a fight.](#)

7. When your fears and anxieties over take you. It's easy to drown ourselves in busyness and disconnect, then retreat into our own heads in times like these. However, doing so shuts out your spouse and makes them feel devalued. Try this: Be open and vulnerable with one another and share what you're each feeling. Then decide together what you will do to overcome these issues.

8. Cultivate intimacy. Intimacy is one of the greatest joys of marriage. This is something we must continue to cultivate, especially as our marriages mature. You can do this through spending time together, touch, learning each others love languages and doing some of the things mentioned above. Remember intimacy does not always mean or lead to sex. It's the feeling of appreciation and belonging to another that creates a sense of security, wholeness and blessing. [Touch is a wonderfully affirming thing.](#)

9. Boost each other's self-esteem. There are four major areas of our lives that the Parrott's call the four "legs" of self-esteem. I agree with them. I have listed them below. Remember, it's okay for one of you to be and extrovert and the other to be an introvert or anywhere along that scale. These are the things that drew you to each other, so appreciate them.

Spiritual: Remember you are spiritual people. Pray with and for one another. Speak to each other's giftedness.

Mental: Speak to the ways by which they show who they are through their mental capabilities. A little affirmation goes along way.

Physical: As our marriages and bodies have matured, we may not look or be as fit as we were when we were younger. No matter where your marriage is it is always a wise to find ways to let them know which of their physical attributes and appearance makes you happy. Every wife wants to know that she still pretty, attractive and desirable even as she ages. The same is true for men, they want to know that they are still handsome and desirable to the woman they married and have spent years with.

Emotional: What is your spouse's emotional intelligence? How do they display and manage their own feelings? How do they interact with others? Let them know what that means to you.