

1. Be Honest

The first thing that you need to know about marriage counseling is that you and your partner have to be honest. If you aren't honest with each other and with your counselor, then you won't be able to find out what the problems are. If you don't know what the problems are, then you can't fix them. So you end up with even more problems that you just aren't fixing. By being completely honest, you can let your partner know what you like and don't like in your relationship and that allows them to make changes (and you as well).

2. Communicate Effectively

You need to communicate with your partner and your counselor. When you speak up and talk about what's bothering you, it's going to improve your relationship. Communicating effectively means that when the counselor or your partner asks you a question or have a problem, you discuss it. Only by being willing and able to discuss everything you experience or feel will you be able to overcome it. When you talk about the things that you aren't happy about when they first happen so that you and your partner can discuss them effectively and resolve the issue.

3. Remind Yourself Why You're Together

After you've been together for a minute, it can be easy to forget what initially brought you two together, and even easier to take each other for granted. That's why counselor often suggest couples make an effort to keep things fresh, with a few simple tricks. Add in spicing up your date nights, having more sex, and being more affectionate, and you should be feeling that spark again in no time.

4. Disagree Healthily

Every relationship is going to have times where you and your partner disagree with one another. There are going to be times when you just can't figure out what to do next, or you just aren't sure how to agree on an issue. Sometimes you can agree to disagree, but other times you may need to make a single decision as a couple. When this happens, it's important that you know how to disagree healthily and how to resolve that disagreement healthily also, without attacking one another.

5. Be Willing To Change

If you're not willing to make changes in your life, you'll never be able to improve your relationship itself. If you're willing to make those changes after talking with your counselor and your partner, you can get started on what you want for your future and your married life. The willingness that you have for change is what's going to mean positive or negative results. **If you refuse to make any changes, it's likely that your relationship won't be capable of improvement and you may want to end things right now.**

6. Keep Your Meetings

When you schedule meetings for your partner and you with your counselor, you want to make sure you keep each of them. If you don't have the appointments, you can't overcome the problems that you're facing. That means making sure that you attend your scheduled meetings to provide all of the things that we've talked about already.

7. Spend Time Together

Spending time together is extremely important, and it's something that a lot of couples don't even think about. You assume that you're spending enough time together because you live together, but are you paying attention

to your partner during those times? It's easy to fall into a habit of simply living together more as roommates than anything. Schedule some time to spend together, actively doing something together. Whether that's talking at the kitchen table or going out on a date doesn't matter. What matters is that you're paying attention to one another.

8. Listen To Your Partner

Sitting down and talking to each other once in a while is going to be important. This is how you learn about each other's day and about the things that are important to each other. You're going to get to know each other better and better every single day if you actually sit down and talk and then listen to what each other has to say. You might be surprised at the things you learn and just how much closer you feel to your partner when you're starting this process.

9. Be Supportive

Your partner is going to go through things in their life that are important to them and difficult for them. They are going to have times when they feel like they're all alone or trying to struggle through something without help. That's when you need to be their support system. Whether they're struggling with something positively or negatively, it's important that you be there and that you help them through it. Show them that you believe in them and that you're going to be right there by their side no matter what might happen in their life.

10. Be Positive

Being supportive is also going to require you to be positive. **It means talking to your partner about what's great about them and praising them for the good things that they do.** Whether it's something they did around the house, with the kids, for you, at work or anywhere else, praise their accomplishments and let them know that you noticed the things that they did. Recognize their contributions and be grateful for them. Don't take them for granted or ignore the things that they're doing to support you and the rest of the household or family as well. So many relationship problems can crop up when one or both partners feel neglected or unappreciated, which is why compliments really can go a long way in improving a relationship. Not only do compliments show that you love your partner, but they can also help encourage positive change.

