

Creating a happy marriage is possible and this site is dedicated to providing resources to help couples who want to stay together. By providing information about qualified marriage counseling, we hope to encourage couples to get the help they need. The site also features articles, other websites, books, and workshops which offer the tools needed to create happy, lasting marriages.



The Four-Step Relationship Review

This is Episode number 42 of Stay Happily Married, "The Four-Step Relationship Review."

Welcome to Stay Happily Married, your source for weekly updates on the latest tips and advice to build a happy and healthy marriage.

Today's episode of Stay Happily Married is brought to you by the Rosen Law Firm. For more information, visit us at Rosen.com.

Lee Rosen: I'm Lee Rosen. I'm your host today. Welcome to the show. I'm here by telephone with Cory Huff from a website called AGoodHusband.net. Sometimes I like to look at the sites as I'm listening to the show and so you might want to do that. Now, literally it's the letter A -- AGoodHusband.net. So you might want to check it out while you're listening. That might help you as we move along.

Now, Cory offers this resource, not only AGoodHusband.net but also a website called HusbandsAndDads.com, and that site gives guys inside tips on becoming a better husband, a better father. There are all sorts of articles, forums, videos, a lot of other great resources. Both sites are definitely worth checking out.

Cory has been married to his wife Lissie for six years. Welcome to the show, Cory. How you doing?

Cory Huff: I'm doing very well. Thank you for having me, Lee.

Lee Rosen: I am so glad that you could be here today. This is -- it's tough being a good husband. It's tough being a good dad. And I've been looking at your materials and I feel like you have a lot of good advice to share. I'm wondering what got you started with blogging and talking about these topics; how'd you get into that?

Cory Huff: Well, thank you very much for having me, Lee. And I totally agree with you that being a good husband is one of the most difficult and important jobs that we have as men.

I started AGoodHusband.net originally because I saw a need for an online place where men could discuss real issues in a positive, constructive way. I went online to look for some help with a particular marriage problem and all I saw was articles on, "Is your husband cheating on you?" "Is your husband a pig?" "Are men pigs?" "How can you find a good husband?" And I couldn't find anything about men talking about what it means to be a good husband and what they can do.

There's so much negativity surrounding men and the idea of discussing marriage that I felt like maybe I could put something out there and make a small contribution and hopefully get some people together to talk.

Lee Rosen: So did you have any sort of background in this whole arena?

Cory Huff: No. Other than being married, no.

Lee Rosen: Right.

Cory Huff: I'm a young guy; I'm only 28 years old. And really it was just I saw a need for it and thought maybe I could create a discussion. I'm not a psychologist or a social worker or anything like that.

Lee Rosen: Well, it is the kind of topic where -- I mean, I've spent a lot of time interviewing psychologists and they're great. But a lot of what we need to know I don't think is not science. It's not deep. It's practical sharing experiences of what works and what doesn't and how you screwed up and how you fixed it. Has the site really -- so you now have the two sites. Are you getting a lot of attention? Are people coming and using the materials?

Cory Huff: Well, it's interesting because I started out targeting men. And I would say at this point about half the readers are men and the other half are women, women who come to either of the sites and they'll leave comments or send me e-mails like, "This is such a great resource. I'm going to tell my husband about this." And whether they do or don't I'm not entirely certain all the time, but the response has been really good. I haven't had anybody tell me, "This is a really dumb idea."

Lee Rosen: Right. Do you feel like you might learn as much as you teach on the site? Do you get a lot of feedback?

Cory Huff: Absolutely.

Lee Rosen: Really? Okay.

Cory Huff: Absolutely, yeah.

Lee Rosen: Yeah. Now, you know you have to stay married forever now because you're out there as this role model, you know?

Cory Huff: Well, hopefully I will. We did an interview with another magazine website, The Simple Marriage Project, and he asked us what our goal was as far as our marriage. And we said we've got this friend here in town who's been married to her husband for 60 years.

Lee Rosen: Wow.

Cory Huff: And we totally want to be that cute old couple.

Lee Rosen: Right. That's a good vision to have a good dream. I have a fear that a lot of people today get married and they don't have any plans for old age together. That's not on the radar screen. It's kind of depressing, you know.

Now, you have an article on the site that I loved and it's all about this whole idea of a four-step relationship review. And if I understand correctly, this is something that you are doing -- you and your wife are doing -- as part of your marriage, right?

Cory Huff: Correct.

Lee Rosen: Okay. How did you come up with this idea?

Cory Huff: I spent two years as a full time volunteer missionary for my church in Vancouver, British Columbia. And while I was there it was -- you live with your mission companion, your partner out there, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And so part of the mission rules are you have to once a week talk about how things are going with your work. And the four steps that are in the review are taken from the four steps of that mission review.

