

Extension Update

From: Sarah Purcell, Extension Educator

Phone: 402-269-2301

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ENDURING MARRIAGES

May and June are the two months when the greatest number of people get married.

While it's a time to focus on new marriages, it's also an opportunity to examine the criteria of enduring and satisfying relationships.

Research suggests that enduring marriages have certain strengths. These strengths are: commitment, balance of intimacy and independence, friendship, fulfillment, tolerance, and perseverance.

Couples who stay married have a high degree of commitment to each other. While love brought them together, commitment to one another - even at times when they don't like each other - keeps them together.

Couples who remain together are often quite intimate with each other, emotionally and physically. They also balance time together with time alone to pursue independent projects.

Couples who stay together are close friends. They share hopes and dreams, successes and failures, with each other. They are able to communicate easily with each other. They also have close friends outside the marriage, which can actually enrich the marriage.

Couples who stay together do what's necessary to make the marriage happy. They find out what brings their partner happiness and then do it often.

Couples learn to tolerate and accept one another. They have refused to allow differences or weaknesses they identify in each other to eclipse their commitment to and love for each other.

During times when married life has been hard, these couples have optimistically weathered the storm. They refused to give up, believing that things would get better if they toughed it out. Love did not preserve the marriage, the marriage preserved the love.

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Sarah Purcell is a Nebraska Extension Educator for Otoe County and Southeast Nebraska. She can be reached as 402-269-2301 or via email at spurcell2@unl.edu.