


Family Living Focus
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New Year's Resolutions For Your Marriage

Like growing a precious plant, growing a healthy marriage takes time, a supportive environment, and lots of high-quality nourishment. What better time than the beginning of a new year to reaffirm as a couple the high priority that you place on the well-being of your relationship?

In today's fast-paced world, one of the most treasured gifts we can give to one another is the gift of time paired with our undivided attention. Why not make a new year's resolution to dedicate special blocks of time this coming year to your marriage? Time beyond what you normally give. Special times for having fun and nourishing your relationship—just the two of you—in whatever ways you hold most dear.

Don't just talk about jointly making one or more New Year's resolutions for your marriage; look ahead at the calendar for the coming year and block out some definite times for marriage enrichment.

For example, you might want to designate the first Saturday of every month as Marriage Enrichment Day. Your monthly commitment could be to use the whole day or, perhaps, just the evening to feed your relationship

in ways that are important to both of you. You might go hiking in the woods, attend a marriage enrichment seminar, or take in a play, a concert, or a ball game.

Here's another idea: Why not plan a weekend getaway during the year for just the two of you? Let your creative juices flow and dream up outings or other adventures that will truly be memory-makers for both of you. Think twice before you decide, "We can't afford the money and time this would take."

Time and money are two of our most important resources; how we use them tells us a lot about what we really value.

Your marriage is extraordinarily important; give it the time and money it deserves! In addition to blocking out special times this coming year for enjoying and enriching your marriage, you may want to try one or more of the following marriage enrichment ideas:

- Write a romantic, from-your-heart love letter to your spouse. Address and stamp it, then mail it from somewhere else in your community.

- Plan a little surprise for your loved one that you know he or she will really appreciate.

- Get out some old pictures from earlier in your relationship,

and enjoy the memories they invoke.

- Talk about when you first met or started dating, and how you felt about each other.

- Make it a point to tell your spouse some of the things that you like most about him or her. Share your appreciation on a regular basis. This is one time when repeating yourself is definitely OK.

- Express your love by showing affection in ways that you know your husband or wife will appreciate. Little gestures of shared affection help to keep the romantic fires burning brightly.

- Jot down three special things you would like your spouse to do for you, and ask him or her to do the same for you. Then exchange your lists and see what happens in the next few days.

- Take turns completing the following sentences with one another: I love it when you You seem most peaceful when I hope that we

- Exchange neck, shoulder and back rubs. Take your time, relax, and thoroughly enjoy it. At another time, do full-body massages.

- List seven activities that you love to do with your partner as he or she compiles a similar list. Then share your lists with one another and make some plans.

A happy marriage is a joy, and for most, it's also a tremendous challenge. Don't feel discouraged when problems crop up; disagreements are normal. Accept these challenges as opportunities for learning and growing.

When a difficulty arises, handle it in the most skillful way possible. Ask yourself, "What can I learn from this situation that will help me become a better and more loving person?" and "How can we, as a couple, use this opportunity to strengthen our marriage?"

Fundraising Chocolatefest Returns To Hershey

HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.) — The eighth annual Chocolatefest weekend is drawing near. Chocolatefest and Chocolateball, the weekend's events, will be conducted at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center on Feb. 1 and 2.

Chocolatefest 2003 includes samplings of chocolate and non-chocolate delights from over 50 area businesses, silent auction, live entertainment, basket raffle and children's activities and will be conducted from 2:30 p.m. until 5 p.m. in the Great American Hall of the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center.

Chocolatefest 2002 raised over \$100,000. Some of the agencies benefiting from the event include Capital Area Head Start, Children's Therapies and Educational Services, Susquehanna Service Dogs, Keystone Residence of Dauphin and Lancaster counties, Keystone Community Mental Health Services Keystone Service Systems of North Central Pennsylvania and Family Support Associates.

Chocolatiers for the event include Cafe Fresco, Appalachian Brewing Company, Cracker Barrel Restaurant, Felicita, Isaac's, Wolfgang Candy, Red Robin Restaurant, Sam's Club and Sir D's to name a few.

Tickets for Chocolatefest cost \$17.50 for adults in advance, \$20 at the door as available and \$5 for children ages 4-12, children under 4 are admitted free of cost. Tickets are available at Boscov's, Pealers, Outlooks for Hair in Linglestown, Little John's Restaurant in Carlisle, The Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Keystone Human Services and online at www.keystonehuman-services.org.

The fourth annual Chocolateball will be conducted Saturday, Feb. 1 in the Monarch Ballroom of the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center from 6:30 p.m. until midnight. This elegant, formal occasion features entertainment by the Hershey Big Band and Bahia, and includes dinner, dancing, a gala raffle and Celebrity Master of Ceremonies Doug Allen of WGAL 8. Chocolateball tickets are available for \$100 per person. Corporate tables may also be reserved for \$1,250. Reservations can be made by calling (717) 232-7509 or online at www.keystonehumanservice.org.

Volunteers are still needed to make Chocolatefest weekend a success. All volunteers will be trained in advance so it is important to sign up early. For information call (717) 232-7509.

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