

Healthy Marriage Tips from A to Z
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Give to One Another

Give and Take - Matt's Thoughts

Every healthy relationship must consist of both give and take for it to last. We've got the "TAKE" part down with our hands tied behind our back and our fingers, toes, eyes and mid-digital hairs crossed. So we need to put our efforts into the "GIVE."

Give your sweetie a back-rub (if you know he/she would enjoy it). Give your spouse a break today from what is usually their duty or household chore by doing it for them - and then whether that act is noticed or not, give him/her a hug or a kiss. The paradox is that when we give, we are blessed tremendously. For one, usually our spouse will recognize our efforts and appreciate us for it. Sometimes they go after paybacks. When our spouse gives and we catch them, why not have some fun with it and say something like, "I'm gonna get you back," and look for an opportunity soon for "paybacks."

Secondly, I'm guessing you've experienced this paradox found in Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." You set out to serve someone else and in doing so you are blessed more than you bless those you serve. Maybe it is therapeutic or cathartic for you to look outside of yourself. More than likely, you benefit relationally because your interaction with those you are serving is insightful, memorable, or even profound. Most importantly, your heart becomes more like God's. That heart gives and ... gives some more.

Did You Even Notice? - Laura's Thoughts

I'd like to go with what Matt said about "whether that act is noticed or not..."

Wouldn't we like all of our acts of service and giving to be *noticed*? Don't we want to be verbally appreciated and lavished with praise for all we do? When we perform acts of kindness, break our backs doing the dirty work, unselfishly - day after day - work to meet the needs of our family...we'd all really like to be told thank you and to be given a wonderful appraisal of how great we are.

Oh my, but did I just say, "unselfishly"? Why did *that* word burst forth out of my little typing fingers?

Yes. Did you know that we can do all varieties of acts of kindness and service to our spouse, and much of it can be done with a heart of *selfishness*? With an attitude of martyrdom? With thoughts of "poor me, I work so hard to please my spouse - and for what?" haunting our minds while we labor? I know it's true because I've been guilty of it many times.

When we give to our families by serving and loving them - and especially when we offer love and care to our spouse, we must surrender our selves to God and to our dear one.

We don't give of ourselves so that we'll be noticed, patted on the back or lavished with praise. We give of ourselves because this is what God calls us to do. We love and serve our spouse because we made the commitment on our wedding day to love, honor and cherish.

We give of ourselves because it truly is more blessed to give than to receive.

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