

What does it take to have a long, happy marriage?

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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Senior married couples give advice on love

Valentine's Day is just around the corner, a day to show that special loved one how much you love them. Couples who have been married for quite some time talked to the *Sun* about how they've made their marriage work.

Twila and James Moots have been married for 62 years. They married in 1961, and then shortly after that the young couple moved to Gallup to begin their lives together.

Twila said they don't do anything special for Valentine's Day; it's just another day for them. In fact, they have never really done anything on the day since they married.

"When we got married, we both were busy being in school obtaining our bachelor's degrees in education," Twila said. "Besides, we really didn't have a lot of money to spend on Valentine's Day."

Twila laughed when asked how they stayed together so long, saying she really didn't know.

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“Patience, you have to have a lot of patience,” Twila said. “I also think you have to have faith to lean back on. You have to make Jesus a part of your life and guide you to what you’re supposed to do.”

James explained with a laugh that his wife is really forgiving and doesn’t get into trouble intentionally.

“There are things we go through that are irritating, but we just overlook them and we don’t make a big deal out of them,” James said. “First off...forgiveness, there’s times you just have to forgive and go on from there, second of course is having love.”

Twila added that being a team is important.

“You have to work together – not against each other – and be willing to give and take, I think that’s a big part of it too,” she said.

Twila also noted that if it’s not Valentine’s Day and one of them brings home flowers, that makes it extra special.

“He did it without having to feel like he had to, I feel Valentine’s Day is like having to do it and it doesn’t have that special meaning to it,” Twila explained.

When asked to identify one thing that couples don’t do as much anymore, they both brought up communication.

“They don’t communicate as much because they are on their cell phones,” Twila said. “Even when you go to a restaurant you see the whole family on their phones and that’s pretty sad.”

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Along with communication, both added that couples need time alone, and suggested perhaps putting the kids to bed early to use that time for each other.

Another couple that spoke to the *Sun* was Gloria Underwood and Tom Bischoff, who have been married for 17 years. They were both born and raised in Gallup.

Underwood said she wanted to keep her maiden name.

When it comes to celebrating Valentine's Day, both Underwood and Bischoff said they don't really celebrate it at all, just a little. Bischoff said he's not much of a celebration guy and that's okay with his wife.

"I'm a pretty quiet guy who leads a quiet life," he said.

Underwood said that Bischoff still brings her flowers and they'll pick out a vase at home and display it, which she said is pretty nice. Having been married for 18 years, they said for the most part it has been a pretty easy-going marriage. Underwood said that they both get along well and think alike for the most part.

Having things in common works for them, Bischoff said.

"Accepting each other for what we are, having a late marriage considering our age, we're both retired and have no kids to take care of," he added.

He stated both of them are financially secure and don't have those pressures as a young family does. Underwood added that letting each other have their own time helps for themselves and their marriage.

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“We let each other do our own thing, we do a lot of things together, but we let each other go our own way too, kinda grow on our own and in together. We don’t pick at each other, we let each other be,” he said.

When asked what advice they could give to other couples, Bischoff said to accept each other for who they are as well as their limitations.

“It’s very challenging for this new generation, I feel for them because it’s going to be harder for them to obtain what we have. You have to have a spiritual life to be able to keep a family together as well,” Bischoff said.

Underwood had some advice for women.

“To women at any age don’t get married to change the guy – accept him as he is already and don’t try to change him,” she said. “Maybe little things like pushing your chair in after you eat, little things like that. Always be there to listen, and the spiritual part too is important.”

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