

Married With Children

by Jean MacKenzie

There are many things that can distract you from making your marriage a priority. In this busy world it seems that there is always something else that needs to be done and it can be very easy to put your marriage on the back burner. If you are a parent then you have an additional obstacle to overcome. Few parents look upon a newborn child and anticipate that that child could be the future source of marital disharmony.

Of course children are not personally responsible for marital problems. Children do not deliberately set out to destroy marriages. In fact children have a strong need for the sense of security that comes from having parents who have a strong relationship.

Nonetheless, children are demanding and meeting their needs is very important. Because they are so important it can be easy to justify putting your obligations to your children before the needs of your relationship. It is imperative that you realize that one of your children's greatest needs is that of the security that can only come from knowing that their parents have a strong, loving and committed relationship. That is, you can best serve your children by putting your marriage relationship first.

You have to give yourself permission to spend time nurturing your relationship while not feeling guilty that you are neglecting your children in some way. If you put your relationship on hold to focus on your children you risk serious damage to your relationship and the insecurity of a wounded parental relationship may negate much of the effort put into your children.

If you have a child with special needs the already enormous demands of having children can increase greatly and it can be exceedingly difficult to find the time to nurture your relationship. If your child requires constant care you may wonder how you could ever find time to be alone with your spouse. However, for your child too the need for a secure parental relationship is very important and I encourage you to do whatever you can to have some quality time alone with your spouse.

All married couples need to take the time to build intimacy. You must set aside frequent and regular time to spend together as a couple. Time spent paying bills and discussing things that need to be done doesn't count. If you have a shared faith, take the time to pray together. Take time for meaningful conversation. Do something you enjoy doing together and don't underrate the importance of taking time to make love.

If you can't get out of the house you may have to be creative. My husband and I have 4 young children and no family nearby. Sometime we will buy packaged, restaurant quality food, put the kids to bed, light some candles, and have a romantic dinner together. If we turn the lights down low enough we can forget for a moment that the house is a mess.

Whatever you do make it about you as a couple. Do something that allows you to express your love and appreciation for each other while deepening your relationship. If you do you will find that the whole family will be stronger. Now, if you will excuse me, I must go find my husband.

About Jean

Jean is a marriage and couples counsellor whose approach in working with couples involves the

development of techniques for solving current problems and achieving unending growth in relationships. Jean strives to assist couples of various backgrounds in learning to solve their own challenges because a couple that knows how to problem solve can keep their love—and their marriage—alive forever.

Jean also offers Catholic counselling to couples wishing to incorporate the Catholic faith into the counselling process, helping couples to develop a relationship pleasing to each other and God. Jean has a Master of Arts in Counselling from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has trained in marriage and family therapy.

So, if you think that your relationship could use a little help-- or even a lot of help,--give Jean a call today and take that important first step in turning your marriage into a “happily ever after” story.

Where do you start?

Look no further.

1. **Go to www.jeanmackenzie.com and sign up for my free newsletter “Happily Ever After: A Guide to Healthy Relationships,” filled with helpful tips on how to nurture your relationship.** You will also receive the free report, **“10 Tips for Resolving Anger in Your Relationship.”**
2. **Call today for a free, no obligation, 20 minute phone consultation.** We will discuss your problems and together decide how I might be able to help you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jean sees clients in her office in Fredericton, NB and offers telephone and online counselling. She can be reached at:

Phone: 506-461-7279

Email: jean@jeanmackenzie.com