

Announcer: The Post Wedding Marriage. This is Stay Happily Married Episode Number 240.

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

Anna: I'm Anna Riley, and I'm your host today. Welcome to the show. We had our wedding. We had our honeymoon. Now what?

Think about your wedding day, whether you've had it or it hasn't happened yet. Oftentimes, and especially in a society like ours, there's a lot of pressure to make the wedding day perfect, to make sure everything is in order, to make sure the dresses are ready and the suits are pressed, to make sure the flowers will be beautiful and that all the guests will leave thinking, "Hey that was a really good time."

But what about after the wedding? What happens when the guests have gone home, the party is over, and it's just you and your partner left? Unfortunately, too many people spend a lot of time preparing for the wedding and not a whole lot of time thinking about what comes after, like how to actually make the marriage work on a daily basis.

Our guest today is Kelly Saylor, a licensed professional counselor associate and marriage and family counselor associate with Healing Solutions Counseling Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. According to her, one of the most important things a married couple can do to help their relationship grow is to nurture the basic friendship they have with each other and the admiration they have for each other.

Welcome to the show, Kelly. I'm so glad you could be with us today.

Kelly: It's great being here, Anna.

Anna: Okay. So since we're starting with weddings and the pressure to have a wonderful, spectacular, extravagant wedding, where do you think that the wedding craze and the perfection obsession really has come from?

Kelly: Well, I mean it's certainly many people dream about this day their entire lives and so much media attention toward weddings, so when it actually does happen, they want to make it absolutely perfect and fulfill all those dreams they've always had.

Anna: Right, right. But in reality though it seems like, you know, the wedding itself actually has little, if anything, to do with the success of the marriage, right?

Kelly: Absolutely. People spend so much time planning and preparing for that day, but they really don't think about what comes after. They forget that it's going to take work to maintain the relationship.

Anna: Right, right. Something we talk about all the time on this show for sure.

Kelly: Yes.

Anna: We've learned it definitely does take work. So what if a couple is maybe already having some relationship issues or some problems within their relationship between each other, with each other, before they get married, before they have their wedding and stuff?

Kelly: Yes, certainly, and that's not uncommon because as the wedding comes closer there's so much stress that's taking place too, that it's important to stop and reevaluate, correct the problem, and begin to fix the issue before it grows. That's really where premarital counseling can be so much help, to really look at communication styles and conflict resolution styles so you can really enter this marriage with the tools that you need.

Anna: So on a side note, the premarital counseling, what are some of the little things that you do in there, like you were saying work on communication skills and stuff like that?

Kelly: Yes, definitely. There are some basic categories of various communication styles and various ways that people fight and things like that. You know some people will shut down. Some people will just bury everything until they explode. Things like that and really learning how to create safety between each other, to speak about and explore what's really going on in their thoughts and feelings and be able to work through those things. So that's one of the many things that we do in premarital counseling.

Anna: Okay, cool. So then back to the wedding and after the wedding, do you with counseling couples that are already married and they have already gone through that, do you kind of see that maybe some people start to get lazy in their relationships?

Kelly: Yes, you get into the day-to-day rhythm of life and other things crowd your attention, and we take our relationships for granted. It's a very easy thing to do. We forget that, again, it takes work as we were speaking about earlier, and it's really important to enact small habits to help protect the relationship and to help from getting into those lazy relationship habits.

Anna: Right, right. So people get into lazy relationship habits. Well maybe, what are some proactive and good habits that they can get into to help their relationship and nurture it and make it grow and be successful forever?

Kelly: Yes, certainly. Well, there are many. One that we hear so much about in all of the marital enrichment literature is date nights, and this is so important. It's just really

creating a time to dedicate to your relationship. You're saying, "Hey, you're important to me. I enjoy being with you. There's still more to learn about you and to do with you." Sometimes when working with couples, just planning date nights can be overwhelming for them. So I really encourage them to maybe take one week one spouse plans and then the next week the other spouse plans.

Anna: Okay, trade off.

Kelly: Yeah. You plan it thinking about what the other one's really going to love and enjoy.

Anna: Okay.

Kelly: Yeah. So that a lot of times seems to be helpful for couples. You're just planning two date nights a month.

Anna: Yeah. I think that would be fun too.

Kelly: Yeah.

Anna: It gets people to kind of learn more about their spouse.

Kelly: Exactly.

Anna: They learn what they like and what they don't like and the things that really make them feel fulfilled and stuff that they enjoy, which is always a good thing of course.

Kelly: Yeah. You always have something to look forward to in that week also to be with each other.

Anna: Right, right. That's good. If you were going to maybe suggest something to people, some people might think date night and they think the typical dinner and a movie or something.

Kelly: Yes.

Anna: But there are probably a lot of different options that people could do to change it up.

Kelly: Of course.

Anna: And do new and something fresh.

Kelly: There are so many blogs and helpful articles online for even cheaper dates. But I know some couples I encourage couples to be goofy to whatever they think even if it's scavenger hunts.

Anna: Yeah, I know. That's so cute.

