



Prayer Tip: Pray Out Loud. (From: *The All-Time 10 Best Tips on Prayer* by Jim Stephens, www.themariagelibrary.com/Resources/10-Tips-Prayer.pdf)

Although God will still hear your prayer if you pray silently, I have found that my prayers are less than 50% as effective for myself if I pray silently. Just as if I'm talking to my closest friend, when I speak the words out loud, it forces me to clarify my thoughts. When the words come out and I hear them expressed, then I can move along to the next thought. If I keep the words in my mind, it's harder to keep going and my prayers tend to taper off to nothing very quickly.

A common problem that beginners face in praying out loud is embarrassment. Obviously, God is invisible so you may feel that you are just talking to the wall. That's pretty embarrassing for your ego. Suppose you found out later that God wasn't really listening and you'd been talking to nothing all that time. You'd feel really foolish then, wouldn't you? If someone passes by and sees you talking to nothing, they might think you are crazy.

Three Suggestions

Here are three hints that I have found helpful to get you started. First, find some object or "representative" to talk to. If, for example, you have a picture of Jesus or True Parents, talk to the picture as if you were talking to the person. Talk to that person as a representative of God and have him or her relay your message to God. You might also want to try a picture of a person you know who really loves you.

The word "prayer" is reserved for interaction with God and not people, so don't be confused, but the above suggestion can help you feel connected to an invisible listener.

A second idea is to use the "Dear Diary" approach. In other words, write it down. Write a letter to God and express clearly your feelings and desires. As you see them taking shape on the paper you will naturally be praying for these things at the same time. After they are written down, then you might also want to say them out loud.

A third hint is to tape record your prayer. This sounds pretty radical but is very effective. It might seem that it would be very embarrassing but it is an excellent way to train yourself for a life of prayer and it especially prepares you to pray in public. When you are praying and you come to a pause, then just pause the tape recorder also. After you have recorded your prayer, then be sure to go back and listen to it. Listening to your own prayers from an "outsider's" point of view, you will be pleasantly surprised that you like them. You will be able to improve them more quickly because of this new perspective you will have. You can even imagine what God must be thinking as He listens to your prayer.



10 Things You Can Do To Have a Healthy Marriage

National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, (continued next week)

It takes work to have a healthy marriage like it takes work to do anything. You can't maintain a house or a car, be successful in a business, art or a sport, take care of a pet, or grow a plant without making effort. The greater effort you put in, then the more rewarding is the outcome. Why do so many people thinking that a great marriage is something you just "fall into" and like magic it's the perfect relationship?

It takes good nutrition and regular exercise over a long period of time to have a healthy body. Likewise, there are things you can do to have a healthy marriage.

Here are 10 Tips you can use to strengthen your marriage (list continues next week):

1. Spend Time with Each Other.

Married partners need time with each other in order to grow strong together. Plan regularly scheduled date nights and weekend activities. If a getaway is not immediately possible make it a goal that you will work toward one. By spending time with your partner, you will better understand your differences and how to negotiate the problems they may cause. Forget the "quality vs. quantity time" discussion - healthy marriages need both.

2. Learn to Negotiate Conflict.

Conflict is a normal part of a relationship. There is a point however when it can increase in intensity and become emotionally and sometimes physically unsafe. Working out problems in a relationship starts with understanding what your issues are and how to discuss them. There are many resources available to help you learn how to deal with conflict. Using these resources can go a long way in preserving how safe you and your partner feel.

3. Show Respect for Each Other at All Times.

When a couple fails to respect each other, they often slip into negative habits. Research shows that nothing can damage a relationship quicker than criticisms and put-downs. Treating your partner as you would like to be treated will do a lot to strengthen the bond between you. Paying your partner a compliment is a quick and easy way to show them respect. When you are tempted to complain to someone about one of your partner's flaws, ask yourself how you would feel if they did that to you.

4. Learn About Yourself First.

Make it a point to work on self discovery. Many partners enter into relationships without knowing enough about themselves. As a result they can also have difficulty learning about their partners. Learning about yourself will better equip you to grow as an individual and a partner. Regardless of how long you've been together, there are always more things you can learn about him or her. What are his dreams for the future? What is her worst fear? What is the way he or she best gives or receives love? Imagine the intimacy and bond you will share over a lifetime together if you commit to discovering new things about one another!

Parenting Tip

Comment:

We highly recommend this book on positive parenting: **Children Are From Heaven**, by John Gray.

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Continuation from last 3
weeks...

Again here are the 5 key
messages:

1. **It's okay to be different.**
2. **It's okay to make mistakes.**
3. **It's okay to have negative emotions.**
4. **It's okay to want more.**
5. **It's okay to say no, but remember mom and dad are the bosses.**

New Skills for Maintaining Control

When a child defies or rejects parental control, instead of recognizing this behavior as bad or wrong, positive parenting simply acknowledges that the defiant child is out of control—out of his parents' control. Instead of judging, punishing, or lecturing the child, all that is required is to bring the child back into control.

Almost all children need to take time outs on a regular basis to learn how to regain control when emotions become too strong to control. Giving a time out allows a child first to feel anger and frustration. Then, after a short period of time, the child will begin to cry and feel sadness or hurt. A little later, the child will feel his or her underlying fears and vulnerability. Within a few short minutes, all this drama will lift away and suddenly once again the child will be miraculously back in your control.

Time outs work, but they must be used correctly.

Four most common mistakes parents make in using time outs:

1. **Too much time out.**

Just giving time out and not applying the other skills of positive parenting will eventually lessen the effectiveness of taking a time out. Time outs are to be used as a last resort or at times when you just don't have time to move through the other four steps of positive parenting. To be cooperative

and flourish, children have other needs besides their need to push up against the limits of a time out.

2. **Not enough time out.**

While some parents rely too much on time out, others don't use time out enough. Some parents conclude that a time out doesn't work, because the next day the child goes out of control again. The regular need for time out doesn't mean it doesn't work. It is simply what your child needs at this stage in their development. There is no right number of time outs. It could be two a day, two a week, or two a month, or two a year. Every child is unique.

3. **Expecting your child to sit quietly.**

Some parents misunderstand the whole purpose of a time out. They expect the child to sit quietly and cool off. The first step in learning to manage negative feelings is to feel them and release them. As children get older (around the age of nine), they are able to feel and release emotions without a time out.

4. **Using time out as punishment.**

The fourth mistake parents make is to use time out as a punishment. Although children may feel they are being punished by time outs, a parent must be careful not to use a time out as a punishment.

When children don't get enough time outs, they become prone to more intense tantrums. This means that when the child finally gets a time out he or she will throw an even bigger tantrum. Eventually, with regular time outs, the child will come back into balance and be more cooperative rather than demanding.

Compliments of the District 1
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