

CLASS 7

MARITAL CONFLICT & THEIR ISLAMIC SOLUTION

Marital conflict is one of those “make you or break you” phenomena. It has the ability to destroy a couple and land them in a heart-breaking divorce, or it has the ability to deepen a couple’s bond to the extent that they feel something that seems like a taste of Jannah. On an individual level, marital conflict can lead a person towards maturation and self-improvement. What most couples fail to realize is that conflict doesn’t have to drive them. People are not the pawns of their emotions, destined to argue and fight because they can’t help what they feel, unless they choose to be.

Conflict is inevitable in any close relationship. It’s impossible for two people to be emotionally close without some inherent differences, which lead to anxiety. This anxiety is characterized by feelings of fear, anger, frustration, or disappointment and it is very natural. Differences that you can live with when it comes to a friend or even a relative can rock your world when it comes to your spouse, because you have to live with this person every day—you want to be extremely close to them, yet the love you share with them is not unconditional. Having a difference with a spouse may also be a bit of a reality-check, because it makes you realize that just because you believe something, that doesn’t make it right. Even though we logically know that some differences can be valid, we still feel insecure having a difference like that with our spouse. These differences can be related to faith, family, upbringing, culture, politics, intimacy, or even something as trivial as food or favourite book genres.

Husbands and wives in conflict often sound like whiny or angry children when they share their problems with a third party. He’ll complain that she doesn’t ever want to get intimate, and she’ll complain that he’s lazy around the house and still on his mother’s apron-strings. Perhaps they’ll come to a compromise to both start meeting each other’s needs more, but both are always keeping a close on eye and a tight score, and as soon as one person starts to falter the other withdraws in turn.

While it is important for us to understand our responsibilities to our spouse, if we never go beyond that, we’ll have a technically functioning marriage but an emotionally dysfunctional marriage. Many are the people who fulfil the fiqhi requirements of marriage but are still unhappy. They’re unhappy because in spite of meeting each other’s needs, they still have conflict about those needs, and they don’t understand why that is or how to resolve it. For instance, a couple may be having intimate relations on a regular basis, so technically this aspect of their marriage is being fulfilled in a fiqhi perspective, but they may still be having a huge conflict about it. There is an entire emotional side of marriage that can be turned upside down even when technicalities are being taken care of. This daily emotional interplay is not properly understood by many couples, in spite of our glimpses into the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

In regards to handling conflict we first need to stop focusing on our spouse and start focusing more on ourselves. Even when our spouse is doing something we believe is blameworthy, we still first focus on our own reactions as a means to rectifying the situation. This is because even though we believe our spouse is doing something wrong, we've usually been enabling and even encouraging their behavior without realizing it. When it comes to conflict, the only person who we can change is ourselves, so the first step in handling marital conflict is to change our own part in a destructive behavior pattern.

Let's understand this through an example. Let's say a husband feels resentful and frustrated with his wife because she always gets upset when he goes out with his friends. She becomes passive-aggressive whenever he comes back home and they usually end up having an argument in the end. He blames his wife for wanting to control his time and he believes she's way too needy. So now he either has to choose between his wife and social life, or so he thinks. If he steps back and takes a look at this situation, he may notice that he's been making some mistake of his own that has created this problem. Perhaps his wife wouldn't mind if he spent time with his friends if he would let her know a little in advance or would come home on time. Perhaps she resents the fact that he always makes time with his friends during Friday nights or other prime times while time with her seems to be spent over mundane tasks on weeknights. It may not be that his wife minds that he spends time with his friends, if only he was just more considerate of her when he scheduled it. Instead of merely reacting to her and making assumptions, he needs to do some calm discovering.

We tend to enable the behaviour in our spouses that we dislike through our very efforts to eradicate it. Whenever we are about to blame our spouse for a problem, we need to pause, step back, and take an honest look at ourselves. Are things really as we interpret them to be? Are these simple character faults in our spouse or are they a reaction to a more complex problem in which we both take part?

