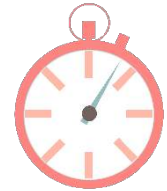


## 15 Ways to Stay Connected as a Couple – Even When Life Gets Crazy

- **Establish your marriage as the primary relationship in your family.** Have you and your husband set your priorities for this year? If you value your marriage and want to keep it strong in spite of a hectic schedule, set a priority to **establish it as the center of your family life.** You won't be taking anything away from your children; you'll be adding to their sense of security and helping them understand what it takes to create a lasting marriage.
- **Control your family's schedule, rather than letting it control you.** This doesn't mean your children shouldn't do activities, but it does mean you and your husband should decide which activities are reasonable in terms of your family's time, energy and finances.
- **Make time to talk every day.** When things get busy, it's easy to go for days without talking about anything other than schedules, carpools, pick-up times and errands. Be intentional about taking at least **15-20 minutes every day to really talk with your husband** about what's going on in both of your lives. You can do it in the morning, right after work, before bed - whatever works for the two of you. My husband and I drink coffee in bed for about 20 minutes every morning and talk while we're waking up and preparing to face the day.
- **Go to bed at the same time,** every night if possible but at least several times a week. Going to bed together allows you to talk and unwind and paves the way for sex and intimacy. Speaking of which...
- **Make love regularly.** Yes, it takes time, and you're often tired. But it's critical if you want to stay connected as a couple. And it doesn't always have to take a lot of time - while a long romantic interlude is great, sometimes a quick romp provides all the connection you need!
- **Plan at least one face-to-face activity (which many women prefer) and one side-by-side activity (which many men prefer) every week.** So, for example, you might enjoy a cup of coffee and some conversation at the kitchen table on Saturday morning, then paint a room together on Saturday afternoon.
- **Exercise together.** Walk, jog or bike together. Train together for a charity walk or race. Take a hike. Anything that gets you moving together, preferably outside.
- **Spend some unplugged time together every day.** Put away your phone, tablet and computer and spend time together without the electronic distractions.
- **Kiss him like you mean it.** After a few years of marriage, the 'hot and heavy' kissing we once enjoyed often disappears. Add a couple of kids and a busy schedule to the mix, and kissing tends to be relegated to a pathetic peck on the lips a couple of times a day! One way to stay connected to your husband is to kiss him like you mean it - every day!
- **Touch base during the day.** If your schedules allow it, talk on the phone at least once a day, just to see how things are going for both of you. If talking isn't feasible, send a brief email or text, just to let him know you're thinking of him.
- **Crank up your sexual energy.** I'm not talking about having more sex, but rather about infusing your marriage with sexual energy - the **communications and actions that say "I want you."** Sexual energy "boosters" come in many forms - sexy texts, sexy nicknames, code words, quick-but-steamy kisses or touches,



planning and anticipating sexual activities, trying something outside your comfort zone, and anything else that keeps you connected sexually

- **Speak your spouse's love language.** You probably know about the 5 love languages, but are you speaking your husband's language consistently? When your schedule gets crazy, maximize your connection by showing him love in the way God designed him to receive it!
- **Step out in faith together.** It's easy to get stuck in our daily routines and miss the needs all around us, needs God is often calling His people to meet. But maybe God is calling us and our husbands to break out of our routines once in a while and do something for Him. **Stepping out in faith to do God's work is a great way to stay connected, while meeting real needs in our communities.** For couples with young children it could be something simple, like serving together at a soup kitchen once a quarter. For those with no children or older children it might be something bigger, like working regularly in a homeless ministry or taking a mission trip together.



• **Let go of small things that interfere with your connection.** Do you hang onto small annoyances, things your husband says or does that really bug you? I try not to, but sometimes it requires putting mind over emotions, making a conscious choice to let it go. **It's hard to maintain a positive connection if you feel annoyed with him frequently,** so consider making the choice to let some things go. I'm not talking about serious issues in your marriage (those need to be addressed), but rather the small things that just aren't worth the anger or frustration you invest in them.

- **Work on projects together.** Rather than always focusing on your own projects, change things up sometimes and work on projects together. If he always does the yard work and outside projects, for example, work together outside one Saturday. Or if you do all of the interior painting, ask him to work with you one weekend to paint a room. Or work on a project you both enjoy (like gardening) or share the "pain" of a project you both hate (like cleaning out the garage).

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