

What You Do

In addition to thinking in ways that support and build the relationship, people in healthy marriages make a habit of *doing* certain things that keep their friendship, their commitment, and their connection strong. Some of these behaviors come more naturally for some people than for others; however, *everyone* can build skills in these areas with some effort.

❖ Maintaining & Growing Your Friendship

It should come as little surprise that couples with a strong friendship quite naturally handle their conflicts better. Couples are often very good in the beginning of their marriage at doing the kinds of things that enhance their friendship and positive feelings for each other. The following are suggestions that are fairly simple but very powerful in maintaining and growing your friendship throughout your life together.

Tip #7 ♦ Frequently ask your spouse about his or her thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

You may know a lot of things about your spouse already, but always striving to more deeply know your spouse can positively affect your marriage. The more a spouse is aware of the details of the other person's world (his or her stressors, hopes, likes, and dislikes), the better the marriage. Knowing your spouse well leads to a strong friendship—the true key to a long-lasting, healthy marriage.



.....

Test how well you know your spouse by answering the following true or false questions.

	True	False
I can name my spouse's best friends.		
I know my spouse's favorite type of music.		
I know my spouse's favorite movie.		
I know my spouse's most stressful childhood event.		
I know my spouse's most embarrassing moment.		
I know what my spouse would do if he or she won the lottery.		
I know what my spouse's ideal job would be.		
I know my spouse's ideal place to live.		
I know the things that currently cause my spouse stress.		
I know the names of the people that have irritated my spouse recently.		
I know some of my spouse's life dreams.		
I am very familiar with my spouse's religious beliefs.		
I know my spouse's favorite and least favorite relatives.		
I feel like my spouse knows me pretty well.		
I trust my spouse.		
My spouse trusts me.		

* Adapted from Gottman, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, 1999