The next thing we have to do is look at our efforts to communicate with our spouse about a problem. This involves broaching the subject and telling our spouse how their behaviour is affecting us. This involves being calm, honest, and tactful with our spouse when we speak to them. It calls upon us to eliminate any emotional games, vengeful arguments, hurtful language, or passive-aggressive behaviour. In other words, if we want conflict to refine our relationship and make our bond stronger, we have to let go of any spiteful attempts to "punish" our spouse or vent our anger at them. We are having this conversation with our spouse, not so we can make them feel guilty, but so that we can overcome a problem as a couple. This type of conversation can only happen between two people who are mature enough to put aside petty attempts to wound each other.

After authentically representing ourselves to our spouse, we have to calmly receive whatever they have to say to us. This may be an emotional tirade that seeks to pull us into a familiar argument, or it may be a valid criticism. In any event, we have to hold on to our resolve to stay calm and respectful, despite how our spouse behaves, and be open to whatever it is they have to say. Our spouse may not agree with us or be willing to change (yet), but at the very least

we've given them food for thought and set a better tone in our marriage. And after the discussion is over, we have to really let it be over, even if we didn't agree in the end. Many times marital conflicts don't have a right and a wrong, but rather involve two valid differences. One partner may think he doesn't overspend while his wife thinks he does. In reality, the definition of overspending is relative. So while she can tell her husband what she thinks of his spending habits, she has to accept that this person came from a different family with different ideas about money. He may never agree with her on it, so she has to learn to live with that. Of course there are subjects in which Allah has limits (physical force, for example), but these are few compared with the things in marriage which are determined by a person's 'urf, which in our case has less to do with the custom of society as a whole and more with personal upbringing (because our society is so diverse).

Throughout this entire process, one thing has to remain in our mind—that each of us as an individual should be contributing our best selves to our marriage all of the time, regardless of what our spouse chooses to do. And even if only one spouse undertakes this approach, they will have the personal satisfaction of knowing that they are fulfilling half of their deen in a way that is most pleasing to Allah as well as remaining a constant source of positive growth for their relationship.

MARITAL DISCORD (An Nushuz) IN ISLAM

PART OF THE WIFE

Here are some definitions from the scholars of nushuz when it is committed by the wife:

- "It is the woman leaving the house of her husband without his permission and keeping her husband from her without due right."
- "It is the woman departing from the obligatory obedience to her husband, her preventing him from her in the bed, her leaving the house without his permission to a place that she knows he would not permit her to go, her leaving the rights of Allah upon her, such as performing the purification of ghusl or fasting Ramadan, and her locking the door on her husband, keeping him out."
- "It is the wife disobeying her husband elevating herself above what Allah has obliged upon her and her raising herself above fulfilling her obligatory duties."
- "It is the wife's disobedience of her husband concerning those acts of obedience that are obligatory upon her from the rights of marriage."
- "It is where the wife raises herself above her husband and she is diffident towards him in the sense that she does not obey him when he calls her to his bed or she leaves the house without his permission and so forth. It is when she withholds from him his right to her obedience."

From all the different definitions, we see that nushuz on the part of the wife revolves around any of four characteristics:

- She does not beautify herself for her husband when he desires that from her.
- She disobeys her husband with respect to coming to his bed and she refuses to respond to his calls.
- She leaves the house without his permission or without any legal right to do so.
- She does not perform her obligatory religious duties, such as failure to perform some prayers, fasting Ramadan, or any other obligatory act of Islam.
- She does not cover up properly, is insistent on posting images on social media for everyone to view - this is not allowed even if the husband wants or orders her to do it.

A REMINDER HERE - As you can see that the wife disobeying your mother is not something that is considered as Nushuz. The wife is not obliged to obey everything the mother-in-law says, it is part of good manners for her to do that and it helps gain the respect of her husband but the fact remains that it is not an Islamic obligation on her.

This topic will be covered in a little more detail in tomorrow's class.

