

# Marriage Means by JENNIFER PFEIFFER, LMFT Compromise and Patience

So you've looked long and hard and finally landed yourself with the perfect mate. Now the question is, how to stay happy and content with one another *after* the big day.

The secret to a happy marriage is to give your marriage your full attention. You may be under the impression that you will just continue on with your life as you knew it as a "swingin' single," and that this new union will adjust and survive. It's you, however, who can now prepare to start adjusting.

Showing respect and appreciation to your new spouse on a daily basis is a must. From thanking them for completing a chore around the house to appreciating the time they

spend with *your* family, we thrive on hearing from our spouse that they actually notice when we do something nice. Receiving this positive recognition and feedback inspires a spouse to want to help out more often, so practice the simple phrase "thank you," and use it even for a small thoughtful gesture.

Secondly, become interested and knowledgeable regarding what your new spouse does for a living. Remember often to ask questions about what they are working on at work and what they think about it. Our careers are a significant part of our lives, so caring enough about our spouse to understand what they really do is vital. If your spouse is not happy in their career, it will affect their attitude at home, so take the time to know what they're going through and, if necessary, help them brainstorm a change in profession or work environment if needed.

Keep having fun together. Take the time to plan activities to do with one another;

things you've always done as a couple as well as trying new hobbies that perhaps you've never done before.

Show your new spouse patience. Transitioning into a married couple from two singles takes time as we try to hang onto our independence while becoming a team all at the same time. Try to be understanding of your spouse and yourself if this transition does not come easily or immediately. This is a time of great change and growth for both of you.

Couples today are choosing to prepare for the challenges and transitions of marriage in pre-marital counseling. This can include options such as a weekend retreat together with a group of other engaged couples, or weekly sessions for a couple of months with a therapist. Discussion of one another's expectations of the marriage and concerns ahead of time can lead to a smooth road in the future. Some topics that can be covered in counseling are money management, religion, location in which to live, relatives or families of origin and career goals. Good luck and enjoy planning your wedding.

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