Lee Rosen: Okay. Right. So you took it right from that. So that's two years of being together with the same guy, day after day, 24/7. I would guess that the church really has some -- they've got to figure that out. I mean, that's a lot of pressure to make that relationship work because you're not in love with -- I assume that's someone you're

just partnered with. You weren't in love with them to start with, you know.

Cory Huff: No, no. It's an assignment given by the leadership and you just have to make it work.

Lee Rosen: Right. So that's a lot tougher than the average -- at least the beginning of the average marriage. I don't know how it compares to the end of the average marriage. But what are the four steps?

Cory Huff: Well, the four steps are pretty simple: weekly planning, business, testimony time, and compliment time. Pretty straightforward. And I'll explain a little bit about each one.

Lee Rosen: Let me ask you this before you explain. Was your wife gung-ho about this idea when you presented it in -- you're the one who came up with it, right? You knew it from your background.

Cory Huff: Sure. I would say she was on the fence about it. She wasn't opposed to it; she just didn't think it would be some amazing thing.

Lee Rosen: Right. Has it proven to be an amazing thing?

Cory Huff: I think so. It's something that we literally do every single week. And I think we've missed it maybe once or twice when I was out of town, or something like that. And it really is an integral part of our marriage.

Lee Rosen: Wow. Okay. So fill me in. Remind me of the four steps again and then tell me about each one.

Cory Huff: Sure. The first one was weekly planning. We don't talk about the routine stuff like I'm going to work Monday through Friday 9:00 to 5:00 and she's going to school, or whatever. We talk about the things that are outside of the routine. We talk about, okay, I have to be at this place this evening so I'm not going to be home. Or, hey, we've been invited to this party together; are we going to go or not? Just the things that take up our time and when we're going to be together and when we're going to be apart.

We also talk about if we're going to have a date, what we're going to do. And is it going to be formal or are we going to go to a movie or a play or anything like that?

And then we don't have children, but for those who do have kids it's also a good time to talk about who's going to take Johnny to soccer practice and all that stuff.

Lee Rosen: Right.

Cory Huff: Okay. And the second step was business. And this is where for us mostly we talk about financial planning. We're pretty young. I'm just getting started in my career so we talk about what are our financial goals? What are our goals around the house? What kind of projects do we want to do to fix up our apartment? What church service are we going to be partaking in?

And then also we use this time to talk about relationship business. We talk about where we're at in our relationship. If there's something that's bothering us, we usually reserve this time to bring it up if we haven't talked about it another time.

Lee Rosen: Right.

Cory Huff: And then the third step is testimony time. Now, for the two of us, we're very religious. We share the same religion and it kind of defines who we are and how we go about what we do each day. So each week during our relationship review we talk about where we're at, what the most important things to us are, and we share with each other why we believe what we believe.

Other people that I've shared this with who maybe aren't as religious have told me that they will talk about what are their biggest priorities in life right now with their spouse. Are my priorities having children? Are my priorities getting further in my career? Whatever the biggest priorities are, that's a good time to talk about that.

Lee Rosen: Right. I think some people get really bogged down in an idea, like your step number three -- for you, anyway -- involves your religion and then other people will resist that. But it sounds like this works no matter what your perspective is. That's terrific.

Cory Huff: Step number four is compliment time. And this is my wife's very favorite part of the whole thing. We always take turns giving each other at least three compliments, but usually it's more like we give 8 or 10 and then my wife asks for five more.

Lee Rosen: Right. That works.

Cory Huff: And it's fun because it's not like we're just sitting the whole time. When we're doing this we might be -- one of us is doing the dishes or we're eating or we're just sitting and relaxing. It's not something

you have to sit and be formal about. It's just something that you can do while you're talking to each other.

Lee Rosen: Right. Just work it in. But it sounds like it is a really important part of your week, that you haven't missed it now for a long time.

Cory Huff: Yeah. Every Sunday afternoon.

Lee Rosen: Right. So what have you noticed? How long have you been doing the four steps now?

Cory Huff: We've been married about six and a half years and we've been doing it from the very beginning.

Lee Rosen: So how has it impacted your relationship?

Cory Huff: That's a very good question. My wife and I talked about that a lot last night because it's hard to see how something affects you when you've been doing it from the very beginning. But I would say the biggest influence is just knowing that we're always going to talk about everything. So there's no point in holding anything back or being secretive, because at some point it's going to come out and we're going to talk about it. And we feel comfortable with that. And that's probably the best thing that it's done for us.

Lee Rosen: Well, you know, it's funny because you say you're not an expert but I have interviewed a lot of people with a lot of credentials and a lot of experts, and what they say over and over and over again is that the key to a happy marriage is communication. And you've taken that, not by being a scientist or by having done a lot of research, but you learned it in your own life.

What I love about it is when somebody says to me, "Well, communicate more," it's like, okay, what does that mean?

Cory Huff: It's kind of a vague concept to communicate more. You need to break it down into manageable steps.