NUSHUZ ON THE PART OF THE HUSBAND

The jurists have defined nushuz when it is from the husband as follows:

- "It is where the husband hates his wife and brings about harm to her."
- "The husband transgresses against his wife and harms her by boycotting her, hitting her in ways not called for by the law, irritating her, abusing her, reviling her, such as cursing and insulting her, etc."
- "For the husband to transgress her by hitting her or harming her or having very bad behaviour towards her."
- "It is for him to harm her by beating her or making life difficult for her or keeping her from getting her rights fulfilled such as proper division between co-wives, support, etc."

So, nushuz when it is committed by the husband, revolves around the following point:

- The husband wrongfully elevating and raising himself arrogantly above his wife and above the obligations which Allah has placed upon him with regard to her.
- He transgresses against her by beating her, harming her, reviling her, abusing her and not treating her properly.
- He fails to fulfil his mandatory obligations toward her such as support, etc.
- He becomes different towards her and unconcerned for her by boycotting her in talk or in the bed, refusing to speak to her, etc.

The Remedy for Nushuz When it is From the Wife

When a wife is in a state of nushuz, the husband can address it with the following three steps:

1. Admonition and guidance.
2. Boycotting
3. Striking her

What follows is a detailed discussion of each of these three steps.

The First Step: Verbal Admonition and Guidance

The first thing a husband should do when his wife commits nushuz or the steps that lead to it is to attempt to warn her verbally, using Quran and Sunnah to remind her of her duties toward Allah and toward her husband. Allah said:

"As to those women from whom you see ill-conduct, admonish them..."

[Noble Quran 4:34]

Admonition is a cure that is gentle and mild. Its goal is to replace estrangement and rebellion with love, compassion and togetherness in obedience to Allah Most High. All of the scholars early and late have agreed that this admonition is only as long as it is in agreement with the Shari'a. Otherwise, the husband has no such right according to the principle:

"There is no obedience to the created if it involves disobedience to the Creator."

(sahih hadith).

Here are some of the scholars' definitions of this admonition (mau'idha):

- *"Advising and reminding one of the outcome of ones actions."*
- *"Reminding humans in a way that softens their hearts by reminding them of the rewards or punishments."*
- *"The husband makes her fear Allah Most High. He reminds her of what Allah has obligated upon her concerning his rights and obedience. She is to be told the results of her sin and disobedience and how she then forfeits her rights of maintenance and clothing. And she is to be told of how that permits him to strike her and boycott her."*

From the sunnah, it is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"If you fear nushuz on their part, then advise them, boycott them in their beds and strike them in a way which is not injurious..."

[Musnad Ahmad]

The Companions, the Followers and all who came after them to this day agree that this admonition is legally sanctioned when a wife commits nushuz. No one has ever rejected that and it is a point of consensus.

The Second Step: Boycotting and Avoidance

Sometimes verbal admonition may have no effect on ending her state of estrangement and disobedience. In fact, it may increase her abstinence due to some emotion that has overtaken her, a defiant reaction or perhaps she has been deceived by position, wealth or beauty to consider herself better than her husband. The husband may be partly to blame for this if he allowed his own emotions to interfere with admonishing his wife in the best way. In any case, the next step in trying to end her recalcitrance is boycotting her and avoiding her "in the bed".

Linguistically, this "boycotting" (al-hajr) is defined as "avoiding, cutting off and not having contact with the one who is being boycotted." Allah recommends this using the additional phrase: "in sleeping places" (fiy al-madhaji'). This could mean either avoiding her entirely and sleeping somewhere else or it could mean sleeping in the same bed but keeping away from her and not speaking, etc.

The Quran, the Sunnah, consensus of the scholars and sound reason indicate its permissibility and it being one of the means of disciplining the estranged wife when verbal admonition brings about no positive result. Allah said:

"...And avoid them in sleeping places..." [Noble Quran 4:34]

Imam Ahmad records in his Musnad that the Prophet ﷺ separated from his wives for a month. (Although this was NOT for reasons of nushuz, it nonetheless shows the permissibility of the act.) The jurists have agreed that it is permissible if it leads to the woman correcting her ways and returning to proper guidance. It is a method which is effective with a woman who loves her husband.

