



CHAPTER 27

A Hodgepodge

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("Rafe")

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A HODGEPODGE

For what it is worth I want to include some random additional suggestions and advice for you and your spouse.

1. Look your spouse in the eye when you two speak.
2. When your spouse is talking to you, give your spouse the courtesy of stopping what you are doing and **give** your actual undivided attention to your spouse. Turn off your cell phone at home.
3. Carry a picture of your spouse and be sure it is the very first picture in your billfold.
4. Put on your calendar every year your spouse's birthday, your anniversary, Valentines Day, Mothers Day, Fathers Day, etc. Have some other backup means of making sure that you will not miss those dates.
5. Regardless of your finances invest in a top-quality mattress. You need effective sleep. You need an excellent marriage bed.
6. Do not live in the same house as or next door to your parents or your spouse's parents, if there is any other alternative.
7. Cut the apron strings and the umbilical cord from your parents and help your spouse to cut the apron strings and the umbilical cord from your spouse's parents. (But remember... it is quite okay to maintain excellent and loving relationships with both sets of parents.)
8. The first part of leaving and cleaving is **to leave**. This needs to happen at the very outset of your marriage. Otherwise the lack of “leaving” or it will reek havoc. Maintain sweet love and contact with all parents while protecting your new family from any meddling or intruding by parents. There is no place for either of you to put the relationship with a parent ahead of the relationship with your spouse.
9. No matter how poor you are be sure you give of yourself and your finances to the Lord. Remember God is the Great Provider. He can keep your cup sufficiently full either by putting more into the top of the cup or by plugging holes at the bottom of the cup. Honor the Lord with the firstfruits of your time and your earnings and joyfully trust Him. God will always keep His promises to provide for your needs.
10. Become a part of and give of your quality time and energies to your local Bible-believing church. Jesus said He would build His church. Jesus is the head of the church. The church is the bride of Christ. Do not forsake the assembly of believers. Your local church is the best place to find like-minded friends and to obtain the blessing of genuine fellowship and friendship.
11. Be creative in planning surprises, dates and gifts for your spouse. Sure it takes time, effort and some expense. Anything worthwhile does.
12. Determine well in advance where you are going to spend your holidays. You might as well assume that it is impossible to please everyone. Since you cannot be two places at once there may be some tough calls. This matter can be a minefield when both the husband and the wife come from loving families who want very much to be with their children and grandchildren. If those families are genuinely loving, however, they will not be selfish and they will understand when you make your decisions. While doing everything you can to take into account the schedules and desires of your respective parents, when all is said and done, you need to make the decision that is best for **your family** (i.e. you, your spouse and

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- your children) and next, if possible, do what you can to accommodate the preferences of your parents and siblings.
13. Start your own happy family traditions, and make such traditions more important each year.
 14. Make a really big deal out of family birthdays, holidays, and special events. Celebrate and emphasize those days and be sure everyone in the family is involved.
 15. After your wedding day do not become a bum or a slob, or a pig.
 16. Do not think for a second that your time is any more important than the time of your spouse. I repeat, do not think for a second that your time is any more important than the time of your spouse. A corollary to this is that you should never declare or complain to your spouse (or to anyone else for that matter) about how busy you are. Of course you are busy. Everyone is busy. And it is really obnoxious to tell others how busy you are.
 17. Take lots of photographs. If you have a video camera, take videos as well. You never can go back and capture a moment. Those photographs and videos will become increasingly more important and fun in future years. Have some means of organizing and identifying those photographs and videos as you go.
 18. Be sure you and your spouse get regular exercise. It will help you feel better, stay healthier, look better, and it will increase your chances of meaningfully living longer together.
 19. If your spouse asks you for a favor, do it if you possibly can.
 20. Clean up after yourself. You made the mess so you take care of it and put things away. Un-wad and turn right side out your dirty socks and underwear.
 21. Make a master family calendar and keep it up-to-date and filled in. Put it where you will see it often (e.g. with magnets on the refrigerator door). Write down calendar items so that both you and your spouse have a reminder of what is coming, and so that you can avoid planning something that is in conflict with another matter that has already been established or scheduled.
 22. When you are out of town, call your spouse every day no matter what.
 23. When you are walking with your spouse, hold your spouse's hand.
 24. Get a good lock for your bedroom door.
 25. Remember that the most loving thing you can do for your children is to truly love your spouse. . . and openly show it.
 26. Do not nag your spouse.
 27. Do not be a whiner or a complainer.
 28. Wear only perfumes or colognes that your spouse really likes.
 29. If at all possible, do not make plans or invite people over without first checking with your spouse.
 30. Do not watch a lot of much TV – TV is a time-robber and often is a cesspool with themes and images displeasing to God.
 31. Do not be a dictator with the television remote.
 32. Do not view magazines, movies, T.V. shows or videos which show nudity or are sexually explicit, or which depict themes of adultery, homosexuality or fornication.
 33. Do not gossip or be a busy body.
 34. Be balanced in the use of your telephone. Don't jabber with friends on the phone when your spouse is home.
 35. Include your spouse as your equal partner in spending decisions.

