

Marriage: When The Honeymoon Is Over

by Marla Lafayette

Getting married is normally looked upon as the joyous occasion in which a man and woman enter into courtship that estimates their lives to last the duration of forever. The infamous anxiety built up of dealing with months of detailed preparation, excessive spending, gathering closest family and friends all for a 30 minute ceremony. But what happens when the festivities are over and being married gets real? When the reality of splitting finances, adjusting to in-law unrealistic expectations, irregularities in communication, battling mood swings and riding emotional rollercoasters of the one in which you now call spouse. That very moment in which the tension becomes so thick that you begin to question your decision about entering into your marriage. Here are some points to consider when trying to identify ways to stay on the Honeymoon cloud for as long as you can:

1. Have the ability to accept that there is no longer “I” in your vocabulary. In marriage this is probably viewed as one of the biggest challenges of newly married couples. As two people have to put the #1 self-mentality to the side and realize now there is two. This step can take some time, however you must be willing to include your partner wholeheartedly in your space, practice selfless acts daily, and change your language to reflect that your spouse is a part of your team.
2. Ongoing dating/courting. Typically some would agree that after marriage, the flame has a tendency to go out. Women are affectionate creatures and like to consistently feel accepted, appreciated and loved by their mate. Men are different, and at times adopt the “what do I need to continue to do that for, I have you now” mentality. This can be very disastrous if not handled carefully. Such differences can lead to infidelity, low-self-esteem, and insecurities. Try listening and studying your mate. Most times, signs will occur without question. The key is to try new things, eliminate complacency, and practice complimenting your mate daily as you do yourself. It doesn't take much!
3. Never neglect each other's feelings. Often times in marriage there will be heated arguments, harsh words, and even stubbornness. The bottom line is that each individual is human and each individual has feelings. There's an old cliché that you have to be able to listen in order to hear. There is no accountability in someone being able to tell you how and what you are feeling, they can't! When a couple is able to fully understand

how to accept what their mate is feeling, their communication and marriage will be able to mend together.

4. Evaluate self to adapt to marriage. When two people marry, neither are perfect. The sooner that a couple realizes this in their marriage the better! The reality is that some people actually go into a marriage thinking that they know everything about their spouse but the truth is, they don't! Once the party is over, and the two individuals are all moved and snuggly, this is where the real fun begins. You may begin to notice things about each other that you never seen before, a shift in mannerisms, characteristics, spending habits, etc. There may even be things that each person identifies in self that tie to generational curses, unfavorable flaws, and old habits that were buried. The positive is that things and people can change; you just have to desire to be better for yourself, each other, and for your marriage. If an option, consider marital counseling to get seek better together.

5. Yielding to each other's beat. Many married couples credit their marriage to being able to get along. Compatibility is key! For years people have been able to identify compatibility with two people being able to complete each other's sentences. There's nothing better than having someone to share things with. It cuts down on the worry of not feeling relatable, or enjoying the same idea as your mate. In trying times when it feels as if you have nothing in common with your mate, adjust. Be open about what you like, and try to learn/like some of the things that they do as well. You may find that it's more enjoyable than what you think.

6. Mixing Money. Finances are one of the biggest contributors of divorce. Trust is a major factor here! All pride must be set aside and you have to revert back to point #1 and remember that there is no "I" in marriage. A little bit of finance 101 should have been introduced before the nuptials took place but if not, now's the time to communicate debt and what's owed. Besides when vows were taken you all not only inherited each other, you inherited each other's finances. Sit down, come up with a budget, discuss accounts, and no secrets!

7. Omit the control of in-laws. After marriage people have a hard time of letting their family go with the idea that family traditions can be merged into a new marriage. Often times we see problems with a wife and a man's mother. Ultimately, it should be the man's role to put his family in order. The way you start out in this area of your marriage, is the way in which you will finish. You and your mate should lay a solid foundation to your household and stick to it. Know your biblical roles as husband and wife and press forward.

8. Open honesty. Be Open, Be Non-Judgmental, and Be Honest!

9. Never be over critical. The worst thing that two people in a marriage can exhibit is too much criticism and not enough praise. A woman is sensitive, and being too critical of her can lead to low self-esteem and inward insecurities that may cause her to go seek attention outside if not careful. A man is hardcore, but his ego bruises easily. This point is so critical because within a marriage, the two individuals look to each other for approval and acceptance. In most cases, the only opinion that matters to a married couple is each other's and the slightest rejection can cause havoc. Learn to identify the good things about your mate and express your excitement about it. Compliment! Compliment! Compliment!