The verse in Surah An-Nisa is ambiguous as to whether it means to avoid the bed and the bedroom entirely and sleep somewhere else or whether it means to avoid them IN the bed. That latter method is preferable because it avoids making the existence of the problem known to children and other family members and because there is a more positive atmosphere for actual reconciliation.

The boycotting may include boycotting her in speech, but that should not last more than three days according to the hadith in Sahih Muslim:

"It is not permissible for a Muslim to boycott his fellow Muslim for more than three nights."

As for boycotting her in the bed, this can continue for as long as he believes it may still lead to her stopping her acts of nushuz but in no case exceeding four months. This is the strongest opinion among the statements of the scholars. It is based on the time limit which Allah placed on al-Ilaa' - where a man takes an oath to cut off relations with his wife. In the jahiliya, there was no limit on this, so a spiteful man could leave his wife "hanging", having no relations with him but not divorced for as long as he wished. Allah limited this to four months, saying:

"And for those who cuts off relations with his wife is a waiting period of four months. Then, if he returns, surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing." [Noble Quran 2:226]

The wife who does not mend her ways after four months of boycotting is not and will not mend her ways. She is deserving of divorce and there is not need to continue this "suspended" situation any further. This is because her continual estrangement and non-cooperation even though she knows full well that it will end in divorce shows clearly that she has no willingness to respond to the action which is taking place and return to a proper Islamic marriage. At the very least, it can be said that she will not be able to live with that husband in a pleasant and proper manner.

The Third Step: Striking Her

In some cases the solution to the problem may require some harshness and toughness. This is because there are some people who cannot be set straight when they go wrong by good behaviour and soft advice alone. Kindness and softness just make such people more arrogant and ignorant. Some such people, if met with toughness, respond by cooling down and ending their defiance. Generally speaking, it is not recommended for a husband to ever strike his wife and it is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said about those who do so that "they are not the best of you".

However, in some cases resorting to harshness including striking may be a beneficial cure which in fact returns the partners back together in love and compassion. In these cases, it can be a positive cure and a spiritual discipline. It is not meant for revenge or punishment. Whoever does it in such a manner is committing a sin and transgressing against his wife. Instead, it is meant to restore what has become improper and bring the disruption to an end. Although it is a bitter medicine, in many cases it may be less harmful to all involved than the destruction of the foundation of the family.

It should be made clear that "beating your wife is NOT permissible in Islam. The striking mentioned above shouldn't be anything more than a tap with a Siwak.

Narrated Mu'awiyah ibn Haydah: "I said: Apostle of Allah, how should we approach our wives and how should we leave them? He ﷺ replied:

Approach your tilth when or how you will, give her (your wife) food when you take food, clothe when you clothe yourself, do not revile her face, and do not beat her.

(Sunan Abu-Dawud, Book 11, Marriage (Kitab Al-Nikah), Number 2138)"

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Apostle ﷺ as saying:

"He who believes in Allah and the Hereafter, if he witnesses any matter he should talk in good terms about it or keep quiet. Act kindly towards woman, for woman is created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its top. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, its crookedness will remain there. So act kindly towards women.

(Sahih Muslim, The Book of Marriage (Kitab Al-Nikah), Book 008, Number 3468)"

"O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness that ye may take away part of the dower [money given by the husband to the wife for the marriage contract] ye have given them, except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity.

If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and God brings about through it a great deal of good.

(The Noble Quran, 4:19)"

The Remedy When Nushuz is By the Husband

Islam has provided remedies for cases when nushuz is from the husband in ways consistent with both her feelings and sensitivities as a woman and their respective roles, rights and obligations as husband and wife. She can look for the reasons for his behaviour and admonish him with Islam in an attempt to make things right between them. However, Islam has not given her the right to address this problem by boycotting him or beating him as has been given to the husband. This is because her nature is different from that of the man and because she does not have the same kind of power and authority in the marriage as he has.

