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MONTHLY ONLINE NEWSLETTER FOR MARRIAGES IN THE EARLY YEARS

"The Christian family...is the first community called to announce the Gospel to the human person during growth and to bring him or her, through a progressive education and catechesis, to full human and Christian maturity."

*On the Family,
Pope John Paul II*

Marriage Tip from foryourmarriage.org

Go for a morning walk with your spouse, and enjoy the quiet time together. You can even make it a date by walking to a donut shop or other tasty destination.

What have you done for your marriage today?



[For Your Marriage](#) has ideas to help you make your marriage healthier.

An initiative of the United States
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Making Choices: Honey, Let's Build an Ark (or, You Want to Do What?)

By Steve and Kathy Beirne

If you are watching some of the many home repair shows on HGTV, you're not alone! Home design shows are very popular, and an important element of them involves marital decision-making. Does the couple want a city or country location? What is on their wish list and how important is it?

In one show, a woman was so intent on having French doors that she threw a hammer through a window so it would have to be replaced! In other cases, something that seemed important at first becomes less so as the show progresses. If you have seen Love it or List It, you know that it is really based on the couple having different ideas about their home—one wants to fix up the home they have and the other wants to move.

All of us face decisions that we have to work through, whether it's about where we want to live, or about jobs, children, or finances. Are there steps to work through these challenges? You might find the following guidelines for making decisions helpful.

1. **Be honest**—It is very hard to make a mutually satisfying decision if you keep some pieces of information to yourself. For instance, if you can't swim and hate the water, then be open about it when your spouse brings up the idea of a cruise. Sometimes we aren't proud to trot out our fears or previous bad experiences, but if they help us make a good, clear decision, we need to trust our partner and be open.
2. **Draw up a list** —Put down all the positives and negatives that you can think of around the decision at hand. What are the good things about moving far away? What are the bad things? Each of you will have your own take on these (maybe something on your "good" list will show up on your spouse's "bad" list) but it will help to clarify what your values are around the choice at hand.
3. **Consult others**—If it seems appropriate, consult with those who might have information that would help you make a more informed opinion.
4. **Don't assume**—Check out what you think your spouse is thinking to make sure if it is accurate. Again, back to the house shows, you won't know how important an element of a decision is unless you ask. Is it of the highest importance that you live near family, or just desirable?
5. **Let go of past mistakes**—No couple has a perfect score on making decisions, so let the ones that didn't work out so well go. Often even mistakes have elements in

them you can learn from, which makes some “bad” decisions really only partly bad. Besides, bringing up the past may make your partner defensive and create a difficult climate for making the current decision.

6. **Be flexible**—Don’t try to sell your partner on your idea, or point out the worst features of their side. Can you remember a decision you were initially against that turned out better than you thought?

7. **Be respectful**—This is the most important element of every interaction in your marriage. You are trying to do the best thing for your marriage, so do it with respect for each other and for all opinions expressed.

8. **Weigh The Choice**—If one of you wants something very badly and the other doesn’t feel like it’s that important, weigh the passion as well as the merit of the choice. If one person wants a trip to Disney World, for example, and the other is not excited about it but also not opposed to it, then let the strength of the desire be part of the equation. Sometimes it’s worth giving in to something your spouse *really* wants. The gratitude factor can be very nice!

Of course the home improvement shows are just TV, but the couples in the shows always seem to come out happy with the decisions they made. We build our lives one choice at a time, so use the best building blocks you can when making big decisions.



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