

Friendship

A bond of mutual affection



Friendship is a critical piece of a healthy, strong marriage and it is a piece that often is left behind in the busyness of life. One of the things Carmen and I did right at the beginning of our marriage was to seek mutual interests; finding things that we liked to do together. We took a craft class together and sought out shared activities we both enjoyed. (Even when we both worked 40 hours a week and had children at home) We've taken a dance class together and I quite sure that another is in my future. My lack of rhythm, makes dancing awkward, but the joy my wife receives when we dance makes it worthwhile. Carmen and I are *so* different (even still after 44 years) and yet we have cultivated a relationship that has brought that *bond of mutual affection* - of *friendship*.

Relationship research demonstrates that friendship in marriage is beneficial; spiritually, emotionally, even physically. It brings many positive aspects into the relationship and it *can* develop in *any* marriage. Are you dissatisfied in your marriage? Rather than trying to change your spouse into the person you think he or she should be, why not seek to be his or her friend? Take an interest in what they like to do, find things to do that you both enjoy. Carmen and I both love to travel and while we enjoy traveling with family and friends, we most like enjoying the beauty of God's creation *just the two of us*. You also can develop that friendship in your marriage, but you must be intentional about building friendship into your relationship.

It can be a lot of fun discovering what you like to do together. It may be playing games together, going to concerts or plays, going for a walk. But you must intentionally seek to find those things you can enjoy together. One thing comes mind; I was able to secure free tickets to a K-pop concert. Our kids and some friends wondered why 70 somethings would want to go to a Korean boy band concert; but we had a great time! The screaming girls got to be annoying and we most likely won't do it again, but it was a great experience that we had *together*.

Friendship requires building positivity into your relationship. Are you willing to drop the negativity and seek to do things that will build up your spouse? Speaking his or her love language, doing little things for him or her? There is so much you can do start building friendship into your marriage relationship. Would you be intentional and start today?

Helpful Resources:

Fortified Marriages Resource page: www.fortifiedmarriages.com - The Fortified Marriages Manual & Workbook is a great resource to help build friendship in your marriage.

Articles to check out:

Friendship in marriage by Katharine Hill - www.careforthefamily.org.uk

How to Become Your Spouse's Best Friend by Michael Hyatt - fullfocus.co