

Self-Care and Clarity of Mind...a weekly column by Princess Lakshman (Sister Iqra)



Welcome to my weekly column on **Self-Care and Clarity of Mind**. If you're taking time out to read this, pat yourself on the back because you have shown commitment to taking care of your mind and body.

Today, In Shaa ALLAH, we will explore the topic: **The Four Ts Of Marriage - Trust, Touch, Talk, Time**

One of the most challenging aspects of life is to successfully "manage" a marriage. I use the term manage because marriage is like an enterprise that directly affects many stakeholders and indirectly affects the whole world around us. Managing a marriage, like managing an enterprise, requires the skills set known as **The Four Ts of Marriage - Trust, Touch, Talk and Time**.

ALMIGHTY ALLAH enjoins a man and a woman in marriage, a union so beautiful in every way. Admittedly, it is not always a bed of roses. When a married couple can help each other develop the skills set required to manage their marriage, the entire family, extended family, community and the Ummah benefit. Having repetitive problems in your marriage may be a sign that one or more of these four vital ingredients may be lacking in some way.

How To Cultivate The Four Ts, Trust, Touch, Talk and Time, in Your Marriage

Trust

1. Look your spouse in the eye when you communicate. There is no barrier when you are together. ALLAH has enjoined you in marriage and permitted you to communicate openly. Looking in the eye when communicating reaffirms trust. Trust happens when you know there is no deception, no danger. Trust happens when you feel safe with each other.

2. Listen to the reply when she/he speaks. REALLY LISTEN. Do not formulate a response while she/he is speaking. Do not interrupt. Become fully engaged. Curb your urge to correct or argue. You will have your time afterwards to respond appropriately. First LISTEN. Listening shows that you are trustworthy.

3. Protect each other's honour. Guard it fiercely. Do not speak ill of your spouse to another person, even if that person is a close family member. Remind yourself that ALLAH is watching you if you backbite about your spouse. If the matter is serious and your spouse's behaviour concerns you, seek appropriate guidance

and professional help. Speaking ill about your spouse shows your poor character - it doesn't fix your marriage. Keep your trust intact by not speaking ill about each other.

4. Be vulnerable with each other and respect each other's fears and sentiments. Fear is very real to the person experiencing it. Being vulnerable with each other and discussing your fears builds your trust. You do not have to encourage it but you need to show sensitivity that it is real to the person experiencing it. Never use their vulnerabilities against your spouse. They trusted you with that sensitive information. Keep it a secret between you and guard that information. For example, "I know it makes you fearful when you think about our new baby. It is overwhelming for both of us. I am with you all the way. I am so pleased that you are trying your very best. That is all that matters. Allah rewards efforts not results. Keep doing your best."

Touch

5. Embrace each other daily, in private, and let your spouse know how grateful you are for your marriage. Thank your spouse regularly for being your soulmate. Expressing gratitude increases positivity in your marriage.

6. Touch your spouse's heart by admiring or paying a compliment. Your spouse feels nice every time you compliment him/her.

7. Touch your spouse's soul with a soulful concern, such as, "What matters to you most in life?" Understand the response given and honour those wishes. Knowing what matters most to your spouse helps you understand what you can do to fulfil his/her wishes.

Talk

8. Have a private conversation daily to check on each other. Don't assume that if your spouse hasn't said anything everything must be fine. Perhaps there are things that your spouse maybe bottling up or is fearful of expressing. Having a private chat can help open up your communication and strengthen your marriage.

9. Talk with gratitude and positivity. Do not bring up past arguments/ negative events when addressing a new issue. Be clear from the beginning of any discussion that the topic of discussion is to remain a specific one and you both need to respect that rule. For example, if you need to discuss the budget for your next family vacation, it is NOT advisable to talk about how the last vacation was horrible because one of you forgot to book a hotel and ended up staying with in-laws!

10. Talk with respect and understanding. Emphasize on each other's good points. Dwelling on mistakes or negative traits will only put stress on your relationship. Instead, acknowledge that you are human hence

you have your own shortcomings. Similarly, your spouse may slip every now and then too. Say sorry, forgive and move on.

11. Be mindful when you are talking about those who are important to your spouse. Speak well about the people who matter to your spouse. You may not get along with all the people who matter to your spouse and that is fine. There is no obligation to get along. However there is an obligation to show respect. If you speak ill about people who matter to him/her, it is hurtful. Causing your spouse hurt will eventually turn the relationship sour.

Time

12. Time spent together in private must be for each other, not on gadgets and not on any other chores. Give undivided attention to each other. Multi-tasking is a wonderful skill but NOT when you are communicating with your spouse. No matter how important certain chores or tasks may seem, remember ALWAYS that your marriage is more important than any task you are concerned about.

13. Spend COUPLE TIME at least once a week where you are by yourselves for a couple of hours to share an activity you both love. This increases your compatibility.

14. Spend time with each other in glorifying ALLAH and discussing the beauty of our religion. Help each other follow ALLAH's commandment that the husband is the guardian of the family. The wife is created equal and has different responsibilities. Following this commandment increases harmony in the home. Disharmony creeps in when these roles are reversed.

In Shaa ALLAH, next week we will explore the topic: **Replacing Regret With Gratitude**

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