



Prayer Tip: Create A Holy Environment For Your Prayers.

(From: [The All-Time 10 Best Tips on Prayer](http://www.themarriagelibrary.com/Resources/10-Tips-Prayer.pdf) by Jim Stephens, www.themarriagelibrary.com/Resources/10-Tips-Prayer.pdf)

Prepare Your Surroundings with Pictures, Music, Flowers, Candles, etc.

Some people are very emotionally moved by special pictures of True Parents, Jesus, their family, and loved ones.

Others might find inspiration in photos with personal significance. Paintings or photos of nature can move our hearts.

Maybe you like having plants in the area where you pray or some fresh cut flowers.

Many people find that one or more lighted candles really help create a mood and environment for connecting to heaven. Throughout history most religions the world over have used candles.

For other people, music moves their hearts. Putting on a special CD, playing an instrument, or singing a favorite spiritual song can immediately take you to a place in your heart that connects to the divine.

Some people pray over the articles in the daily newspaper, especially if there has been a tragedy.

Experiment for yourself what types of additions to your prayer space can help you get in the mood.

Just the act of preparing the environment will help stimulate and cultivate your space for better prayers. In thinking and investing your heart into your prayer place you are putting out the type of energy that will inhabit the space and welcome God. The objects in your prayer place will begin to take on the energy of your prayers and eventually will radiate that energy back to you.

I once went into the "Prayer Room" in the house of a very elderly "prayer woman" in Korea. The feeling in that room was totally an environment of prayer energy. It had been accumulating there for decades of her prayers.

Just one small note to remember. Your environment should be created to ASSIST you to pray. Don't let it become a distraction from your real purpose - connecting to God.



Talking About Problems Increases Oxytocin For Women, Making Them Feel Better

By John Gray, author of *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*

An understanding of oxytocin-producing behaviors can completely change the way a man interprets a woman's behaviors.

For example, when a woman complains she is not getting enough support, or feels the need to talk about the problems in her life, it does not mean she does not appreciate what her partner does.

Instead, her behavior may be an indication that she is attempting to cope with stress by increasing her oxytocin levels.

Most men are not aware that talking and sharing can increase oxytocin levels to help a woman cope with stress. (This actually makes their bodies feel better also. Not so for men. Their hormone is testosterone. - Jim)

Without understanding this biological drive, a man mistakenly assumes that a woman is looking for a solution from him. He interrupts her to give his solutions. He does so because solving problems is one of his ways to make himself feel better when he is stressed (which would increase his testosterone -Jim). He thinks it will help her, too. But he is wrong.

Solving problems raises his testosterone levels but does little for her oxytocin levels. Once a man understands that simply listening to his partner is enough to make her feel better, his testosterone levels go up as well, because he knows that he is actually solving a problem.

This examination of the biological basis for the way men and women deal with stress sheds light on why Mars and Venus sometimes collide.

Social conditioning, parental example, and education can have a significant effect on how men and women interact and respond to each other, but how we react to stress is hardwired in our bodies and brains.

One suggestion that John Gray offers is that the woman can say to the man, "You don't have to do or say anything, please just listen for 10 minutes and I'll feel better." --- Jim

Parenting Tip

For The Sake Of The Kids

By Michele Weiner-Davis

People often say that you shouldn't stay married for the sake of the kids. After all, the logic goes, if parents are miserable, it will only hurt the children. It's better for kids, they say, to have two happy parents who lead separate lives than to be exposed to sadness, emotional distance and conflict. Makes sense, right? Wrong.

I've specialized in work with couples for nearly three decades. At the start of my career, I was one of those people who believed that staying together for the sake of the kids was foolhardy. But now, after seeing the havoc that divorce wreaks in the lives of families, I am an unabashed marriage saver. And since I became dedicated to helping people resuscitate flat-lined marriages and keep their families together, I have learned a great deal about the process and the benefits of working things out.

First, I learned that implicit in the question, "Should people stay together for the sake of the kids,?" is the assumption that they will inevitably remain miserable in the marriage. This is insanity.

Over the past decade, we have learned a tremendous amount about what constitutes a successful marriage. We actually have a very concrete understanding of what

spouses need to do - and stop doing - to make marriages work.

Falling in love is easy. Staying in love is another matter. It requires skills, relationship skills. We learn about relationships as we were growing up and unfortunately, most of us didn't have great role models.

Even if we did have great role models, we might choose a partner who wasn't so fortunate. If we don't have adequate relationship skills - knowing how to co-parent, communicate, resolve conflict, compromise, build on relationship strengths - our relationships fail.

But the good news is that today there are marriage education classes couples can take to improve their Relationship I.Q. Couples can transform an unhappy or ho-hum marriage into a great one. Additionally, although choosing a quality therapist takes some investigation and effort, couples can go to therapists who are skilled at helping them resolve their differences, not just talk about their feelings or the problems.

In short, although it's understandable why someone who is unhappy in marriage might envision the future to be nothing more than a miserable extension of the past, it ain't necessarily so. Marriages can heal, change and improve with the proper help. (In fact, studies show that, even without professional help, couples who wait out the storm, report that they are extremely happy five years later! When it

comes to marriage, patience isn't only a virtue, it's a necessity.)

Parents who want a divorce often say that, although it won't be easy, children are resilient and they will be better off in the long run. But here's what the research is telling us about this. Divorce takes an enormous toll on children.

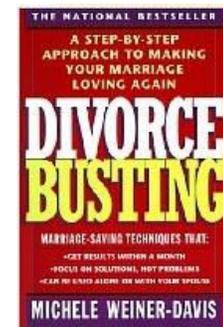
Change is very difficult. Dissolving a family has enormous repercussions. Children often are shuffled from home to home. Family finances suffer due to the need to maintain separate households. Parents are often preoccupied with their own emotional well-being. Frequently, there are moves to new school districts, requiring major emotional adjustments. And then there are second marriages and the unique challenges of step-families. Plus, second and subsequent marriages are less likely to succeed than first marriages, requiring even more changes to children's lifestyles. Furthermore, studies suggest that even when the adults are happier in their new lives, there doesn't seem to be a trickledown effect to the children. Children, it seems, get the short end of the stick.

Here's one more thing to consider. There is never just a single reason people remain together; there are many, many reasons couples decide to stick it out. Marriage is a package deal. People choose to remain married because they want companionship, sex, financial security, family ties, extended family, someone with whom to

share responsibilities, a person to grow old with, a preference to share life as opposed to going it alone and so on.

If one of the reasons people choose to remain together is for the sake of the kids, I say, "Bravo." That's great.

But the truth is, we only have one go-around. We all deserve happiness. No one should plan on simply acquiescing to a life of misery. Having said that, given the miraculous changes I've seen in couples' relationships, even in the 11th hour, I feel like a psychotic optimist. You don't have to just stay together for the sake of the kids, get happy for the sake of the kids. It will be a gift for a lifetime.



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