

Spiritual Tip

Require Yourself to Remember

By Joel Osteen

In the Old Testament, God commanded His people to have certain festivals, certain celebrations. One of the main reasons was so they would remember what God did for them. Several times a year, they would all stop what they were doing, come together and celebrate how God brought them out of slavery, or how God defeated their enemy, or how He protected them.

They were required to remember. Another place talks about how they put out memorial stones. These were huge boulders. We might call them historical markers today. That reminded them of specific victories. Every time they walked by, they would say, "Oh, yeah. That stone is for when God brought us out of slavery. That stone is for when God healed my child. That stone is for when God provided for our needs." These memorial stones helped it to stay fresh in their memory. They fed their faith and hope in God.

In the same way, every one of us should have our own memorial stones. When you look back over your life, you should remember not the times you failed, not when you went through a breakup, or not when your boss did you wrong, or the business went down. That's remembering what you should be forgetting.

Switch over to the other channel. Do you remember when you were lonely and God brought somebody great into your life? Do you remember when the medical report said it was impossible, but God supernaturally healed you? Do you remember when it was dark? You didn't think you'd have another happy day, but God not only turned it around, He gave you beauty for ashes, joy for mourning! All of us should have our memorial stones out.

We should require ourselves to remember! Why? Because it keeps us focused on God's faithfulness. It keeps our hearts and minds going in the right direction. It causes us to be grateful which opens the door to His blessing.

Today and every day, make it a point to meditate on the good things of God. Stay focused on Him and praise Him for all that He will do in your future!

"Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced." (Psalm 105:5, NIV)

Parenting Tip

Leadership – Being a Proper Parent

By John Rosemond

In my most popular presentation — **"Parenting with Love and Leadership"**[™] — I reveal the secret to proper, effective discipline: to wit, acting like a superior being.

Today's parents have been seduced by behavior modification theory into believing that effective discipline is all about the proper (consistent) use of the proper consequences. In other words, they believe that effective discipline is a matter of manipulating reward and punishment. Consequences are sometimes necessary, but over-relying on them is certain to backfire. Many parents have already discovered that; they simply don't realize what it is they've discovered.

Think about it: The teacher who always has the fewest discipline problems, who is regarded by her peers as the best disciplinarian in the school, is not controlling her class by using behavior-modification-based classroom management strategies. What is she doing? She's simply acting like a superior being. In a calm, composed manner, she projects an overarching confidence in the legitimacy of her authority. A child's natural response to this is obedience.

The question then becomes "How does one act like a superior being?" The answer: act like you know what you're doing, that you rather enjoy doing it, and that it matters not to you whether your kids (or students) do or do not approve of your decisions. You love them, and/or you know what is best for them, and that's all that matters.

After a recent talk, a fellow told me he wasn't comfortable with the idea of acting superior to his kids. He said it reminded him of his dad, who disciplined through threat, anger, and repeated spankings.

"Your father was frustrated, tense, angry, and wanted you to behave for his benefit, for his convenience," I replied. "I thought I made clear that's not at all what I'm talking about. The parent who successfully acts like a superior being is calm, composed, unflappable, and wants his kids to behave for their benefit."

"Their benefit?" he asked, skeptically.

"Right! Their benefit. The best research into parenting outcomes confirms commonsense: the most obedient kids are also the happiest kids."

I went on to explain how leadership principles apply to the raising of kids. Parenting is, after all, a leadership function — the most important, character-and-culture-shaping leadership function of them all. The rules of leadership are few and simple: Be decisive; be declarative (as opposed to persuasive); be purposeful; be determined; be commanding (as opposed to demanding). Act like a superior being.

The fellow wasn't convinced, so I asked him, "Who knows more about the real world and how to properly live a good life — you or your child?"

"I do, of course," he answered.

"Who relies upon whom for protection and life's basic necessities?"

"My child relies upon me."

"Right! And your child needs to know you are capable of providing for and protecting him under any and all circumstances. It is to his benefit that he sees you as a superior being, which you've already told me you are. So, act like one. It's that simple."

