

Twogether 2017

Living a Generous Marriage

Part I: Acts of Generosity

“let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders and a crown upon their heart” Book of Common Prayer, Celebration of Holy Matrimony

A husband and wife are dressing to go out. The wife puts on shoes with a strap and buckle. The husband notices and kneels to buckle them for her.

A wife leaves early to make rounds at the hospital. As she gets ready, he fixes her a thermos of coffee, toasts a bagel and wraps it in napkin for her to take in the car.

Generosity involves going above and beyond “our fair share” and exceeding expectations with small acts of service, extra efforts to be affectionate and attentive, and plenteous praise and words of appreciation.

This is called emotional generosity – what makes your spouse feel valued, noticed, respected, loved and desired.

In a study conducted by researchers at the University of Virginia, couples who reported to be “very happy” in their marriages also scored high the generosity scale. The benefits of generosity were particularly pronounced among couples with children. Perhaps because the demands of parenting can leave little time for being thoughtful and attentive to one another, and acts of generosity are appreciated more when under stress.

Make a date to spend time together this week. Go out to dinner or have dinner at home. Enjoy breakfast together or a late night dessert. Carve out time for just the two of you. Turn the television off. Silence your cell phones.

- What is one of the greatest acts of generosity you have received in your life from someone *other than* your spouse? (The generosity may have included money but wasn't about money.)
- How did that gift affect the trajectory, potential or quality of your life? Does the giver know of its importance to you?
- Mother Teresa said we can all do small things with great love. Tell each other about a time early in your relationship that stands out to you when your spouse was generous to you in a way that made you feel valued or desired. Then offer a recent example.
- Make a list of five to ten small things your spouse could do for you that would make you feel cared for and appreciated. The tasks should be inexpensive, specific and require little time. (i.e.: Kiss me when we greet. Massage my feet.

Bring me coffee. Ask me about my day. Call me during the day. Give me fifteen minutes of free time when I get home.)