Foundational Keys to a Successful Marriage

The foundation for all great marriages is selflessness and friendship. The more we think about ourselves, feel deserving, and make demands of others, the more difficult emotionally fulfilling relationships become. If both partners make a point of nurturing and giving in their relationships, both will experience increased friendship, trust, and joy.

Lose yourself

1. **Knowledge** –The more you know about someone, the more you can feel empathy for them.
   1. It involves knowing one another's internal world, what they enjoy, and consistently being interested and keeping up to date. (Love Maps, Languages of Love).
2. **Respect and Admiration** –It includes not just feeling, but also frequently expressing fondness, admiration and supporting each other’s roles, values, and ideals.
3. **Details** –Are the difference makers!
   1. It’s the small things that count; the tiny little deeds performed for the benefit of each other are what count at the end of each day. On the other hand, small abuses of power or selfishness create lasting distrust and discord and destroy years of good will. Forget about keeping score!

Explore Differences

1. **Explore and Validate Differences rather than critiquing** –You will always be different, use your differences to draw closer rather than as points of criticism.
   1. Respecting differences, learning to accept alternative perspectives, emotions, and beliefs can make or break a relationship. The everyday critiques of each other are emotionally destructive.
   2. STOP criticism, contempt, defensiveness, stonewalling (silent treatment).
2. **Conflict Intimacy** –Quit solving problems and focus on learning and understanding.
   1. Sixty-nine percent of relationship conflicts never get resolved. People either adapt to these PERPETUAL conflicts with dialogue, or the conflicts get gridlocked.
   2. The skills for effective problem solving. These are Softened Startup (Make it about you), Repair and De-escalation, Accepting Influence, and Compromise.
   3. An important component of effective problem solving: physiological soothing (Self and Partner), mature communication skills, and personal responsibility.

Roommates no More

1. **Everyday Shared Experiences** –Tiny moments of emotional connection must be created for your partner on a daily basis.
   1. Creating little moments for each other reverses relationship alienation and deeps emotional intimacy and mutual understanding.
2. **Make your partners little dreams come true**.
3. **Building Shared Meaning and Goals** –Couplesshould frequently share with one another what makes their life journeys meaningful as well as explore, develop and achieve shared goals.