

10 New Year's Resolutions Newlyweds Should Make Together

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Lifestyle

By Jenn Sinrich December 6, 2017

Start the New Year off right with these expert-approved resolutions to help strengthen your relationship.



Photo: [Shaw Photography Co.](#)

You may have heard a thing or two about how marriage is hard work—which is something you might already know a thing or two about (though it doesn't come close to compare to the hard work involved in wedding planning!). The truth is—relationships of any kind are not easy and marriage is far from the exception. As anyone who's been married even a few months, let alone several decades, will tell you, it takes a lot of effort and commitment on both sides to reap the fruits of a happy marriage. That's why there's truly no better time like the present, while you're in the midst of setting your New Year's resolutions, to focus on the small and big ways you can improve your marriage each day.

Here are some expert-approved New Year's resolutions that will set you both on the path to a long-term togetherness.

Express one appreciation towards each other each day

It might seem rather obvious—the importance of saying how much you appreciate each other on the reg—but experts say this is one of the first actions to fall off the bandwagon in unhappy marriages. The appreciation can be specific or general, but Dr. Rachel Needle, Psy.D, licensed psychologist and certified sex therapist, says telling your partner something you appreciate about them each day can lead to feeling appreciated, positive feelings and can foster connection.

Communicate and talk openly

Neglecting to tell your partner how you feel, even once in awhile, can lead to pent-up frustration and an overall lack of understanding (which can also be frustrating to deal with). Experts agree that communication is key, and trying to communicate more effectively with your partner is one of the best New Year's resolutions you can make. “Be sure to communicate in a healthy way, even regarding issues that you don't agree on (i.e. how to load the dishwasher or how to fold laundry),” says Dr. Needle. “Listen to your partner and do your best to understand their feelings.”

Plan time together

Connection doesn't just happen or remain without some serious effort being put towards ensuring it's still there. This is something you should be doing every day, says Dr. Needle. She suggests setting aside 10 minutes each day to talk and spend undistracted time together. “This time is for you to connect with your partner and talk about deeper topics or to continue to get to know your partner,” she adds. “What is most important is to just set aside time to spend together that is free of distraction.” This allows you and your partner to reconnect, enjoy being with each other and focus your attention just on each other.



Photo: [Kate Wenzel Photography](#)

Show physical affection daily

Kissing and hand-holding might not be top-of-mind when you've just got home after a long and busy day at work, but experts say that physical affection is the glue that holds a marriage together—and it's one of the easiest New Year's resolutions you can make. "At the beginning of a relationship couples often enjoy deep kissing and touching, but that often subsides with relationship duration," Dr. Needle explains. "Continuing to hug, kiss, snuggle is an important component of a healthy relationship and will increase the likelihood of remaining sexually active with your long-term partner."

Put sex back on the schedule

It's normal for a couple's sex life to wax and wane over the years, but you shouldn't let weeks go by without it. According to Deb Castaldo, PhD, couples and marriage therapist and author of *Relationship REBOOT*, a healthy sex life determines whether your marriage will grow or deteriorate in the years to come. "There are infinite number of ways to keep sex vibrant, but all require open communication and a serious commitment to nurturing it," she says. "You may try doing one thing different each time, sharing a new fantasy, shopping for toys, sprucing up your bedroom or surprising each other with some new bedroom attire."

Have fun together

At the beginning of your courtship, you probably had the time of your lives together, which is how you two kids fell in love in the first place. But, over the years, the responsibilities involved in maintaining a long-term relationship and marriage take a toll and it can be easy to forget about the things you used to laugh over. That's why Paulette Sherman, Psy.D., psychologist, director of My Dating & Relationship School and author of *Dating from the Inside Out*, recommends setting aside regular time to be silly, laugh, have fun and lighten up. "This will remind you of the joy of life and the fun times that you can still have with each other."

Take technology breaks

If most weeknights consist of the two of you sitting side-by-side on the couch with your smartphones or tablets in hand or nearby and your Netflix queue lined up, it's time to unplug—one of the more difficult New Year's resolutions for many of us, but important nonetheless. Castaldo recommends committing to technology-free time at least a few times a week. "Silence all your technology and pay attention to connecting with your partner," she says. "I also recommend one day on the weekend without technology. The world will keep spinning if you are off social media for a day!"



Lecture less

As frustrating as your partner can sometimes be, ordering, commanding and controlling have no part in a healthy marriage, says Castaldo. "No matter how much you annoy each other or want something, you have no right to tell your adult partner what to do." She suggests checking your controlling impulses at the door and taking special precaution if

you've had a long or stressful day. "On an ongoing basis, discuss how the two of you are doing with keeping power and control in a healthy balance in your relationship," she adds.

Review your conflict and anger management skills

It's perfectly normal if you and your spouse fight—it comes with the relationship package. But fighting in a healthy way is key to the longevity of your marriage. "Every time you lash out in anger, refuse to listen or give any solutions to your spouse, you are killing off feelings of love and creating a breeding ground for a relationship-threatening super-virus," says Castaldo. "Review how the two of you are doing with creating open and loving responses in conflict and try your hardest to practice active listening and apologizing when you're in the wrong."

Have a weekly date night

Whether you recently got hitched or are coming up on your fifth year wedding anniversary, Dr. Sherman says it's important never to stop dating. "Research shows that a weekly date vastly improves sexual satisfaction and lowers divorce," she says. "A date night is a time to have fun, get away from all responsibilities and focus on each other—it can bring back fun and romance and it's a time to be present without being on electronics or prioritizing all the other things or people."