

# Marriage Values



*Explore these issues within the context of your family of origin:*

- Expressing anger
- Showing affection
- Spending money
- Male or female roles
- Education
- Dealing with crises
- Things important to mother
- Things important to father

*Discuss these values within YOUR marriage:*

- Time — alone, with others, and as a couple
- Careers and education
- Housecleaning and home maintenance
- Money — save/spend; how to prioritize
- Sexuality — frequency; inside/outside the marriage
- Parenting issues
- Spirituality — church/other organizations
- Inlaws

# Love & Marriage

**LOVE AND MARRIAGE** have become more complex in the past few decades. As the divorce rate continues to rise and the pressures of daily living take their toll on relationships, many couples have been searching for ways to maintain a healthy marriage. Books on relationships have become popular as couples struggle to understand the essential elements that will help them keep their marriage on track.

**THE MILITARY LIFESTYLE** can create additional pressures on couples who are already struggling with communication and intimacy. Here are some helpful tips many military couples have used to strengthen their relationships:



 Communicate clearly and specifically with each other about expectations, needs, and feelings. Check out assumptions and ask questions to clarify. Many arguments occur as a result of simple misunderstandings that can easily be avoided with clear communication.

 Build a strong sense of commitment, trust, honesty, and openness. Keep your promises and be able to count on each other. Be loyal to one another to create a sense of safety and security in the relationship.

 Conflict is normal. Work toward resolution with a spirit of teamwork rather than as a battle to be won. Negotiation, compromise, and give-and-take can help create a win-win situation. Respect your partner's right to have a different opinion, and agree to disagree when necessary.

 Make a point of saying or doing something supportive or affirming for your partner daily. Often the little things are taken for granted over time, but are helpful in maintaining a happy relationship.

 Always be respectful and courteous. Good manners still apply when you are married. Don't interrupt or dominate the discussion. Say "please" and "thank you."

 Anger is normal and how it is expressed is important. Don't attack your partner. Stick to one issue at a time. Begin statements with "I feel . . ." rather than "You always . . ." or "You never . . . ."

 Make time for sharing and discussing. Maintain respect and give the discussion full attention. Turn off the TV or radio when discussing important issues.

 Unconditional love and acceptance are important. Whereas some behaviors cannot be tolerated in a healthy marriage, learning to tolerate smaller faults or personality differences can help. Don't try to change your partner into someone they are not.

When couples have difficulty resolving relationship problems on their own, talking with family and friends or reading books can help generate new ideas and solutions. Many military couples have sought free and confidential counseling through Fleet and Family Support Centers. Counselors help couples clarify obstacles and develop solutions to marital problems. By following some of the tips listed above or using other resources, many couples have strengthened the quality of their relationships.