Kelly: Yeah, just anything like that. There are so many cheap options out there because I know many people are concerned about financial aspects of just even the movie and the dinner, things of that nature. But just a walk in the park or a picnic or anything of that nature works.

Anna: Right, right.

Kelly: Just having that time together.

Anna: Do you think that maybe, like you were saying, even if things are kind of silly or whatever, I look at it like maybe even bringing elements of playfulness and silliness and fun into the relationship can actually make things really cool and give you a sense of feeling like you're back in that dating stage again, and it's not like you've been together for 10, 20, 30 years or whatever.

Kelly: Exactly. Yes. One rule that I give couples on date night is don't talk about the day-to-day stresses of life because sometimes that's what couples will end up doing or planning out their next week. It's really important to leave all that stress behind and to really, again, be goofy. I really try to encourage my couples to be goofy, be playful.

Anna: Yeah.

Kelly: Enjoy each other. Enjoy this time. It's really important.

Anna: Yeah, definitely. So Kelly, what are some other things that couples can get in the habit of doing?

Kelly: One is daily compliments.

Anna: Okay.

Kelly: It sounds rather easy, but again there's a saying that before we get married, we can only see the positive, and after we get married, we can only see the negative. So if we can train ourselves from day one that, hey, I'm going to give my wife or my husband one daily compliment, it really starts to train ourselves to pay attention to that positive.

Anna: Okay. That's cool.

Kelly: To protect against that. Other things is to check in daily or weekly with each other to see, "Hey, what about our relationship is fulfilling, good, something you enjoyed that happened this week? What is something that, hey, we need to look at or we need to grow within?" This important, kind of going back to that communication styles. There's usually one in the relationship that it's harder for them to speak up and ask for what they're wanting. Instead of allowing them to bury that and it kind of explodes one day, it creates that safety. They know that this is something regular. It's expected. It's a safe conversation between these two. So if you can get into that habit as soon as possible, again another way of really protecting your relationship.

Anna: Right. That's good. Definitely. So what about when there's some conflict between partners, and maybe they're fighting about one specific thing or a few different things? What do say about that?

Kelly: Certainly. And again, this is where counseling or premarital counseling really comes in helpful to understand this is going to happen. At the beginning of relationships, sometimes it's hard to imagine having a lot of conflict. You feel like your love is so unique and special. But it's normal and working through conflict will bring intimacy. So it's not something to be afraid of, but to really understand that there are different styles of people how they fight and to understand what that looks like so you can be productive. You can actually resolve an issue and not bury an issue. I'm a Christian counselor. So when I work with individuals that are of the Christian faith, one thing that I've found that is helpful is reminding them of a passage, and it's Ephesians 6:12.

Anna: Okay.

Kelly: This passage speaks about how we don't struggle against flesh and blood, but we struggle against spiritual forces of evil. I really remind them that, "Hey, you two, you're a team. You obviously married each other for a reason. And to take a step back and say that, 'Whatever is happening here, we don't need to get defensive about. We don't need to attack each other. We need to work together to resolve this.'"

Anna: Right, right. You're in it together.

Kelly: Yes.

Anna: No matter what life throws at you, you've got to work together as a team.

Kelly: Exactly. Yes, exactly.

Anna: Yeah. That's really important, making that commitment to someone, and that's really what it is. It's a commitment that's supposed to last forever. So that's what we want for people, everyone of course.

Kelly: Exactly. Of course.

Anna: Yeah. Well, Kelly is there anything else that we should know?

Kelly: I would just say whether you are able to look into premarital counseling or counseling after the marriage, some people get nervous with going to any type of counseling in the marriage, and all it is, is a check-up.

Anna: Right.

Kelly: You go yearly for your yearly exams and things of that nature with your doctors.

Anna: Right, right.

Kelly: When something is as important as a marital relationship, you want to put the work in and you want to protect. You want it to be the best that it can be, and that's what counseling is really about. It's not about finding fault in either one of the partners. It's about creating that team to be the strongest that it possibly can be.

Anna: Very good. Definitely. Well, Kelly, thank you so much for talking with me and being on the show today. I really appreciate it.

Kelly: Well, thank you so much for having me.

Anna: Absolutely. To find out more about Kelly and her practice, Healing Solutions Counseling Center, you can visit their website at [www.CharlotteTherapy.com](http://www.CharlotteTherapy.com), or you can call 704-944-5530 for an appointment. You guys can check out, like Kelly was saying, the premarital counseling and counseling for once you're already married. Check it all out.

Thank you so much for joining us today, and I hope you'll join us again next week. For more information about this show and future episodes, visit us at [StayHappilyMarried.com](http://StayHappilyMarried.com). I'm Anna Riley. Until next time, stay happily married.

Announcer: Thank you for joining us today on Stay Happily Married. If you'd like more information, please visit us on the web at [StayHappilyMarried.com](http://StayHappilyMarried.com). We would love to hear your feedback or comments. Please email us at [comments@StayHappilyMarried.com](mailto:comments@StayHappilyMarried.com), or call us at 919-256-3083.

Until next time, best wishes.