

92

SIMPLE WAYS
TO WIN BIG IN

Marriage



marriage
revolution
TURN LOVE AROUND®

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INTRO

One of my favorite authors and speakers, Paul Tripp, is famous for saying, "Change doesn't take place in big, dramatic moments. Rather, the transforming work of grace operates in 10,000 little moments of life more than it does in a series of two or three life-altering events."

I couldn't agree more.

Here's what that statement looks like as it relates to marriage, **"Marriages are built and destroyed in the everyday small moments of life."**

I believe we underestimate the power of a initiating a small expression of love (holding the door open, a unexpected kiss, or kind word), and overestimate the significance of creating big moments (anniversary trips, surprise birthday parties, big gifts, etc...).

I typically get up earlier than Star each day and I'm always amazed at how she responds to me when I simply have her coffee made for her when she wakes up. In my opinion, she over appreciates this small act of love compared to some of the other bigger ways I think I love her.

The point? The size of your expression of love doesn't matter as much as the consistency of your expressions of love. **Success in marriage looks like doing the small things day in and day out.**

With that in mind, here are 92 simple ways to win big in your marriage. Any one of these things can be done in a day, and some of them you can do every day. Some will require a little planning, but the majority of these things can be done in less than a minute.

You likely won't be surprised at this list, but don't discount the potential impact of putting these in to practice on a regular basis. Remember, small efforts repeated everyday will make a big difference in your marriage.

COUPLES

Make a point to express at least 1 of these statements to your spouse every day:

1. I was wrong.
2. I appreciate you.
3. Tell me more.
4. I'm so proud of you.
5. You did a great job.
6. I know we can work through this.
7. You're right.
8. You look nice.
9. Thank you.
10. It would have meant a lot to me if you would have...
11. Yes.
12. How can I pray for you?
13. How can I help you today?
14. I'm so glad I'm married to you.
15. I'll always be here for you.
16. I love you.
17. Will you forgive me?
18. I forgive you.
19. I want you (don't abuse this one guys!)
20. I respect you.
21. I'm committed to you forever.
22. I love when you...

Take these actions as a way to be proactive against attacks on your marriage and pave the way for years to come. (Contributed by Janel Breitenstein)

23. Share all passwords – Every single one. Give your spouse full access to your life, electronic and otherwise. No “off-limits” areas means you can move closer to that vulnerable, intensely beautiful and trusting place of “naked and unashamed”. You have the power to reduce hideouts for destructive influences, cut back on suspicion, and pursue a marriage that ain’t holdin’ nothin’ back.

24. Be reasonable – Pulsating romance novels, airbrushed magazines, well-scripted movies, and even friends gushing about marriage where the grass seems greener can set our marriages up for failure before they start. Examine closely your expectations, and whether they’re truly based on Scripture—or even reality. If not, fissures of dissatisfaction can wheedle their way into the bedrock of our relationships, creating an environment where our spouse is destined to deliver nothing but disappointment.

25. Be a team – Don’t keep your spouse from what you’re passionate about in ministry, work, or otherwise. Bring them with you in what’s important to you. Grow together, not apart, in all areas.

26. Be honest – Explore whether you’re really being “naked” with your spouse in what you reveal about yourself. We’ve still got to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) and only what truly builds others and gives grace (Ephesians 4:29). Read: Just because you think it doesn’t mean you need to say it). But we hold much of the power to make a best-friend kind of marriage. Don’t just tell your mate what they want to hear. Don’t just coexist. Develop that glue of soul-level intimacy and trust that holds couples fast.

27. Forgive – Exquisite pain from the past creates invisible walls, and opens us up to all the temptations that come with disappointment. Explore Scriptures like Matthew 18:21-35, Ephesians 4:31-32, and 1 Peter 3:9. Spend time entreating God for the grace to let go of deep-seated anger and loss.

28. Make some white space—on your calendar - Couples with little time to nurture each other and their relationship, or for rest, can find themselves glancing around for the respite they need. Dr. Patrick Carnes writes, “Living in the extremes—being frenetic, overextended, and depleted—leads to addictive feelings of entitlement (I deserve it) and denial (just a little will not matter).” What seems like mere chronic busyness may be a warning sign that danger’s ahead. Protect your marriage by allowing margin for relationships, conversation, and even a little libido, already.

29. Get accountable - If temptation is eating at your marriage—pornography or otherwise—get real with a same-gender friend experienced and knowledgeable enough to help you, and courageous enough to call you on it. Regularly meet with them, and make sure he or she asks you tough questions, like some of these or these. And while we’re at it—treat porn as cancer: ruthlessly eradicating it no matter the cost, and performing regular checkups with your accountability partner on affected areas.

