Medicine & Marriage

Secrets of Successful Physician Relationships

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I have no financial relationship with any product or book mentioned in this presentation.

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The Bad News....kind of.
Qualities that make for excellence in the physician (dedication to the pursuit of knowledge, commitment to patients, attention to detail, thoroughness, willingness to work hard for long periods of time) may be so demanding and absorbing that the needs of the physician’s family members may be neglected.
Past research suggested that physician marriages were 10% to 20% more likely to fail than general population marriages. Recent research suggests that physician marriages for the past 20 years are trending much more like the general population, if not better. That’s a good thing!
* Non-healthcare professionals  35%
* Nurses   33%
* Healthcare executives  31%
* Lawyers   27%
* Dentists   25%
* Physicians  24%
* Pharmacists  23%

Marital satisfaction is strongly associated with time spent awake with physician partner and number of nights per week on call.

Marital satisfaction has not been shown to be associated with total hours worked, specialty area, or practice setting.

Dual physician marriages have more time challenges, but more empathy and understanding between partners.


Other Stats....

* Female physicians are more likely to report being divorced than male physicians.
* Female physicians report making greater professional adjustments than male physicians to accommodate for household responsibilities. Feel more pressure in the work/life balance arena.
MARRY A DOCTOR FOR LONG LASTING MARRIAGE: STUDY

An American study has showed that there are certain advantages of being married to a doctor, such as long-lasting marriage. According to the research by University of Michigan Medical School, doctors tend to marry later and their marriages last longer even as they face the challenges like others with demanding professions, of giving time and attention to their partners and families.

Researchers interviewed doctors and spouses to learn how ‘medical marriages’ succeed and the resulting report was rich with data and anecdotes about living-in-laws, role definition, financial security and the advantage of children avoiding the emergency room because mom or dad knew how to stitch a bad cut.

The study also listed the strategies for success when one or both spouses are doctors including acknowledging the benefit of being a physician in a relationship.

They also said that they appreciated having role definition, knowing what they needed to do...
Additional Good News

The past 40 years of relationship research provides us with a wealth of valuable information addressing what works in long term romantic relationships and how to choose great partners.
Choosing Wisely

- At least....all four seasons! See them in action in different contexts.
- If you marry before age 20 and never obtain a bachelors degree you have nearly a 51% chance of divorcing.
- If you marry at 25 or older and obtain a bachelors degree you have about a 19% chance of divorcing.
- Be mindful of major differences in socio-economic backgrounds, age, religious preferences and cultural backgrounds.

Choosing Wisely – Partner Qualities

- Kindness/Generosity
- Open Mindedness/Ability to compromise
- Non-Defensive/Approachable
- Integrity/Trust
- Self Worth
- Committed to personal/relationship growth
Six Common Traits......

1. **Physical attraction** between partners.
2. Is the relationship out of **clear choice** vs. obligation or fear of being alone?
3. Share **fundamental** values, beliefs, interests and goals.
4. Able to **express anger** directly and resolve differences through communication/compromise.
5. Experience laughter, **fun**, pleasure, and play with each other.
6. Able to express support for each other and **support** each other’s activities, interests, and careers.
The Marriage Pill

- Live longer
- Better physical and mental health
- Happier
- More sex/better sex
- Increased wealth/more successful in careers
- Heal from wounds and surgery quicker
- Children more emotionally stable/academically successful

Five Essential Marital Skills
Friendship

- Showing interest, asking questions, emotional bank account.
- 5 to 1 positive to negative ratio
- Beware of the four horsemen - criticism, defensiveness, contempt, stonewalling
- 93%!!
- Small steps make big ripple effects

Beware of the Four Horseman

- **Criticism**: Attacking the person, not the behavior. Different than feedback.
- **Defensiveness**: Feeling you have to be on guard most of the time.
- **Contempt**: Disgusted with spouse as a person. Eye rolling.
- **Stonewalling**: Emotionally checked out.
Avoid the Divorce Land Mines

Relationship Quality

- Infatuation!!
- You deceived me..
- Love

Time

Relationship Quality
Beware of Marital Myths

1. I married my “soul mate.”
2. Marriage **should** make me happy.
3. **Conflict** in marriage is harmful and should be **avoided**.
4. Loneliness and boredom will be **cured** by marriage.
5. We must do **everything** together to stay happily married.
6. **Children** will hold a failing marriage together.
7. Loving behaviors should only be done when it feels **genuine/natural**.
8. A sure sign of true love is if my spouse **instinctively** knows that I need and want in the relationship.
Love Languages

Discover and act on your partner’s language

- Quality Time
- Acts of Service
- Physical Touch
- Gifts
- Words of Affirmation

“When I do ________, my partner feels loved.”

Recipes = opinions/background

Your personal **recipes** are not the **TRUTH** for others, particularly your partner.

When one or both partners believe their recipes are the **TRUTH**, harmful **conflict** will flourish.

Examples – holidays, leisure time, likes, desires, religion, parenting
Summary of the Five Skills

1. Friendship
2. Avoid the Divorce Land Mines
3. Beware of Marital Myths
4. Love Languages
5. Recipe Wars
Self Help Books

5 SIMPLE STEPS to Take Your MARRIAGE from GOOD to GREAT

THE Five LOVE LANGUAGES
How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate

THE Seven PRINCIPLES for Making Marriage WORK
A Practical Guide from the Country’s Foremost Relationship Expert

THE Medical Marriage
Sustaining Healthy Relationships for Physicians and their Families

FIGHTING for YOUR MARRIAGE
A Deluxe Revised Edition of the Classic Best Seller for Enhancing Marriage and Preventing Divorce

THE SEX-STARVED Marriage
BOOSTING YOUR MARRIAGE LIBIDO
A Couple’s Guide

for better
THE SCIENCE OF A GOOD MARRIAGE

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