

“DAILY STUFF,” SECRET TO KEEPING INTIMACY ALIVE by Mike Danchak

Couples go through an unsettling emotional transition once the “honeymoon” stage is over. The initial passion and butterflies in the stomach you once felt are gone. During the early years of marriage (1-3 years) body chemistry causes you to treat your spouse in ways that meet their needs. These need meeting behaviors create the feelings of being loved.

The chemistry of love changes with the passing of time. Not being aware of this change, some couples think there are no longer in love. Couples end up in my office saying, “We don’t have the feelings we once had for each other. We’re afraid our love has died!”

To keep intimacy (emotional and physical connection) alive you first need to be aware of this transition. Second, you need to understand what causes the chemistry of love. I call this the commitment state of marriage. You must make a commitment to knowing what your spouse needs from you (need meeting behaviors) in order for your spouse to experience the feeling of being loved. Chemistry in your marriage is all about how you treat one another. It’s a 180 degrees different from infatuation...feelings cause you to give to your spouse. Now, commitment to meeting your spouses’ relational needs creates the chemistry of love.

In this article, I want to share behaviors that we seldom think cause the feelings of being loved. However, relational studies find that this is an often overlooked area where you can say to your spouse, “I love you,” and to cause your spouse to experience the feelings of being loved.

Opportunities to feel loved in **Daily Stuff!**

Here is how a typical day looks in many marriages.

1. Wake up
2. Drink coffee
3. Get the kids off to school
4. Drive to Work
5. Work
6. Drive Home
7. Fix dinner
8. Get the kids ready for bed
9. Watch TV
10. Go to Bed
11. Next day, Repeat steps 1-10
12. You can adjust the routine things to fit your daily schedule.

Within the everyday events of life (daily stuff) are golden opportunities to build intimacy. Marriage research shows that happily married couples do a lot of turning toward each other (being together) whenever they get the chance. They look for ways to be physically and emotionally close to each other.

Turning toward each other means making each other your number one priority. In coaching with couples, I help them build intimacy in their relationship by paying attention to the daily small stuff as an opportunity to develop intimacy.

Take a couple of minutes to reconnect when you come home from work by talking together, go grocery shopping together, take a walk together, sit together when you watch TV, and you can add other intimacy building opportunities through the boring bonding events in your daily schedule.

One couple keeps their intimacy on fire by a tradition of shopping at Wal-Mart every weekend. Both are busy executives and this gives them a block of time together. During this “daily stuff” experience, serendipitous conversations occur that keep them emotionally connected.

Although these habits are all very simple, they are the things that can develop a lasting, concrete relationship. These small gestures are critical in building intimacy in a marriage...you can still have excitement in your intimate moments together.

COACHING TIPS

1. Take time to review your daily schedule.
2. look for ways to use “daily stuff” time to keep the fires of intimacy alive in your marriage.