11. Keep Each Other In The Loop

There are going to be times when you're doing things without one another. There are going to be times when you want to do something on your own or when something doesn't concern the other person. That doesn't mean you should just go on with your life entirely on your own. It's very easy to suddenly find yourself doing everything alone because you started with just a few things. Find a way to talk to your partner about everything that's going on in your life and be open about it. Letting your partner know what you're doing is a way to keep them in the loop about your life.

12. Make Decisions Together

When it comes to anything that is going to have an impact on both of you and your relationship, it's important that you make those decisions together. Don't just make a decision and assume your partner is going to go along with it. Instead, take the time to think about what this decision is going to mean for your relationship and the two of you and then talk it over. Let your partner know your thoughts and also let them express their thoughts so you can work something out that works for both of you.

13. Be Spontaneous

Sometimes it pays to just be spontaneous once in a while. There's nothing about gender roles that matter with this because either person can be spontaneous and do something special for the other. Showing your partner you care is something that you should be doing as often as possible, and sometimes that means doing something sweet and nice for them that comes completely out of the blue. It doesn't need to be anything big, but something little can make their day and help them see how much they mean to you.

14. Finding The Help You Need

The first thing you need to do is make sure that you find someone who can help you with the process. You want to find a counselor that you and your partner trust, which will help you with the different skills and techniques it takes to improve your marriage.

15. Embrace The Fact You're Both So Different

If you and your partner are total opposites, you might start to wonder why the heck you're together. And you might even think your differences are the source of all your problems. But counselors are often quick to point out that opposites attract for a reason. *"Partners often seem perplexed how they could have possibly ended up with a spouse or partner who is so opposite from them," licensed psychotherapist Karen R. Koenig, MEd, LCSW, tells Bustle. "I explain that their choice is due to evolution, whose main purpose is to keep us alive and procreating. In evolutionary terms, a child has more probability surviving and thriving if its parents have complementary strengths."* So the fact you're opposites can be quite beneficial — especially if you learn to embrace it.

16. If You Need To, It's OK To Go To Bed Angry

It's often suggested that couples never "go to bed angry," but instead make up right away, so they don't stew in their fury the whole night through. Sometimes, you just need to part ways for a few hours. (Or go to bed.) "Only once you've cooled down can you really address an issue in the relationship positively and productively". So if you're mad and it's bedtime, you can either argue, fight, and yell until the wee hours of the morning, or you can accept that the problem is what it is right now, go to sleep, and wake up in a much better place to handle it.

17. Relationship Issues Are Never One Person's Fault

While it may be tempting to blame each other for the problems in your relationship, counselors want you to know it's hardly ever one person's fault. Instead the problem is in the interaction, the dynamic that the two have developed and honed over time. Instead, you'll want to look at the "life cycle" or your arguing pattern. There is usually a trigger, not the same thing every time but rather a feeling that is elicited in one partner. The beauty is both partners have the ability to interrupt this dance at any point in time. The struggle is forcing yourself to do something new so you don't stay gripped in the power of the pattern."

18. The Sooner You Stop Assuming, The Better

Nine times out of 10, when we assume we know what our partners are thinking, we are usually 100 percent wrong. That's because a lot of times we view a situation solely from only your perception of a situation. Without complete communication with each other, assumptions can start to creep in about what the other person is thinking, feeling, or doing. Some couples will then act on their own perception without fully getting the whole truth. Instead of jumping to conclusions, it's much better to ask questions. Ask questions based on what you know and confirm the truth or complete understanding of it. It's less stressful and you cultivate a deeper connection with your partner since you both understand each other's point of view."

19. Use "I" Statements For Healthier Arguments

The best course of action, whilst having a disagreement, is to state your case using "I" statements, which essentially means talking to your partner without pointing fingers. Don't tell another person how to feel, who they are, or lecture them, instead, use 'I' statements to describe your thoughts and feelings about a situation. 'You' statements will put your partner on the defensive. Honestly sharing your own thoughts and experiences through 'I' statements opens up dialogue and allows your partner to engage you with empathy."