30. Don’t go there - Set tight boundaries on your thoughts (2 Corinthians 10:5 and Philippians 4:8 are superb guardrails)—both of your spouse, and those who aren’t.

31. R-E-S-P-E-C-T - Fight to make a home where you’re an advocate for each other, and consistently creating a secure environment for someone to grow rather than be perfect. It means the two of you aren’t seeking security, and someone to believe in you, elsewhere. Everyone needs a wingman.

32. Guard your heart - When you’re hurting in marriage, you may be tempted to confide in a member of the opposite sex. Don’t do it. Emotional affairs tear apart marriages, too. Keep your oneness to your spouse alone.

33. Take care of yourself - I’ll just speak from my personal experience on this one. Getting sleep, well-considered nutrition, and my body in shape after my kiddos’ birth had a considerable impact on me—my emotional health, for one, as I did something good for myself (and my family). It also got some of those brain chemicals I’d from which I’d been starved finally cruising through my system.

Working out also bolstered my confidence! And it was pretty fun watching my already-completely-accepting husband drink in my gradually changing physique. I could initiate and respond with a bit more gusto. In short, I felt sexy again. And both of us noticed.

34. Watch your mouth – How do you portray your spouse to friends? There's no need to be false—but venting and seeking allies can drive a wedge between ourselves and our spouse even in our minds. It doesn't push us toward grace and forgiveness. And definitely don't talk about marital problems with the opposite gender, cautions Rick Warren.

35. Pray – together, when you can! And about everything. Ask for God's protection and favor on your marriage. When it seems all hope is lost—and long before that—He is 100% able.

36. Get it on – Sex is a sort of marital super-glue, even beyond fulfillment of sexual needs. As author Gary Thomas notes, "A man's levels of oxytocin—the brain chemical that leads to bonding and feelings of closeness—are highest immediately following a sexual encounter. In fact, this is the only time that a male's oxytocin levels approach those of his wife." God knew what He was doing in creating us with desires that restate and renew our unity over and over again.

37. Sign up – Download free Christian accountability software for all your devices—and if you want, tell your spouse you did: Because I love us this much.

38. Get help – No marriage is an island. It can be downright mortifying to let friends know you're hurting, or to get help with longstanding issues or addictions. But your kids, your otherwise lonely or embittered future, your health, your job—and a whole lot more—will thank you for it. Let someone in.

39. Get regular – Looking at your calendar, is your relationship a consistent priority? Whether it's a date night, a new hobby, or some new lessons you've been wanting to try together (Tennis? Dance? Cooking? Pottery?), carve out

time for the two of you for both quality time and some in-depth conversation. As corny as it sounds, connection equals protection.

40. Together, form wise “rules.” - Will you allow a person of the opposite gender in the house when you’re the only one there? What about lunches, late-night work hours, or riding in the car alone with the opposite sex? Some rules may sound ridiculous to you—but others may simply protect your reputation and your future. Talk about it, and lay some guidelines together to stop iffy situations before they start.

41. Keep on - Commit to working through the tough stuff—that you won’t give up, won’t run away from the hairy issues between you.

42. Brag on ‘em - Let people know unequivocally that your spouse is the one you’re crazy about. Leave no doubt about who you’re with in mind, body, and soul.

MEN

43. Follow Christ – Being a good leader starts with being a good follower. Know Christ. Obey Christ. [Spend regular time with him.](#) Every other act of leadership flows from this step.

44. Pray with and for her – [Prayer](#) gives perspective, demonstrates dependency, cultivates intimacy, and provides power and protection for your marriage.

45. Take her to church – Don't give up the habit of meeting together with other people going in the same direction as you. Your marriage needs community and a regular reminder of truth from God's word.

46. Take care of yourself – Work out, eat healthy, and get a good night's rest every night. You'll look better, feel better, and you'll be around a lot longer. Do what you can to not allow your failing health to be a burden to your wife.

47. Get a life insurance policy – The last thing you want your wife to worry about if you pass unexpectedly is money. Term life insurance is cheap and worth every penny.

48. Provide for her – Pursue a career that you're passionate about, but also one that will provide for your family. Work hard every day and continually seek to improve your skills to be a more valuable asset to your current and future employers.

49. Do the dishes – Help out around the house. I know it's the last thing you feel like doing at the end of the day, but help your wife out so you can spend some quality time together more quickly at the end of the night.

50. Put the kids to bed – Bed times are for kids, but they are also for parents. Have some structure in your evenings so that you and your wife can have some together time each night.

51. Help her identify and develop her gifts – Find out what your wife is passionate about and gifted at and help her develop those areas. Ask her how you can help her achieve her dreams. She is a wife and a mom, but she is also a woman. Help her preserve and develop that identity.

52. Encourage her to hang out with her friends – You are not all the community your wife needs. She needs girlfriends, and that requires her to spend time with just the girls. Encourage her to hang out with her friends and have a good attitude about it.

