



Taking Time
by
Rebecca Escott

money, making the parents' challenge to find time for one another even more difficult.

Patricia Kramer, author of *The Dynamics of Relationships*, writes that "Marriage is a sense of connectedness that comes from problems met and resolved, crises that have been overcome and struggles, losses and victories that have been shared. So marriage is a caring, sharing, trusting companionship that requires lifelong nurturing."

"Lifelong nurturing," that's the challenge. Kramer summarized the research on strong successful marriages. In her chapter on making marriage last, she provides these directives to couples:

- Spend time together and time alone. Don't take your partner for granted. "After we hook the love

of our lives, we somehow think we no longer have to impress each other... Too often, partners become sloppy about their appearance and they stop doing all the nice, considerate and loving things they used to do. Familiarity can become the enemy," Kramer comments.

- All marriages have peaks and valleys. People do too. Be patient with one another. Practice compromise. Deal with conflict when it occurs rather than allowing it to simmer for hours or days.

- Remember special occasions that are important to your partner. Give flowers or tokens of your affection on those days but also on ordinary days just to say, "I love you."

- Do an activity that you enjoy together at least once a month.

Once a week is better. Choose something that gets you away from crowds, phones, and the children. Be creative. Don't do the same thing each time. Play together. Try some child-like activities. Allow silliness to brighten your days. Laugh together, and laugh often.

- Don't allow children to steal away couple time. The best thing any parent can do to raise healthy, loving children is to be a good role model. Children who see their parents giving affection, respect, and support instead of neglecting on another will grow up healthy and happy.

- No matter what else has happened, make a practice to check in with one another daily. Discuss the day's events—good and bad. Talk about what you're thinking and feeling.

Lifelong Nurturing — A Couple's Challenge

I've been looking forward to October's arrival. This month my husband and I celebrate our fifth wedding anniversary. We've planned a few get-away days when we can be alone and relax. But we don't limit our couple time to a once-a-year event. We've adopted two practices that keep our marriage growing throughout the year. Maybe you've discovered similar ones.

The first thing we do is plan "for specials." These are dates (maybe as short as an hour) that we plan when we haven't had much time to slow down and care for one another. Sometimes we do fancy things like go out to dinner. Other times, we light candles at home or watch the sunset from a quiet spot. "For specials" don't necessarily cost a lot of money. They do take commitment. We write them in red on the calendar and consider the time non-negotiable.

My husband created the other practice. He calls it "marriage

maintenance." These are the things he does out of love and obligation to me that he's not really fond of. It might be a weekend with my friends (people he doesn't really know) or it could be an event that doesn't strike him as terribly interesting. He participates because he knows I enjoy it and want him to be there, too.

"Marriage maintenance" times and "for specials" are ways that we've managed to carve out time for one another. Depending on your family's stage, finding couple time may seem nearly impossible! Last week I talked with a father of four elementary school-aged children. His children are scattered across three schools; his wife works several part-time jobs. He works out of his home in addition to a full-time job in town. How do they find couple time?

He said, "We make appointments. I do that for everyone else. And my marriage is more important than any of those other meetings." Research and history document that children can easily monopolize a family's time and

Local Achievement Day Part Of National 4-H Week

HONESDALE (Wayne Co.) — On Saturday, Oct. 12, Wayne county 4-H clubs will gather to recognize outstanding 4-H'ers, club projects, and 4-H supporters at the 4-H Achievement Day.

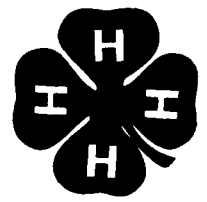
The program, scheduled from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Wayne County Fairgrounds, will include a Halloween costume competition, awards ceremony, recognition of livestock sale supporters, and displays of local projects. Refreshments will be served.

The Wayne County Cooperative Extension annual meeting

will also be held in conjunction with the Achievement Day festivities. Penn State Cooperative Extension in Wayne County provides educational resources in four major program areas: agriculture, family living, 4-H and youth development, and community development.

There will be educational exhibits showcasing cooperative extension programs and free educational information available. Election of Wayne County Cooperative Extension board members will also take place at

the Achievement Day festivities. For more information call the Wayne County Cooperative Extension office at (717) 253-5970, ext. 239.



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