Lee Rosen: Yeah. You're giving us an agenda that we can say, okay, Sunday afternoon here are the four questions we want to answer. And that's very powerful. And it's simple but incredibly powerful I think for a lot of relationships.

You know, I'm impressed. And it's the kind of thing that I feel like it doesn't require a whole lot of discussion of how to do it. It's a matter of just committing to do it and doing it week after week forever.

Cory Huff: Yeah. It's pretty simple. It's not difficult at all. It's just whether or not it's important enough to you to do it.

Lee Rosen: Now, the article that we're talking about is on the site AGoodHusband.net. I found it in two seconds, so I think it's pretty easy to find. What else is going on at that website? Fill us in.

Cory Huff: AGoodHusband.net, there's a lot going on. I talk about marriage and I talk about all of the issues relating to marriage from the men's perspective. So some of the big issues that I've covered are pornography use, talking about cohabitation. I've talked about video games. Apparently there's a big issue with a lot of guys making their wives into Xbox widows; they play video games too much.

Lee Rosen: Right.

Cory Huff: And then there's the fun stuff, too. I don't just talk about difficult, negative issues. We talk about how to plan a good date. I have a pretty regular series about planning last minute dates because if guys out there are anything like me, they tell their wife they're going to take them out on a date and Friday rolls around and, "Oh, crap. I haven't planned anything. What can I do?"

Lee Rosen: Right.

Cory Huff: So I talk about that. And then there's also -- I like to talk about fun resources. I'll throw out, "Hey, there's this really cool website for guys. Check it out. Let me know what you think."

We also have discussions on the site. Talk about current political topics as they relate to marriage.

Lee Rosen: Right. Now, was AGoodHusband.net your -- that was your first site, right?

Cory Huff: That was the first site.

Lee Rosen: So what prompted you to go and do HusbandsAndDads.com?

Cory Huff: Okay. HusbandsAndDads.com was started from a discussion that I had with a guy named Jeremy Biser, who runs a website called ADiscoveringDad.net. And Jeremy and I decided that there's really not a website out there that deals with men's family issues in any sort of journalistic way.

There's a lot of blogs giving opinions and kind of editorial sites but HusbandsAndDads.com is a site that is -- we try to make sure that it has rigorous journalistic standards. We try to fact-check everything. We use research. We try to present marriage from a scientific and research standpoint and give useful, factual information that guys can act on.

And our tag line is "where it's cool to be a family man." So we also have funny videos about marriage and we also have a forum where people will talk about different issues relating to marriage. Or not. One of our popular forums is the sports forum. And the great thing about that forum is it's pretty much a whole bunch of daddy bloggers from around the Internet and a bunch of people who are not bloggers. And so you get a lot of guys who have a pretty big voice talking about this stuff, but also talking to people who are just there -- they don't run their own websites or anything; they're just there to talk.

Lee Rosen: Right. It just sounds fantastic. It sounds like you've really built a community around the site. That is terrific.

Cory Huff: We're trying to. It grows slowly but it's really an enjoyable experience.

Lee Rosen: Yeah. Well, anything else that we need to tell people about what you're up to? I feel like we've got a pretty good sense, but is there anything else you need to add?

Cory Huff: I would just say that I think there are more men out there who are trying to be good husbands than we think there are. Henry David Thoreau is famous for saying that "the mass of men live lives of quiet desperation." I think there are a lot of men who really want to talk about these issues but they're afraid to because of societal pressure to say that men aren't allowed to talk, or whatever. I hope that in my own small way Jeremy and I can contribute to encouraging me to discuss these things because I think it's really important.

Lee Rosen: That is a fantastic message. And I do. I feel like you're talking about things we don't talk about, that you've got people coming to the site and contributing to that conversation; and maybe we won't be talking about things we don't talk about much longer, that you're really making a dent and guys are talking more and more about stuff that in the past they have not really talked about very much. So I for one really thank you for your contribution to that discussion. I think you're making a real difference and I appreciate it.

Cory Huff: Well, thank you very much, Lee.

Lee Rosen: Cory, thanks so much for being with us today. I really appreciate you being a guest on the show. I think you've added a lot of valuable input to a conversation we've been having I guess for about a year now, and you're giving a perspective that we don't always hear here. So I appreciate that. Thank you so much.

Cory Huff: Thank you for having me.

Lee Rosen: This has been a good show I think. I hope you've enjoyed it as much as I have. I've gotten a lot of good stuff out of this and it's got me thinking about some things that maybe we have not been doing as much in the past as we might want to do going forward. So I hope you've learned as much as I have. Cory I think was a great guest for us.

Thanks so much for joining us today. I hope that you will join us again next week. In the meantime, if you have comments about this show or any of our shows I'd really love to hear them. We have a comment line set up for you where you can call in and leave a message at (919) 256-3083. You can also e-mail me at comments@stayhappilymarried.com.

I'm Lee Rosen. Until next time, stay happily married.

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