53. Compliment the way she looks – Notice her haircut, the new outfit, and when she looks nice. Look for ways to compliment her appearance on a regular basis.

54. Don't only compliment the way she looks – You and your wife aren't getting any younger and your physical appearance is slowly deteriorating. If you only compliment her looks, you might create some insecurity as her body starts to change. As much as you compliment her looks, compliment her character even more. Tell her often what you love about her. Think small, not big. Send a short text, make a quick phone call, take a 30 second pause to praise the character of your wife.

55. Take her out – Your wife is wearing multiple hats during the day and it's easy for her to forget that she is also a wife. Initiate, schedule, and plan a regular [date night](#) so you and your wife can actually be husband and wife.

56. Make decisions together – You're probably a capable decision maker, but you're even more capable with your wife's help. You are better together. Ask for her opinion and give consideration to her perspective.

57. Tell her about your day – The events of your day may seem insignificant to you, but they aren't to your wife. Let her into your world. Answer her questions. Proactively share what's going on in your world.

58. Share your feelings with her – You don't have to get mushy, but go a little deeper than just sharing the facts of your day. [Share how the facts made you feel.](#)

59. Say, "I was wrong" – Humility is required for a healthy marriage to survive and there's no greater act of humility than to admit when you're wrong. [Say it, and say it often.](#)

60. Raise your voice – It will be tempting for you to go passive in some way shape or form in your marriage. Resist that temptation and speak up when needed. This isn't license for you to be harsh or controlling, but rather to lead strongly when necessary. Your marriage needs your leadership.

61. Lower your voice – Always speak gently and loving with your wife. Resist the temptation to rely on the strength of your voice to lead your wife. Leadership without love is really just control.

62. Hang around friends that lead you in the right direction – Who are you hanging out with the most? Are your friends a source of security or insecurity for your wife? You are a product of the company you keep. Hang out with good guys that inspire you, challenge you, and hold you accountable.

63. Be strong when she's weak – You, your wife, and your marriage have weak spots. Know what circumstances create "slippery" places for your marriage and stay away from them. When those circumstances are unavoidable, develop, communicate, and stick to a plan to protect your marriage.

64. Listen to her – Chances are, your wife likes to talk. Create space in your day to listen to her. Ask about her day and listen. And just when you think you're done listening, listen some more.

65. Ask her how you can love and lead her better – Your wife sees things about your leadership that you are unaware of and that needs to change. God gave you a wife (in part) to help you see and become better in those areas.

66. Tell her what God is doing in your life – Tell her what you're reading and what stood out. This is one of the most intimate types of communication you can have.

67. Love Jesus more – In order to lead your wife, you need to be in front of her. Not because you're more important, but because it is your role. Don't do this to hold it over her head or to get in a competition with her, but strive to love Jesus in a way that challenges, inspires, and encourages your wife to do the same.

WOMEN

68. Ask questions that invite edification – Don't ask him with an attitude, but genuinely, "What do I do, or not do, that makes you feel respected or disrespected?"

69. Give him "The Look" – Your eyes can communicate a thousand words without speaking a single one. Look at him right in the eyes, and give him that look. The one that lets him know you love him deeply. Or, the other one. The one that says, "I want you!" Every man wants to be wanted.

70. Talk about him when he's not around – Speak about him to others as if he could hear every word. He might not ever find out what you said, but he will on occasion. When he does hear about all the good you said second or third hand, it will make him stand a little taller.

71. Guard your heart from those outside of your marriage – Trust takes a long time to build, but only a moment to destroy. Reserve your most intimate thoughts, looks, and conversations for him. Be faithful to him...always.

72. Be slow to interrupt and interject – Have you tried to tell a story to a friend only to have one of your kids interrupt you and try to correct some insignificant or irrelevant detail? It doesn't feel good, does it? Try not to correct him when he's telling a story even if the details are just a bit off. If the details are significant, comment to him privately.

73. Champion him – At one time you married him because he was the champion of your heart. Let him know today that's still the case.

74. Remind him he's your #1 – Let him know he's the priority relationship. There's no one else you're one flesh with. Your kids will eventually leave, but he will be there forever. Let him know he's most important and show it with how you spend your time.

75. Verbalize how much you believe in him - often! -

Believe in him, and let him know you do. You have so much influence over how your man thinks of himself. You can take his confidence from a "5/10" to an "8/10" with three simple words repeated day in and day out. Tell him, "I believe in you!" Call out the man he longs to be and the man God created him to be. Sooner or later he'll start to believe it.

76. Be intentional with the timing of addressing any conflict -

Calling him out isn't a community event. Your husband will need your correction, admonition, and instruction at times. However, don't challenge him in front of your kids, in front of your friends, or in a public setting. Private confrontation is almost always better. When he does need to be corrected, do it privately and respectfully.

