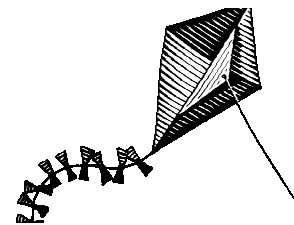


The Family Friend



A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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The Price Tags of Successful Marriages

Andre was a gifted athlete. At 6'4" and 210 pounds, he stood out on the football field. He told his coaches, "I don't just want to start, I want to star." And there was little doubt that he could do that and reach his goal of a college scholarship.

However, he never worked out in the weight room. He ate too much junk food, and he struggled to keep his grades at a passing level. The problem with Andre was not his goals, but his effort.

Most couples exchange their vows with anticipation of great things—success, happiness and longevity. The challenge is not their goals, but the effort they will put forth. The following four truths will illustrate this principle.

You cannot have closeness without time. Love in a relationship demands that two people spend time together—talking, working, planning, praying. Without that continuing investment, partners will drift apart.

You cannot have financial security without self-discipline. Unless there is a massive inheritance, budgets have to be set and followed. Impulsive spending habits for cars, boats, vacations, and a

host of media gadgets can bankrupt even two-income families. The number one conflict within marriages is money and its use.

You cannot have great "sex" without intimacy. Our society is consumed with sexual activity, but so often separates it from a meaningful relationship. If a married couple do not feel a sense of "real life intimacy" in their everyday activity, it is not likely to appear in the bedroom.

You cannot have marital longevity without commitment. Every relationship goes through peaks and valleys. There will be issues and disappointments along the way, because marriage is a contract between two imperfect people. Marriage requires folks to sacrifice and go the second (or third) mile. Marriages that are strictly 50-50 will end in divorce, because they will never agree on the limits of their individual "50."

To enjoy a good marriage and celebrate a Golden Wedding Anniversary are great goals. They are realistic goals. However, for many, those dreams will never gain traction. Far too many are unwilling to live unselfishly, demonstrate kindness, extend forgiveness, and share honest communication. —Don Loftis

A Guide for Those Helping Others With Grief

Don't try to find the magic words or formula to eliminate the pain. Nothing can erase or minimize the painful tragedy your friend or loved one is facing. Your primary role at this time is to "be there." Don't worry about what to say or do, just be a presence that the person can lean on when needed.

Don't try to minimize pain or make the other feel better. When we care about someone, we hate to see them in pain. Often, we'll say things like, "I know how you feel," or "perhaps, it was for the best," in order to minimize their hurt. While this can work in some instances, it never works with grief.

Help with responsibilities. Even though a life has stopped, life doesn't. One of the best ways to help is to run errands, prepare food, take care of the kids, do laundry, and help with the simplest of maintenance.

Don't expect the person to reach out to you. Many people say, "call me if there is anything I can do." At this stage, the person who is

grieving will be overwhelmed at the simple thought of picking up a phone. If you are close to this person, simply stop over and begin to help. People need this, but don't think to ask. There are many people who will be with you during the good times—but few that are there in life's darkest hour.

Talk through decisions.

While working through the grief process, many bereaved people report difficulty with decision making. Be a sounding board for your friend or loved one and help them think through decisions.

Don't be afraid to say the name of the deceased. Those who have lost someone usually speak of them often, and believe it or not, need to hear the deceased's name and stories. In fact, many grievers welcome this. Remember that time does not heal all wounds. Your friend or loved one will change because of what has happened. Everyone grieves differently. Some will be "fine" and then experience their true grief a year later; others grieve immediately. There are no timetables, no rules—be patient.

Remind the bereaved to take care of themselves.

Eating, resting, and self-care are all difficult tasks when besieged by the taxing emotions of grief. You can help by keeping the house stocked with healthy foods that are already prepared, or are easy to prepare. Help with the laundry. Take over some errands so the bereaved can rest. However, do not push the bereaved to do things they may not be ready for. Many grievers say, "I wish they would just follow my lead." While it may be upsetting to

see the bereaved withdrawing from people and activities—it is normal. They will rejoin as they are ready.

Avoid judging. Don't tell the person how to react or handle their emotions or situation. Simply let him/her know that you support their decisions and will help in any way possible.

Share a meal. Since meal times can be especially lonely, invite the bereaved over regularly to share a meal, or take a meal to their home. Consider inviting the bereaved out on important dates like the one month anniversary of the death, the deceased's birthday, etc.

Make a list of things that need to be done with the bereaved. This would include everything from bill paying to plant watering. Prioritize these by importance. Help the bereaved complete as many tasks as possible. If there are many responsibilities, find one or more additional friends to support you.

Make a personal commitment to help the one grieving get through this. After a death, many friendships change or disintegrate. People don't know how to relate to the one who is grieving or they get tired of being around someone who is sad. Vow to see your friend or loved one through this, to be their anchor in their darkest hour.

—Excerpted from *"I Really Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: a guide for surviving, coping, and healing after the sudden death of a loved one"* by Brook Noel and Pamela D. Blair, PhD (Sourcebooks, 2008)

*There was also a note above this list saying to photocopy it and give to close friends and loved ones.

A Father's ABC's

Always trust your children to God's care.

Bring them to church.

Challenge them to high goals.

Delight in their achievements.

Exalt the Lord in their presence.

Frown on evil.

Give them love.

Hear their problems.

Ignore not their childish fears.

Joyfully accept their apologies.

Keep their confidence

Live a good example before them.

Make them your friends.

Never ignore their endless questions.

Open your heart to their love.

Pray for them by name.

Quicken your interest in their spirituality.

Remember their needs

Show them the way of salvation.

Teach them to work.

Understand they are still young.

Verify your statements

Wean them from bad company.

EXpect them to obey.

Zealously guide them in Bible truth.

—via *Pulpit Helps*, June, 1988