

## Qualities of a Healthy Marriage - University of Maryland, Baltimore

Several social scientists, in examining "healthy marriages," have identified a number of traits, qualities and skills of people who had been able to maintain successful, satisfying relationships. These people:

1. Share a healthy philosophy of life with clear ideals
2. Are growing in friendship and respect as well as love for each other
3. Share many interests and activities together
4. Enjoy each other's company
5. Are trusting and trustworthy, are interpersonally honest yet tactful
6. Are interdependent
7. Are proud of each other's achievements, and give realistic praise
8. Are interested in and respect each other's work
9. Share in decision making
10. Try to share and make monotonous work interesting, such as household chores
11. Have realistic hopes linked to attainable goals
12. Take responsibility for decisions and behavior
13. Will, if education is needed to reach goals, patiently delay marriage to continue their schooling
14. Have a mindset which sees problems as challenges to be solved
15. Have usually been seriously interested in at least three other possible mates before making their final choice, and have affected "break-ups" in non-destructive ways
16. Are able to live within their financial means
17. Are aware of their weaknesses and show efforts at constructive change
18. Use criticism wisely, but maintain a balance in which there is more praise than criticism
19. Are "real" people, genuine and authentic
20. Find that the growing relationship helps each person become more sure of him/herself
21. Engage in healthy physical activities – get adequate nutrition, exercise and sleep
22. Restrict their use of sarcasm, nagging, embarrassment and complaining
23. Enjoy talking and listening to one another, even when discussing areas of conflict
24. Experienced courtships that were not frantic or rushed (over 60% of the early divorces were due to hurried marriages- where the couples were very young, not well acquainted, and where the engagement period was very short)
25. Are empathic and attempt to understand and meet their partner's needs
26. Did not elope (4/5 of couples who elope, divorce)
27. Enjoy giving of themselves to others – they desire to give as well as to get
28. Used their courtship time to thoroughly get acquainted, and grow in love
29. Carefully consider the issues that face them, evaluating the pros and cons of alternatives. They try not to jump to hasty conclusions regarding important relationship issues
30. Marry out of respect and affection, not out of pity or sympathy
31. Enjoy each other's families, in spite of their possible faults

- 32. Talked through a number of sexual issues during their engagement period
- 33. Enjoy a healthy, non-destructive and appropriate use of humor
- 34. Are satisfied with the amount of affection demonstrated in their relationship
- 35. Try to change personal habits that are irritating to their spouse
- 36. Try not to dwell on past mistakes, but look ahead to ways of avoiding similar situations in the future
- 37. Are able to forgive and receive forgiveness from one another