77. Brag on him - Praising him is a community event. Catch him doing something good around your friends or your kids and let him know for all to hear. Be quicker to catch him doing something right as opposed to doing something wrong. Go on a "praise hunt" as opposed to a "sin hunt."

78. Speak life into him - Praising him is not ONLY a community event. Praising your man in public might be more or less impactful depending on his personality. Sometimes your praise is best delivered in a private setting. Tell him you're proud of him. Tell him you're glad you're married to him. Tell him how great of a job he's doing. Big things, small things, and in-between things. Call him, text him, tell him in person. Make this a habit in your marriage.

79. Don't laugh AT him - laugh WITH him - Your man will likely do some silly things that tempt you to bust a gut. But, don't let your laughter lead him to feel a lack of respect from you. Follow his lead when laughing at his blunders. Laugh second, not first. Laugh with him, not at him.

80. Be mindful of your tone and body language - A common belief is that 55% of communication is body language, 38% is the tone of voice, and 7% is what is spoken. What you say to your man is important, but how you say it and what your body language is communicating is even more important. Watch your tone when you're talking to him. Look him in the eyes. Give him your full attention. Make steady

eye contact. Lean forward to show him you're really listening. When you speak, make sure you're using a tone you'd want him to use with you.

81. Praise him in front of your children - You and your kids don't need another hero other than your husband. Expose your husband's good character to your kids by appreciating him in front of them. Let them hear you telling their dad how thankful you are for all that he does for your family. Be as specific as possible.

82. Be his biggest cheerleader - One of the ladies I speak with at FamilyLife [wrote a great book](#) on becoming your husband's personal cheerleader. Her encouragement is to cheer him on just like you did your team in high school. The cheerleaders don't stop cheering when the team is doing bad or after their team has had some losses. They keep cheering. In the same way, keep cheering your husband on regardless of the circumstances and his successes and failures.

83. Show him you want him - Affirm him by letting him know you desire him sexually. More than your man wants to hear "I love you," he wants to hear, "I want you!"

84. Talk about sex - Be willing to talk about what happens beneath the sheets. Share your likes and dislikes, and more importantly ask him his!

85. Pray for him - I heard Louie Giglio say recently, "If we could actually see what happens when we pray, we would never stop praying." I don't claim to understand all the ways prayer makes a difference, but I do know it does! [Pray for your husband](#) with him and without him and never stop. Instead of pointing out every area you want to see change, start praying about it. It might just be the most significant thing you can do for him and your marriage.

86. Remind him of your promise - Intimacy is best experienced in an environment of security. Does your husband know you'll be with him forever? If not, let him know. By the way, this isn't something once done and forever accomplished, but rather a culture to create. Look for 100 small ways to let him know you're in this for life.

87. Speak up – Talk to him regularly. He won't always listen, but don't let his lack of listening hold you back from saying things that need to be said...about you, about him, about your relationship. Part of your role is to submit to him, but don't let your submission lead to silence... [Submission speaks.](#)

88. Embrace your differences – If you haven't realized it already, you are different from your husband! Not just physically, but emotionally as well. The goal of marriage is not to pursue becoming the same. Don't try and change him to be more like you, but rather make personal adjustments to accommodate how he's different from you. If he struggles with listening, try to streamline your conversation. If he prefers a quiet night with the family, order in and rent a movie. Look for ways to occasionally adjust to his preferences and design.

89. Avoid comparisons – Don't compare your husband to anyone. When he acts like his dad, find a way to tell him without comparing him to his dad. If his best friend is hitting it out of the park in an area where he's not, tell him without mentioning that friend's name. Correction doesn't need to include comparisons.

90. Hype him up – Remind him frequently that he has what it takes. Just like our little boys are looking for affirmation, our husbands need it just the same.

91. Give him space to share – Listen first, then seek to be listened to. Create an environment where your husband can share his wildest and craziest dreams so you can be his sounding board. Ask him questions about his passions for his career, or a possible change of career. Whatever the subject, draw out his innermost thoughts through your penetrating questions and listening ears.

92. Maintain a servant's heart – The art of marriage is knowing what it looks like to serve your spouse and then actually serving them. Serve your husband every day, even when you don't feel like it, and especially when he doesn't deserve it. Serve him sacrificially.

We know marriage can be hard at times, but we also believe it doesn't have to be complicated. Hopefully this list helped simplify your marriage and gave you some practical things to put in to practice right away.

As helpful as we believe this list is, we also know the list doesn't fix every marriage issue. Please, start putting this list in to practice. But if your marriage is in a cycle of conflict that you can't get out of, please reach out to us for help. We have biblical counselors standing by to help turn your love around.

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