

My 25th Wedding Anniversary Is This Week. Here's the Secret to a Happy Marriage.

To commemorate my 25th wedding anniversary this week to my husband, Jesse, I asked readers on Facebook to share their own secrets to a long happy marriage.

In short, the crowdsourced recipe for marital endurance includes faith, forgiveness, romance, kindness, selflessness, and a healthy dose of humor. A union built to last begins with a promise and persists through compromise and commitment. It is about keeping your word, choosing the right words, and knowing when no words are necessary.

Teri L. emphasized: "Marriage is WORK. You have to put effort into it. You have to love and nurture the relationship. It has to be priority. You have to respect it."

Cathy G. advised: "Be careful with your words. Once they are out in the universe, there is no taking them back. And laugh—a lot! 41 years and counting."

Vincent O. opined: The "key to a long marriage is forgiveness and understanding. You must also end your arguments and misunderstandings the same day. Never let it linger."

Tony G. kept it short and simple: "53 years ago, I learned how to say, 'Yes, Love.'"

Marie G. also administered pithy wisdom: "30 years. It's all about RESPECT."

Hugh W. counseled: "Our secret to a long marriage: I always let my wife think she's in charge!"

Terence C. gave the opposite instruction: "As far as a secret

to a successful marriage, I always tell everyone: 'My wife lets me think I am the boss!'"

Walt S. weighed in: "50 years here ... keep God and common sense in your marriage. Simplicity, Trust, and Utility inside of our wedding bands."

Pamela N. shared: "We celebrated our 51st last March. My advice is to apologize when you're wrong and forgive when you are wronged. Don't throw in the towel when hardships come. Hang on. There will be hills and valleys ... and beautiful meadows. Embrace it all together."

Robert S. reflected: "Will be married 50 years this August 2018. I carry a picture of my wife that I have had for over 51 [years]." She "sent it to me when I was in Vietnam. I look at that picture every day to remind me why I married her. It hasn't failed me yet."

Barbara M. posted: "Never take each other for granted and make memories, even if it's just dancing to a tune on the radio in the kitchen. Laugh as much as possible and trust God to bring you through the storms. Be grateful for all that you have and most of all always be KIND and FORGIVING!"

Stark G. suggested: "Commit to the relationship voyage" and "always remember that this is a LONG-TERM voyage." Moreover, "never forget that you are not an Adonis or a diva. Your partner didn't have to marry you. They did you a favor." And "go out for a coffee or a drink once a week to remind each other that you are still a couple."

Rod K. divulged: "Having my wife of almost 44 years lying in a bed with terminal cancer and other pressing issues, the adage of 'live each day with one another as though it may be your last' has a tremendous message we are now facing, but equally for any married couple."

Joan H. similarly noted: "My 25th was spent with my husband in

a nursing home dining room where the staff had prepared a beautiful meal in a private room. I think my advice for a long lasting marriage is believing and living the part of your vows that say 'in sickness and in health,' because you just are never prepared or know what the future holds."

From my mom and dad, who marked their 48th wedding anniversary this spring:

Today, as you reflect on the 25 years of journey through your married life, you can rejoice, be grateful, and take pride in all that you have accomplished and weathered together. Marriage indeed is hard work, but it becomes lighter when lived in love and perseverance, with patience and humility.

Finally, Neil S. joked: "Never be stupid at the same time."

We'll take it all to heart. Stay tuned for another longevity update in 25 years.

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