"So," he said, smiling now, "back to my dad...he was really just an ignorant cuss."

"That is the forgiving perspective."

Marriage Tip

7 Things No Spouse Can Be Expected To Do – Part 2

(Continued from Part 1 last week)

By Winifred Reilly

The main thing that no spouse can be expected to do is ...live up to your dreams.

If you want to have a happy marriage, you need to let go of your expectations that he or she will.

We all come into marriage with our unique set of expectations — about ourselves, our partner, and about what marriage will be.

Quite often these expectations are not articulated. Sometimes we're not even aware that we have them.

The truth is, most of the expectations people have are unrealistic. When they're not met, many think there's something wrong with the relationship rather than the trouble lying with the expectations they brought in the first place.

My friends in AA say that "Expectations are resentments waiting to happen."

3. Give you unconditional love.

Ideally, as children, we will get unconditional love from our parents. But the love we get and give as adults doesn't follow the same rules.

It's not unusual to hear people vow at their wedding to love one another unconditionally. Then, some years down the line, they find that they can't.

I've known couples to think something is wrong when they find that, despite loving each other deeply, there are times that it's difficult to feel love. Whether faced with a betrayal, or simply in the midst of a fight, love can, at times, slip out of reach.

Worries like this come from an unrealistic expectation that "true" love is unwavering, undying, and unconditional. It is a fantasy to think there's nothing that can impact or tarnish the love we have for another.

Nothing? Really?

If you're being honest with yourself, I bet you can think of something your spouse could do that may well be a deal breaker.

Unromantic as it is, as adults we love each other conditionally — though that's not a bad thing. It is beneficial to know that there are things we can do to cause our spouse to stop trusting us, and potentially stop loving us.

Rather than expect to share a love that asks for nothing in return, I suggest loving as generously and warmly as possible.

4. Read your mind.

Maybe you don't expect your partner to read your mind as if he or she were a clairvoyant. Maybe, instead, you have thoughts like these: Why doesn't she understand me? Or After all this time he should know what I want.

It makes perfect sense to want to be known and understood, but you will never be perfectly understood, nor will your wants and needs be unerringly anticipated. It's inevitable that,

sometimes, the two of you won't be perfectly attuned.

That's why it's your job to reach out and speak up, instead of assuming that your partner knows what's important to you without your expressing it.

5. Make everything right.

No partner, no matter how kind, loving, or generous, can make all of your life's struggles disappear. While there are many wonderful things we may get from a partner, no one can be the ultimate cure for our loneliness or boredom. No one can give our life meaning, make us happy, or fix all of the injuries we incurred in childhood. Like it or not, love does not heal all.

Life is, after all, a challenging journey. Unless we pursue our own passions and figure out how to make ourselves happy, we will feel disappointed and mistakenly think that our partner is falling down on the job.

6. Be just like you.

Though people like to say that opposites attract, deep down, most people hope their partner will be a lot like them. Not necessarily identical, but enough like them that they can side-step the inevitable work that comes with learning to tolerate and accept difference.

There's no getting around the fact that the two of you are different. You see the world differently, you want different things and you have different dreams. In fact, you've been different since the day you met, even if you were too blinded by the stars in your eyes to recognize it.

Rather than protest the nature of your differences, why not strive to be open-minded and loving? Consider the things you can learn from each other. Challenge yourself to go somewhere new.

7. Be perfect.

Take a moment to think about what you would want if you were designing a perfect spouse. Maybe you'd start your list with thoughtful and generous, followed, perhaps, by sexy and smart. You might go on to say fun-loving and lighthearted. You could say you want someone who loves the outdoors, who likes to work in the garden, is a good listener and a willing talker, someone willing to change a tire, a diaper, and, better still, an old attitude.

Sounds great, right?

Well, maybe not.

Your list for Mr. Right or Ms. Perfect is a set-up for trouble if you expect to find all of these fine qualities in one person. People often tell their spouse, in a state of frustration: I want a partner who _____ (fill the blank with some quality that's missing.) Why not drop your expectations of your partner becoming the person you want and embrace, instead, the person they actually are?

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