

Making A Commitment To Loving

Even though this article uses the term "marriage" throughout, the thoughts expressed apply to any relationship where there exists a loving and enduring commitment to another person. The term "marriage" is used only for the writer's convenience in conveying the concept of commitment between partners in a loving relationship.

- When you truly love someone, you do so without considering whether they deserve your love or not. You simply choose to love them, unconditionally. In marriage, expecting love does not bring about love. Loving behavior, however, most often does.
- Love is a feeling, *loving* is a verb. Loving is the "action" part of love. It involves not only experiencing feelings of love, but it is also the sharing of loving behaviors with your partner. Loving behaviors do not always follow feelings of love. Many times it is the just the opposite: Feelings of love often emerge out of loving behaviors.
- Loving behaviors are neither token gestures, nor simple behavior exchanges – one for another. They are true gifts, given to your partner without expectations. Behave lovingly toward your partner in many different ways. Use more than words to express yourself to your loved one.
- Marriage is your personal promise (covenant) of what you will give to your partner and your relationship. It is not a contract, made up of your expectations and obligations for your partner to fulfill.
- Be a good marriage partner by learning how to positively interact with your partner and how to sustain and nurture your relationship. The cost of learning how to do this is often painful. Don't expect it to be otherwise. Some of the best marriages were built upon partners struggling to survive a difficult or endangered relationship.
- A good marriage involves learning about your partner: learning about his or her dreams, goals, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. You must *know* your partner in order to give the gifts that make him or her happy. Learning about your partner requires both observing and listening.
- Marriage requires constant nurturing of the relationship. Marriages are not sustained by simply being together and living together. Good marriages are built upon and sustained by the happiness found in sharing life together.
- Participate in your marital relationship. Marriage is not a passive existence with your partner. You don't just live in a house together - You live in a relationship together. The term *relationship* implies active involvement with another person. Demonstrate your presence in the relationship by being an active participant. Share life.
- Never abandon your partner! He or she is your life's partner. Take care of one another, whatever the hardship, whatever the circumstances.