She should use some or all of the following steps:

- Try to discover the reason for his estrangement and/or bad behaviour.
- Admonish her husband and remind him of his responsibility in front of Allah towards his wife such as good behaviour and kind treatment.
- Try to please her husband in order to make things right. This can be just by showing kindness and concern and can also include compromising some of her own rights for the sake of harmony.

"And if a woman fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part there is no sin upon the two of them if they make terms of agreement and agreement is better..."

[Noble Quran 4:128]

If it becomes clear to her that the signs of nushuz are confirmed and he is turning away from her out of dislike for her and wishing to be away from her, then there is no sin upon either of them if the "work out terms of peace". This means that she may give up some of her due rights in order to stay in the marriage. For example, she may give up some of her rights to support, housing or equality of nights with other wives in order to remain under his protection and in the marriage. Or, she may give up some or all of her dowry in exchange for his divorcing her.

Ibn Abbas said: "Saudah feared that the Prophet ﷺ was going to divorce her so she said to him, "O Messenger of Allah, do not divorce me but keep me and make my day for Aisha." The Prophet ﷺ did so and the verse was revealed concerning that. (Bukhari)

'Umar said: "*Whatever points they agree upon are permissible.*" Al-Baihaqi

Problems of the Modern era and ways to tackle them:

A Cheating Husband

Remember that what the man is doing of having a haraam (an unlawful) relationship with a woman who is not his mahram is a betrayal of the rights of Allah before it is a betrayal of the rights of his wife. If you see that he still loves you and there is a chance of him repenting from the traps of Shatiaan he has fallen into, then below steps are advisable: -

1. Talk to him and remind him this is Haram and the punishments from Allah.
2. Do not let many people know about this as he might repent and you might choose to forgive him.
3. Offer lots of Dua.
4. Do not let him alone for Shatyaan - Fill his time with useful things (Islamic & Social)

Finally, if what is mentioned above does not succeed in putting a stop to that haraam relationship of his with that woman, then you have two options:

- You can advise him to marry her in accordance with the laws of Allah, may He be exalted, so as to save him and her from this haraam relationship, on condition that his relationship with her has not reached the level of zina (adultery) – Allah forbid – because it is not permissible to advise someone to do something that is haraam, as their getting married will not be permissible until after they repent (from zina).
- Or you can ask for a divorce (talaaq), but start by threatening to ask for it, then if he remains as he is you have the right to seek a way out of the calamity you are faced with by asking for a divorce. It will protect you and your children from the possibility of fitnah (tribulation) because of your husband's misbehaviour and his haraam relationship, whether that protection has to do with your religious commitment, honour or health.

[Click here](#) to read more details on the above.

Husband watching Porn

Watching pornographic websites and sexual activity is haraam; it is a disease, not a remedy. The one who does that is afflicted and he should seek to remedy himself by repenting and giving it up, not by making up excuses for himself. All sinners make up excuses for themselves. The one who drinks alcohol or takes drugs or commits adultery – they all claim that they are under pressure and that they cannot escape it except by doing something haraam.

Now if you want to help him fight this disease below are some recommendations:

- Confrontation, sister, you have to confront your husband about it. He needs to know how you feel and how concerned you are about your marriage. *In sha' Allah*, your honesty and concern will help him and give him the strength to leave this ugly habit. Especially if he is addicted, *in sha' Allah* seeing how much it affects you and your marriage might give him the strength to leave it.
- You are One Team, it is always better to try and face these challenges as a team. In that regard, you should do all you can to help him and support him in trying to overcome this addiction. Offer your help and your support to overcome it together. To do any of this, though, you need to talk openly and honestly with him about it. But also make sure you do not make him feel that you are kinda ok with it. He needs to always understand that you resent this part of him, but are willing to do anything you can to help him leave this.
- Dua'a, make sure that you are constantly making *du'aa'* for Allah to help your husband leave this behavior and strengthen your marriage. Try to perform *tahajjud* prayer regularly. All help and success is from Allah alone.
- Threaten Him (more like a final warning or stern advice), you can make it clear that this is something which is just not acceptable to you and hurts your self-respect to levels he just does not understand. So you should threaten him that if you see him do this again you are not sure if you can refrain yourself from letting others know about this habit of his, so his self-respect is also threatened. But make sure you do this in the right tone, you do not want to allow Shaytaan to play with his mind and make him do this more because of the way you spoke to him.
- Educate Him & Yourself about Addiction, there are many resources out there for people who have this type of addiction.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

