

Marital satisfaction is an attitude concerning the quality of a marital relationship and a process that is susceptible to changes over time. What?! Changes in a marriage aren't supposed to happen, are they? Our culture says that marriage is a paradise and once you find the right person you will never look away. Is what the media, books, and fairytales tell us not what will happen in a marriage? Sorry to say folks, but marriage is the complete opposite. Yes there are times of happiness and love, but it can only truly be described as a journey with your spouse.

This journey brings up a lot of questions relating to why someone decides to even get married in the first place. So sit back and reflect on why you chose to marry your spouse. Well, why did you? Was it because of beauty, financial background, the sense of security, true love, or the most simple response, it was the next step? A lot of these come off as punitive terms except for true love. Beauty fades, money is not everything, also just like in movies, in life, security can be breached (adultery etc.), and the next step is not marriage. Now you might be confused with marriage not being the next step and you have a right to. Yes technically it is the next step as far as status goes but relationship wise there is so much more to explore. Have you figured out the reasons why you married your spouse? You see, after all the hardships you two have faced, this brief moment of reflection allowed you to bring back the true reasons you fell in love with your spouse. The biggest reason aside from how happy they make you feel is trust. Without a solid foundation of trust in your marriage, it will surely fail. If you cannot trust your spouse, how can you truly love them? Love and trust your spouse; go and share your list with your spouse, they are going to love that you took the time to put them in your thoughts for such a creative exercise.

Beginning the journey with your spouse, couples need to know that arguments are going to happen. They will range from the simplest things, such as the color of the carpet, to big things, such as financial issues. Women, you have to understand that men are trying to hear what you are saying but you have to figure out how to fully communicate with him. Men, your wife has a lot to say so PAY ATTENTION. Many arguments occur over this reason of simple miscommunication. How an argument is brought up is very important because it might come off the wrong way causing an elevated argument. To resolve this, each must learn how to differentiate (finding the balance between being one's self and being in relationship). Finding the right words to say can be difficult because one doesn't want to hurt the others feelings but the problem must be addressed all the same. The way the issue is brought up must be solvable and not perpetual. Giving the argument a chance to perpetuate into something bigger can lead to grudges, while sharing your side as well as understanding your spouse's side, leads to conflict resolution. In the end, if differentiation is obtained by both, strength and an intimate bond is formed between the two. So cross that uncharted area of confusion and seek to understand your spouse and build a strong bond of differentiation.

How is this possible you ask? It is actually even simpler than you think. It all starts with dropping your guard and completely surrendering yourself to your spouse. Open your heart to them so that they may fully understand how you feel. Do this and see how arguments will turn out as compared to before.

Along with adjusting to the new lifestyle of I'm not the only person in my life now (basis of arguments), marital satisfaction takes a turn entering the era of children. Children are a wonderful gift for a couple and couples point to the fact that a new addition to the family causes a need for new habits and behaviors. Key aspects to a relationship such as interactions, functioning, roles, levels of conflict, etc., are changed which therefore affect the marital satisfaction. You have seen the movies how one spouse is stuck taking care of their new born while the other works, comes home, and doesn't engage in anyway. Does this sound familiar to anyone? The list could go on and on about different situations but the main point is that you both made a commitment to each other and now that there is another in the family you both have new responsibilities. Work together, be there for each other, and most important differentiate with each other. Many marriages hit rock bottom during this time, and that is why it is important that you both find time to stay intimate. Keep your intimate connection with one another so that you don't lose each other. Take the time to sit together and talk about your day so that the loving bond you both share stays intact.

Well, there is a headful of information. By the way, how is that list coming along? The bottom line to marital satisfaction is finding a way that makes you both happy (differentiate). Although the topics of children and arguments between each other are just the icing on the cake (marriage), it is a start towards a healthier happier marriage. Take the time to explore each other's hearts; you will be surprised by how much it will help your marriage.