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36. Decide which decisions should be the husband's call, which decisions should be the wife's call, which decisions should be the call of either, and which decisions require the agreement and consent of both of you.
37. Come to an agreement and an understanding about what types of music will be played in your home and in your car.
38. Never, never, never, never allow any anger, dispute, animosity or hostility to go unresolved by the time either of you turns in for the night.
39. Do not be a worry wart. If you have the tendency to worry, study the clear Biblical instructions about not fretting, not being anxious (e.g. Matthew chapter 6) and actively cast your cares on God for he cares for you. Actively choose to trust God and keep your faith in the Lord. Pray that the Lord will help you to not be a worrier.
40. Watch your tongue. Do a topical study in the Bible concerning the dangers and damage of the tongue (e.g. James 3:1-12; Proverbs 21:23; 25:15,23; Psalms 39:1; etc.).
41. Consider the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the practical impact that should have on your godly living, right choices, and your obedience to God's principles in your marriage.
42. Think about, pray about, plan for, and establish various annual goals, individually and as a couple. Share and discuss your goals with your spouse. Have a method to evaluate how you are doing.
43. Make a habit of writing things down. We all forget things if we do not make the effort to establish a system of reminders.
44. Write and deliver love notes, love letters, and (if you have the ability) poems to your spouse.
45. Plan and do things that break the routine. Guard against monotony or getting into ruts.
46. Do everything in your power to nip in the bud any problem that you see. The sooner the matter is addressed, the better. Keep little fires little - they are a lot easier to put out that way.
47. Make sure you and your spouse are not presumptuous of each other, or of others (or of God).
48. Make sure you and your spouse are not ingrates. Go overboard in noticing what you should be thankful for, and in expressing your sincere gratitude.
49. Get into the habit of sending thank you notes and appreciation cards. Send those "thank you" notes and cards immediately. If the thought enters your mind that "I should send a note of thanks or encouragement to her/him," then DO IT that day.
50. If something needs to be done or fixed around the house, and it is your role or responsibility to do it, then do it as soon as you have the time and wherewithal to do it. If you need outside help then get the help as soon as you can afford to do so.
51. Do everything that is within your power to make and keep your home as the castle, oasis, and refuge for you and your spouse. Do everything in your power so that you and your spouse would rather be at your home than any other place on the face of the globe.
52. If you have some mannerism or habit which is offensive to your spouse, do everything you can to stop it or change it.
53. Commit yourself to regular evaluation about how you are doing in your marriage, in your Biblical role, in the development of your relationship with your spouse, and in the actual implementation and practice of Scriptural principles for the marriage.

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54. Prepare and practice giving your testimony of how you came to Christ, how your spouse came to Christ, and what it means to you that Christ is in the center of your home. That way you will be ready, individually or as a couple, to share the Gospel using your own lives.
55. Communicate with your spouse and come to a very clear and totally understood agreement as to how to know when the other person does not remember the name of a person just encountered. When the setting would normally call for an introduction, but your spouse does not do so, you will know that your spouse does not remember the name of the person. Because of such understanding, you will be prepared to affirmatively introduce yourself to the person and ask that person's name or do something else to save your spouse from embarrassment.
56. Be very liberal every day in giving your spouse kisses, hugs, pats and "I love you's." Show your affection and affirming smile to your spouse numerous times each day.
57. Because there is not enough time to do all of the good things, you must decide what are the best things and give them priority. Periodically review your memberships in organizations, activities and commitments and decide whether these should continue or whether you should eliminate some so that you will have time for your family and so that you will have time to be more effective in the activities you retain. It is vital that you learn to say "no" to some of the requests made to you. Remember that a decision to help some particular organization may at the same time be a choice that will hurt your spouse and children or it may diminish your opportunity to enhance your relationship with your spouse and children.
58. There are so many things that are just fine in their proper context, place and in balance. Hobbies, recreational and sporting activities, hunting, fishing, computer time, golfing, meeting the boys, meeting the ladies, and the like can all be fine. But if these items even in the slightest become an offense to your spouse or crowd out quality time and activities with your spouse, then those other items need to be very directly subordinated or even eliminated if necessary.
59. Establish a place in your home for leaving messages between you and your spouse. When you get home make it a practice to check for a message. When you have a message for your spouse, put it there. This serves a practical function. It also is a place where you can leave love notes, notes of encouragement and notes of appreciation. If you can afford an answering machine I recommend it because it can help you and your spouse remain in better contact.
60. Husbands, how about loving your wife by exercising routine toilet detail. First, you are not a perfect shot, so take one step closer, please. Second, when finished check the rim and floor to see if you left your marks. Third, if there is anything to clean up you do it right then. If you think that is disgusting, imagine what your wife thinks. Be a **giver** nor a **getter** – even with toilet detail.
61. Be wise with your finances. It is a great tragedy that so many newlyweds these days have the false expectation that they should live at or near the lifestyle that their parents are presently enjoying. These newlyweds either are misguided or are ignoring the facts that their parents started out poor, struggled for years and worked their backs off to improve their financial status and security. Get your eyes on reality and expect that you will have to work your backs off as well. Watch out for credit cards. If you can't afford something, why not just go without it or at least put it off until you can afford it.

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62. Here is a practical exercise. Go through each chapter of this book and make a list of the **CHOICES** that are called for. Consider how and what you have been **CHOOSING**. Then resolve to make the right **CHOICES**.
63. Here is another practical exercise. Review the chapters of this book and pull out how you can be a **giver** rather than a **getter** in the application of the various principles and topics presented.

Then decide how you can actually put those **CHOICES** to be a **giver** into action in your life and in your marriage.