One of the rights of spouses is that trivial mistakes should be overlooked, especially words and deeds by which no harm was intended. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*“those who repress anger, and who pardon men;
verily Allah loves as muhsinoon (the good-doers)”.*

[Aal Imraan 3:134]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

*“Every son of Adam makes mistakes,
and the best of those who make mistakes are those who repent.”*

(Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 2501; Saheeh al-Jaami, 4/171).

Both husband and wife must put up with one another, for every child of Adam may slip, and the one with whom you have to be most patient is the one with whom you live and interacts with most. Neither party should resort to a tit-for-tat response. If one spouse sees the other becoming very angry, he or she should restrain his or her own anger and not respond immediately. For this reason Abul-Darda said to his wife: If you see me angry, calm me down, and if I see you angry, I will calm you down, otherwise it will be too difficult to live together.

Anger is one of the most powerful weapons of the Shaytan against us. It causes people to lose control and to say and do things which they regret severely merely moments later. This is more so in case of anger between spouses. Shaitaan loves it when there is Discord between Husband & Wife (based on a hadeeth in Sahih Muslim). In general terms, to become angry easily is a characteristic which is disliked in Islam, and a disease of the heart.

A man said to the Prophet ﷺ: “Advise me.” He ﷺ said:

“Do not get angry.”

He repeated his question several times and he said:

“Do not get angry.”

(Narrated by al-Bukhari, 5765)

Advices from the Sunnah to Control Anger

1. Seek refuge from Shaytan: When we feel anger overtaking us, the first thing that we should say is *"A'uthu billaahi min ashShaytaan arRajeem"* (I seek refuge in Allah from the cursed Shaytaan). (Bukhari)
2. Keeping silent: Speaking in haste out of anger can have devastating consequences. The best thing one can do to control his anger is as the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: *"If any of you becomes angry, let him keep silent."* (Ahmad)
3. Sit or lie down: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said to us: *"If one of you gets angry when he is standing, let him sit down, and if that does not take away his anger, then let him lie down."* (Narrated by Abu Dawood, 4782). Changing one's position forces one to de-escalate their state of agitation, and control their actions.
4. Think of the reward for keeping calm: Controlling your anger when you are in a position of power or position is a truly admirable feat. Keeping yourself calm is something so important that the Prophet ﷺ said, *"Whoever controls his anger at the time when he has the means to act upon it, Allâh will fill his heart with contentment on the Day of Resurrection."* (Tabarani, classed as Sahih)
5. Perform Wudhu: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: *"Indeed anger is from the Shaytaan, and indeed Shaytaan was created from fire, and indeed fire is put out with water. So if any of you were to become angry, perform ablution."* (Ahmad and Abu Dawood)

General rules to keep in mind to avoid marital discord

1. When talking to the spouse, don't point fingers. The moment you point the finger, (even if it is not pointing back in the same direction it is still connected to you), that's the moment conflict starts. Ex: "Honey, you never take out the recycling bin." Said the wife. "I took it out last week." Says the husband. Fire lit. The right thing for the wife to say is "Honey, I'm tired, can you please take out the recycling bin for me today?" Normal answer from the husband should be "yes." The wife should say "Thank you!". This way the husband feels appreciated and will do it more often and the wife has more time to do something else in return for him or clean up.

2. Fight eye to eye. If the fighting has already started, sit down, and discuss it eye to eye. If your spouse is not willing to sit down, be the 'bigger person' in the conversation and ask them nicely to sit down.

3. Do not pick at the other for little things. For example, your husband might move some of the pillows on to the other chair when he comes home from work every day and every day you put them back. Make it a habit! Do not pick at your husband for doing that. Also, if your wife likes to rearrange your mail, give it to her to put in order so that both of you are happy. Nagging at what the other does, doesn't help one bit.

