

Engaged:

Fully occupied or giving full attention.



It seems that in today's fast paced life, we rarely stop and give our *full* attention to anyone, especially our spouse. Yet, newly "in love" couples don't seem to have a problem being fully occupied with *the one* they love. I get it - Carmen's and my lives are really busy. We could go days without really stopping to *engage* with each other and connect. But that is the key - *connection!* We aren't going to truly connect with each other without *engaging* - without fully occupying ourselves with each other and giving our full attention. We *can* do it and so can *you!* But we must be purposeful about stopping life to give our attention to our spouse.

There are many benefits to engaging with your spouse. The feeling of *connection* is perhaps the most important. Marriages will go awry if couples do not connect with each. *Understanding*; we will better understand our spouse when we engage with him or her. *Intimacy* will increase; emotional closeness will grow, trust increase and it will be easier to be vulnerable with each other. Engagement will increase *marital satisfaction*; giving each other one's full attention will bring higher levels of satisfaction. Engaging with our spouse will improve our own lives. With the connection, understanding and intimacy; we feel better about ourselves and our lives. There still may be troubles, but it will be easier to deal with those troubles.

It sounds like a lot of work to engage with our spouse, but in reality, it is not as much about the work, as it is about being *intentional*. It doesn't have to be the serious, opening our soul to our spouse - it just a matter of taking some time to be fully aware of our spouse. Have fun! Do fun things on occasion, but in having that fun, but fully occupied with your spouse. It is taking to heart Pastor Ted Cunningham's exhortation to have a *daily disconnect*, a *weekly withdrawal*, and an *annual abandonment*. Spending a few minutes each day to disconnect from the world and stuff to connect with your spouse. On a weekly basis, withdrawing from the busyness to connect with your spouse. And at least once a year, taking a couple of days (or more), to really be engaged with your spouse - just the two of you.

The key is being engaged - fully occupied with your spouse; giving him or her your full attention. We all must be purposeful about making that happen - will you do that?

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Articles to check out:

Creative Ways to Connect With Your Spouse by Watermark Resources - www.reengage.org

15 Practical Tips on Being Present in a Relationship by Marriage.com Editorial Team