

Healthy Marriage Tips from A to Z
by Matt and Laura Coppinger
HeavenlyHomemakers.com

Read Together

Being on the Same Page - Matt's Thoughts

Variety in marriage is fun. So, when it comes to reading together, mix it up, taking into consideration what would be good for the two of you. Laura and I have never gone wrong by reading books, articles, posts or other material that is written to help marriages. Even if it is not insightful for our context, at the very least we are side by side trying to align ourselves with each other. We have read from the Bible and discussed it and we have read material that is just plain fun...like a joke book. We don't read together every night, but we talk about what each of us is reading separately. I urge you to read at least one book together every year that is specifically for marriage relationships written by an author(s) who has a Christian worldview. Whether you borrow it from your local library, church library, or a friend, or whether you purchase it so that you can own it and reference it, the key word here is TOGETHER. If only one of you reads the book, then you're not on the same page...pun intended. Make it happen TOGETHER.

If you are like us, we have good ideas like reading a book together and then we blink and 2011 is almost history. This "good idea" of reading together probably won't take place unless you agree on the book and schedule it TOGETHER. Of course life happens and schedules need to be rearranged on occasion, but our experience has been that the time together and discussion that follows connects the two of us.

Yes, it needs to be intentional, but beware of the checklist mentality and the critiquing spirit - as in critiquing the author. Speaking from experience, I have needed to choose to have the right attitude when it is reading time. I remember one particular couple's devotional book that I was counting down the pages 'til it was complete. It just wasn't doing anything for me. The reason it wasn't doing anything for me was because of my attitude. Once I stopped the countdown and ceased being critical of the writer's style, then the discussion about its relativity to my marriage improved.

A suggestion if you are having trouble deciding: Visit with other couples who have healthy marriages and see what they would recommend reading and ask them why they would recommend it.

Yeah, What Matt Said - Laura's Thoughts

I think Matt said all of this wonderfully. The only thing I'd like to add is this: For those of you who don't enjoy reading, try books on CD. (I almost said "books on tape", which *like totally* tells you that we grew up in the 80's and that I used to have big hair.) You may not love every book or concept you read together, but be sure to ask yourself if you don't love it because it's difficult to

hear. Sometimes the truth hurts. Allow God to stretch you and challenge you with books that enrich your marriage.

Books That Have Benefitted Us or Other Couples (alphabetical order):

[*Created to Be His Help Meet*](#) by Debi Pearl

[*His Needs Her Needs*](#) by Willard F. Harley Jr.

[*Intended for Pleasure*](#) by Ed Wheat MD and Gaye Wheat

[*Love and Respect*](#) by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs

[*Loving Your Marriage Enough to Protect It*](#) by Jerry B. Jenkins

[*Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*](#) by John Gray

[*Night Light*](#) by Dr. James & Shirley Dobson

[*Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before \(and After\) You Marry*](#) by Les & Leslie Parrot (This is what we are currently reading and it good for us even after 17 years of marriage)

[*The 5 Love Languages*](#) by Dr. Gary Chapman

What have you and your spouse read together that you would recommend?

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