4. Appreciate one another. A thank you for something nice here and there didn't hurt someone. Also, saying sorry to someone, even if they made the mistake, can make a big difference.

5. Let the other make mistakes. No one is perfect, people make mistakes. Do not hold down the other when you wouldn't want to be held down for a mistake.

6. Try not to always plan to annoy, because the only one who is to be annoyed is you more. Okay, we all have our evil days but make sure the spouse is not having a bad day before hand.

7. Spend quality time together. What was the real reason you married the person? To have kids and that's it? I highly doubt that's why most people marry. The person you married is for a companion many people long to have but sometimes never get. Someone who's your best friend when your best friend isn't around. Back to reality, when spending quality time with your significant other it doesn't mean going shopping for 5 hours or going to a baseball game which only one might enjoy. It means take the time out to enjoy the weather to talk, to play, to take a stroll down a country road or even speed race each other at the go-carts.

8. Understand one another. Listen to what the other is saying. For example, women exaggerate. Men, on the other hand, sometimes only say things up front but without the drama and sometimes only half of what they want to say. Sometimes it can even be the reverse but listen and observe their body language. If they look at you when they are saying it, then they know what they want. But if they tend to look away, they are more likely embarrassed or too shy to say it than not knowing what to say. Do not accuse them of hiding anything because sometimes things are hard to put into real words.

9. Do not snoop in the others past life. The moment you have tied the knot is the moment you start a new life. Snooping in their past will lead to misconceptions. To tell you the truth, they were human once too. They grew up in a different world than you did, but you both came together to make a new world. Why try to bring back the old when the new has much more to see?

10. Let it go! The bravest thing one can do is forgive the other person and move on like nothing happened. It may be hard but if you do forgive them, the world will look like a better place to you and you will feel much better.

11. Do not keep an idle mind. Yes spending time alone once in a while is good but too much time by yourself, is not good. When you are by yourself and thinking of what the other 'has done me wrong', the anger inside tends to pent up and you could blow. So best thing to do is invite or go out with some friends and release some of the tension. You and your buddies will both find relief and laughter.

12. Stay clear from the people who try to control your marriage. These people will destroy it. Its okay to get tips on how to avoid problems and how to get out set in stains but when someone says "Oh, My wife always keeps busy in the kitchen making food all day! Women should always be in the kitchen!" This is a sign that person (best friend or not) is not a good person. You can be very venerable to listening to this and go home and do this. Also, when a person might say "Oh, my husband buys me this and that" it is a signal to make one jealous and question their own husband 'why don't you provide for me?' (This provide is not the shelter and food provide but of worldly material). If you do not want to stay clear of these people then change the subject. Stay in control of your marriage. No "okay, you can test drive it!"

13. Keep the green eye monster away. Like the last two steps, Jealousy and the idle mind go hand in hand. Plus do not jump to conclusions. Reason being, many marriages break up because of jealousy and people jumping to conclusions without listing. If you see them cheating on you or they themselves have said they have, it's your call. But if you just see them talking to some random stranger, you never know it might be for directions or a special gift for someone. Always think positive. If they love you, they probably wouldn't do anything to hurt you...just test you.

14. Be honest with each other. If there is something you disagree on with other, politely say "I do not agree with you on that. The reason being..."

15. Here is the big one: CHOOSE HAPPINESS OVER BEING RIGHT! Okay, we all want to be right but sometimes being right at the wrong moment can destroy a relationship. Let the other person get away with being wrong and thinking they are right half the time. Don't worry there are 4 benefits, happiness, learning to compromise, knowing that you were right when they realize they were wrong and come to say sorry, and you'll get a laugh out of it. But all in all, being right all the time is not good. Let some mistakes happen.

16. When fighting, do not drag others in. It is a conflict between you and your spouse. Not you, your spouse and best friend/mother/father/child/etc. They probably do not know the whole story anyways.