

Secrets of a long and happy marriage



1a SPEAKING The following statements are based on research into British couples*. One statement is false- which one?

- A Being married is 20 times more important to your happiness than how much money you earn.
- B The average age for a woman to get married for the first time is 21.
- C People aged between 25 and 29 are twice as likely to get divorced as those in other age groups.
- D The average British wedding costs around £20,000.
- E 92% of 15 year olds want to get married one day.

b Do any of the statements surprise you? Why?

- 2 What do you think are the secrets of a long and happy marriage? In pairs or small groups, write a list of 5 tips.
- 3 VIDEO Watch the video of an elderly couple's advice to their grandson on his marriage. Is any of their advice the same as yours?



4 Watch the video again and answer the following questions.

1. What examples does Selma give of how to keep a clean house?
2. Why does Kenny say he doesn't always pick up things he's dropped on the floor?
3. What happened on Kenny and Selma's trip to Italy?
4. How long does Selma say it's been since they kissed like that?

5a VOCABULARY Look at the idiomatic language in bold and check you understand the meaning. Then answer the questions.

1. What was Selma's reaction to Kenny **making eyes at** the topless lady in Italy?
2. Why did Selma and Kenny always **make up** before they went to bed?
3. How long is it since Selma and Kenny **tied the knot**?
4. Do you think Kenny and Selma are **made for each other**? Why/why not?

b Which of the idioms can you replace with the following idioms also related to love and marriage?

To walk down the aisle
 To be a match made in heaven
 To be right for each other
 To say 'I do.'
 To bury the hatchet

6a GRAMMAR Watch one last time, and complete the following extracts.

- A Number 1. ____ good to each other.
 B Number 2. _____ you have food in your Frigidaire.
 C Number 3. _____ each other in every way.
 D Number 4. _____ a clean house.
 E _____ that your laundry is done..
 F _____ to have a happy marriage.....travel.
 G Number 5. _____ with each other.

b Now rewrite your tips from exercise 2 using some of these imperative structures.**c Add one more tip beginning 'Never.....'**

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Transcript

K&S: Hello everybody, we are so happy that you are all together and witnessing my Michael's and Sue's wedding.

S: Mike and Sue, I'd love to give you 5 tips to a warm and healthy marriage. Number 1. Be good to each other.

K: I agree.

S: Number 2. Make sure that you have food in your Frigidaire because you do not want to be hungry or starved.

K: Correct.

S: Number 3, help each other in every way, financially..

K: Yes, yes..

S: Financially...

K: Put away a couple of dollars, whatever you make, put away a couple of dollars. That's what we did, we saved up by putting away one of the salaries..I don't know, should I say that?

S: No, no...Number 4. Always keep a clean house. Make sure that your laundry is done, that your kitchen is clean, and this too would help you in a healthy...

K: Hang on a minute, why don't you tell him that I throw things on the floor because it falls on the floor and you yell at me very....for everything. You drop something, pick it up, don't do this, don't do that.

S: But you have to wait for me to tell you to pick it up, Kenny.

K: I don't know I drop it.

S: Number 4. If you really want to have a happy marriage and you both want to get together and be with each other...travel. Go to as many places that you can so be together. And you've got to watch your husband though because on one of the trips in Italy I remember..

K: Oh yes..

S:...Kenny was flirting with one of the ladies at the..

K: At the pool, I was surprised she had..

S: She didn't have a top on, and there he was standing over her like she died..

K: And I told somebody to take a picture of me.

S: And we did! So that's number 4... Number 5. Just don't argue with each other. If your wife...

K: I don't argue with you.

S: No, you do argue with me!

K: No, you always pick on me, but we never..

S: But if I didn't argue with you, if I didn't fight with you, we wouldn't be there together for..how many years?

K: Seventy two years, it's gonna be.

S: But here we are, the two of us together.

K: We went to bed happy....after our fights.

S: That's because we were tired of fighting!

K: No,no, no..

S: No, no.

K&S: Mike and Sue, we'd like to wish you a long and happy marriage. We are now making a toast to the bride and groom for a long and happy marriage.

[They kiss]

[Laughter]

S: I haven't kissed him like that in 25 years!

Key and Notes

1

All the statements are true except 'B'. This was the average age in 1960, but the average age now in the UK is 30.8 for men and 28.9 for women.

*Sources for statements

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10090130/Marriage-makes-people-happier-than-six-figure-salaries-and-religion.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/8331027/Couples-who-marry-young-are-most-likely-to-divorce.html>

<http://www.2-in-2-1.co.uk/images/factsheet.pdf>

<http://www.stylist.co.uk/life/the-way-women-were-60-years-ago#image-rotator-4>

3

The key pieces of advice are about being kind to each other, always having food, helping each other, having a clean house, travelling and not arguing.

4

1. Doing the laundry and having a clean kitchen.
2. Because he doesn't realise he has dropped them.
3. Kenny was amazed to see a topless lady and had his photo taken with her.
4. 25 years.

5a and b

Idioms:

Making eyes at – flirting

Make up – stop fighting, make peace (also bury the hatchet)

Tie the knot – get married (also say 'I do', walk down the aisle)

Be made for each other – be a happy couple (also be a match made in heaven, be right for each other)

Questions:

1. She laughs about it and still has the picture, so presumably she wasn't really upset.
2. She says because they got tired of fighting, but this is a joke.
3. 72 years.
4. The answer to this is subjective, but probably yes, they seem very happy despite the arguments.

6a

A Number 1. Be good to each other.

B Number 2. Make sure that you have food in your Frigidaire (fridge).

C Number 3. Help each other in every way.

D Number 4. Always keep a clean house.

E Make sure that that your laundry is done..

F If you really want to have a happy marriage.....travel.

G Number 5. Just don't argue with each other.

This is a good reference for imperatives for advice

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/flatmates/episode161/languagepoint.shtml>

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