20. It's Important For Relationships To Grow & Change

While you might want your relationship to stay exactly "how it used to be," getting stuck in the past can actually be detrimental. Understand that you, your partner, and your relationship are dynamic and always changing, the moment you find yourself in the 'it used to be like this' mode, you are trying to work backwards in time. What can you do, what can they do, and what can you do together to make the relationship work well now, today? Figure it out, because, "getting stuck in the past will kill your relationship."

21. It Really Is All About The Little Things

While you might think that grand gestures of love are the keys to success, counselors tend to point out that it's more about the little things that add up to a healthy relationship. A good relationship consists of doing small things consistently and checking in with each other. Huge gestures are nice but what really builds emotional connection is listening to each other and becoming intimately aware of each other's dreams and aspirations.

22. Schedule In Time For Sex

In the early days of a relationship, sex tends to happen easily and often, because you're still so excited about dating and spending time together. But as you get further into the relationship, and your busy lives start to get in the way, sex can start to take a back seat. This can be a sign of a problem in a relationship, but it can also be the cause. Our sex lives are like a barometer that can be used to gauge how things are going in the relationship, often, when the relationship is suffering, so too does the sex life. Of course make sure you are both comfortable with the time you choose, and in the moment, but this hack can help when it's been a while.

23. Be Mindful When You're Together

Couples tend to ignore each other when they're together; again due to the fact it's easy to take your partner for granted. Add in the fact we all have our phones in our faces, and it just compounds the issue. We live in an age when distractions are everywhere this can be overworking, hobbies, smartphones, and more. It's easy to find yourself so distracted in a relationship that you never truly spend quality time with your partner. So, put away the phone, turn off the TV, and spend mindful time with your partner on a regular basis, whether it's going for a walk or simply cuddling. And you should see your relationship improve, as a result.

24. Give Each Other The Benefit Of The Doubt

When you're angry, it's easy to dig in your heels, act stubborn, and see your partner as your enemy. However, the best way forward in relationships is to give your partner the benefit of the doubt, then have a conversation about issues that are bothering you. Relationships are tough, and are often fraught with disagreements and assumptions — all of which can make for an incredibly unhealthy situation. So do like the counselor do, and take a step back, see your relationship for what it really is, make an effort, and you should be able to smooth over almost any issue, with ease.

25. Let go of your past

Don't keep on reminding your partner of the wrongs they have done, let it go. Start on a new page. Forgiveness is key for a happy marriage.

How do I succeed in marriage counseling?

To succeed in couples therapy or marriage counseling, you and your partner must be invested in the process. You must be committed to putting effort into counseling. This will mean a variety of things. First, it means putting effort into showing up. Then, it means being vulnerable enough to open up to a counselor or counselor, both individually and as a couple. You and your spouse will have to talk to one another and might have to have some hard conversations in counseling, depending on what you're there for. You must be honest. If something is on your mind that relates to your partnership and it weighs on you, you need to talk about it. It will hold you back both in therapy and in the success of your relationship if you don't talk about what's going on internally. For example, if you have a fear of being "needy" and it makes you afraid to talk about your needs in counseling, that something to move toward. We all have needs, and there's nothing to be ashamed of in couples therapy. A marriage counselor is there to be an objective third-party that helps you and your partner navigate things productively and work through any issues you might have. Counseling is an excellent place to talk about things that you've been nervous to verbalize. It is a safe space where you are there to strengthen the bond you have with your partner and work through anything you have going on that affects your relationship.

Does counseling really help marriages?

Many couples find marriage counseling effective and beneficial. Statistics indicate that just over 97% of couples who seek marriage counseling got the assistance they were looking for. Counselors who work with couples are well-versed in relationships sex marriage family and other issues. Counseling is your safe space to talk about whatever's on your mind. In some cases, people might go to both marriage counseling and individual therapy.

For more tips contact Priscilla a Family Counsellor on 0772 418 175 / 0719 418 176

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