

A Marriage Survival Kit

By Jim and Mary Carroll
Rochester Worldwide
Marriage Encounter

A while ago a young man working in a Rochester store received a phone call from his wife. He was obviously delighted, and proud to mention to a customer that they liked to talk to each other during the day. The customer asked, "How long have you been married?"

"Two years," answered the young gentleman, and added, "Oh, I know, you're going to say, 'Just wait! That will wear off.'"

That's the message this couple had been hearing about marriage. The customer's answer is how we'd like to begin our message to all engaged and newlyweds. "No," he said, "we've been married many years and it doesn't have to wear off at all."

We in Marriage Encounter are couples who believe in marriage and try to live every day with a freshness and newness in our marriages. The commitment you are making to each other is a beautiful "yes" to a way of life that calls you to marry each other each day of your life.

How can a marriage survive, much less blossom, in a world that keeps saying, "Do your own thing. Fulfill yourself." How can we, as Catholic couples, speak to those approaching marriage in a way that will encourage and support their marriage?

We ask you to believe in your marriage, and take time for each other, now and every day.

Take time to talk about your marriage, your dreams, and what's important in your life together.

Take time to have fun together; enjoy each other's company.

Take time to make love. Your sexual relationship is so important to your marriage.

Take time to disagree. The only way you'll ever change and agree is to open yourselves and listen.

Take time to turn back to each other and heal each other when you hurt.

Take time to know that your love and caring for each other will blossom if you reach out to touch the lives of others together.

Take time for faith, to pray together. Center your life in Christ. Believe that whenever you decide to turn to each other in love, whether in joy or pain, hurt or pride, physical need or satisfaction, doubt or confidence. His grace will be present. The sacrament of marriage is different from just civil marriage in that the sacrament is a daily celebration of two people's commitment to be a sign of God's unconditional love to each other and to build a life of ministry to others among

a faith community of fellow believers.

We rejoice with you at this special time in your life. We believe in you. Our wish for you is that in building your life together, you experience much joy, peace, and love.

Rules For the Younger Set

If there are going to be small children in your wedding procession — a flower girl, ring bearer, or both — make sure they know what they are going to do.

If necessary, go over what will be happening several times so that both you and the youngsters will be comfortable and confident.

Remember that they, too, will be both excited and nervous about this big event, their chance to share some of your limelight, and that they will be doing their very best on your most important day to make it just a little bit more special.

Groom Hints

Do I owe a gift to any of the wedding members?

Yes. Some small gift should be made to your ushers or groomsmen. Dress studs, cufflinks, pocket jewelry or the like is appropriate. Those gifts serve as mementos of the occasion.

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