

DUCKLOW'S

10 MINUTES TO MAKE A MARRIAGE

It only takes 10 minutes to make a marriage. A lot of 10 minutes.

Some people are anxious around intimacy time. "What will I say?" "What am I supposed to do?" Even couples that have been married many years, can be anxious when getting close to their spouse.

This is not a male / female issue -- it is a person / person issue and relates a lot to family of origin, how one grew up being close, who initiated kindness, what the parent's marriage was like in terms of closeness-distance, how important one thought one was growing up, this kind of thing.

THE 10 MINUTES THAT MAKES A DAY

There are two vital "connections" in a couple's day. Your day depends a lot on how you handle these two 10 minute periods.

The first 10 minutes is when one wakes up. As you put off your sleeping with showering and cleansing, and as you put on your day with fresh clothes, you are forming your attitude for the day. How you will create that day depends in good measure how you handle that first 10 minutes.

I suggest that people take a few minutes alone, writing on a 3x5 card or in a journal, anticipating the day, choosing it before it happens. As you do so, choose your attitude. Will you be thankful, or entrepreneurial, or well boundaried, or purposefully passive, etc. Think about your emotions as well.

Let your first intentional 10 minutes affect your marriage for the next 12 hours. Be intentional.

The second 10 minutes is how you will greet your spouse at the end of the working day, when one walks through the door and into the house, or out of the office and into the kitchen. Young parents often express how their children greet them with "Poppa's home!" and the delight that is generated for the entire evening.

The same is true in marriage.

I think of 3 levels of kissing. The first, called the "peck," is more past-timing than anything -- it communicates little affection and demands no response. A second level kiss can wake up the

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relationship but it is often lost with the clutter of work day conversation. The third level kiss is life-saving (mouth-to-mouth resuscitation). This 5 second body-embracing investment can change the atmosphere of the home and the ethos for the evening.

These two, 10-minute periods are attitude adjustments for a good marriage.

Now that you know this, it will be hard not to want it!

10 MINUTES OF DEDICATED CONVERSATION [10-10]

We call this “10-10” and it means 10 minutes of dedicated conversation in the morning and the same in the evening.

In the morning, the couple may navigate the marital geography of his or her partner’s day. What he or she is doing, what special challenges there are to be faced, the worries and the anticipations. This allows the spouse to “walk in the shoes” of the partner throughout the day. Partners can pray for each other’s anticipated day.

In the evening, the couple invest another 10 minutes with the TV off, kids in bed, tea cups in hand, summarizing their day or going through the “Couple Intimacy Questionnaire” (see our web site for this) to dig a little deeper.

This is a great setup for bedtime intimacy as well.

Here is some practical advice:

1. Choose a comfortable place that you can consistently revisit without many distractions. TV off, no computers and don’t answer the phone.
2. Avoid administrating your time; that is planning the schedule or organizing kid’s activities.
3. Face each other rather than sit side by side. (See “The Marriage Position” on this web site.)
4. Keep to 10 minutes rather than extend the time.
5. If 10 minutes is too much in the morning, do a 5-10 until you have time to do the 10-10.

Here is what we have discovered in our clinical practice. 20 minutes of dedicated conversation each day for about a month fills the emotional reservoir of the marriage. Even those “intimacy hungry” people find themselves satisfied. And those who are “intimacy avoidant” can manage the 20 minutes per day invested in the marriage.

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