

Eleven Secrets to a Great Marriage

1. Commitment is the glue of marriage. Insulate and protect your marriage against emotional infidelity by avoiding friendships with members of the opposite sex.
2. Interdependence is a necessary ingredient for a great marriage. Spouses must need each other.
3. Spouses need clear, realistic goals and a specific plan of how to achieve those goals.
4. Like any strong working partnership, marriage needs well-defined roles for each spouse.
5. Acceptance is about appreciating, not settling.
6. Your marriage has to come first—before jobs, kids, anything else. Your unconscious assumptions are holding you back from putting in the effort.
7. Your childhood has a great deal to do with your ability to enjoy a great marriage. The more you understand this connection, the better marriage you will have.
8. Great sex comes not from great sexual skill but from sharing your deepest, shyest self while trusting your partner.
9. Your marriage comes before your child. But your child is one of your best tools for creating a great marriage.
10. Time is on your side. A great marriage has many stages and takes years to develop properly.
11. Focus energy on creating a healthy relationship with your spouse's parents.

Secret #1. Commitment is the glue of marriage. Insulate and protect your marriage against emotional infidelity by avoiding friendships with members of the opposite sex. This focus area will help you identify the important energy and commitment you will need in your marriage. Often, attempts at making a marriage better fail when much of the marital energy is diluted by outside factors. Commitment to your marriage is the first step you must take to enable all future loving actions to have their full intended impact.

Secret #2. Codependence is a necessary ingredient for a great marriage. Spouses must need each other. It isn't enough to want your spouse. Needing each other is more important than individuality and independence. This focus area will help you learn to see your spouse and your differences in a whole new light. You will see why your mate can offer you so much more in your life than anyone else. Differences will become paths for personal and marital growth instead of points of contention. Codependence is *not* a

dirty word.

Secret #3. Marriage must have clear, realistic goals and a specific plan of how to achieve those goals. The difference between a business proposal and a marriage proposal is extraordinary. Couples must understand what it is they are looking for in their marriage. Once they agree on realistic goals, they need to outline what each one of them will do to attain them. This secret will help you create a written marriage document to help each of you focus on what you will contribute to develop a great marriage.

Secret #4. Like any strong working partnership, marriage needs well-defined roles for each spouse. This focus area helps you develop a unique working system to reduce tension while getting the most out of your marital effort. It will also offer you a system to deal with finances and avoid tension in that area.

Secret #5. Acceptance is about appreciating, not settling. Appreciation taps into the very core self-value of your spouse. You will learn to see your spouse in a new positive light and appreciate things about your mate that you never did before.

Secret #6. Your marriage has to come first—before jobs, kids, anything else. Your unconscious assumptions are holding you back from putting in the effort. This focus area offers you a clear plan for carving out consistent time for your marriage while using various methods to connect with your spouse. Using a four-point plan, you will learn to use your marriage as a tool for loving focus throughout your day.

Secret #7. Your childhood has a great deal to do with your ability to enjoy a great marriage. The more you understand this connection, the better marriage you will have. Having a meaningful understanding of your past and how it affects your ability to love will have a great impact on your marriage. This focus area will help you understand this connection and offer you ways to get in touch with this deeper self.

Secret #8. Great sex comes not from great sexual skill but from sharing your deepest, shyest self while trusting your partner. Lovemaking is about the love. You will learn to "make love all day" and make your sexual experiences more pleasurable and meaningful. You will learn about the implicit trust given through the sexual relationship and learn techniques that will greatly enhance your lovemaking.

Secret #9. Your marriage comes before your child. But your child is one of your best tools for creating a great marriage. Don't have a great marriage *in spite of* your children. Take your children on a family journey that will enhance your marital relationship. You will learn to include your children in your marital energy, which will in turn enhance your marital focus.

Secret #10. Time is on your side. A great marriage experiences many stages and takes years to develop properly. Having a long-term vision of your marriage relationship and how to use each stage to develop a great marriage.

Secret #11. Focus energy on creating a healthy relationship with your spouse's parents. (This isn't always a fundamental issue in marriages, but I've found it can really cement a

relationship.) Don't overlook the importance and potential pitfalls of in-law relationships. Both spouses are responsible for the health of these relationships and can do many things to ensure that they are always successful.

Summary by Dr. John Thorington of
Emotional Infidelity, by M. Gary Neuman