

8 Tips Smart Women Know about Living “Happily Ever After”



By Amanda Martin

While most of us want to believe in the happily ever after ending, it sometimes takes a lot of work and effort to get there. With the news media feeding us frequent stories of celebrities who can't seem to make their relationships work, it's no wonder everyday couples who don't have an abundance of money or fame are struggling to keep their marriage alive.

With the national statistic for divorce in the United States still holding at 50 percent, we don't have reason to believe that fairytale endings exist anymore. So, what do the couples who stay married know, and why are they hiding it from the rest of the world? Best-selling author Iris Krasnow shares the secret to staying married forever in her new book “The

Secret Lives of Wives.” Check out eight of her tips below for achieving your happily ever after:

1. It's okay, even healthy, to have secrets: It's your relationship, not anyone else's, and there is no gold standard marriage. Everyone has issues, problems, and most importantly, their own secrets, so don't worry that your marriage isn't measuring up. No one knows what's really going on in a marriage except the two people in it. That gives each of us the freedom to write our own rules and keep our own secrets.

2. You don't get it all in one place. Staying married takes bold creativity, a variety of sideline adventures. If you depend on one person in a house to sustain you until death do you part, that's a ticket to divorce. A marriage that runs on multiple tracks makes for a happier wife who gets to have it both ways – a committed marriage and adventures in uncharted territory.

3. Resurrect childhood passions. Those hobbies and sports you loved to do, and excelled at, as a child bring raw primal energy and invigorated self-esteem. Take up surfing again, become a potter, get back on a horse, go back to school. Too often those hobbies of childhood get left behind as we sit on benches and watch our children race around playing fields and accrue academic kudos. Getting back out there yourself and re-engaging with the best of the old brings on a re-birth of youthful optimism and vigor.

4. Hang out with outrageous girlfriends: The wives with the highest marital satisfaction have a tight circle of wild and warm women friends with whom to drink, travel and vent. With women in their early 90s comprising the fastest growing segment of the aging population, and many marriages lasting more than 50 years, we're going to need all the laughs and support we can get! Our girlfriends, ever-forgiving and always empathetic, provide the escape hatch from the inevitable storms and challenges that come with long marriages.

5. Take Separate Vacations – or Separate Summers: You like to camp and your husband likes to golf? Spend a month in the Adirondacks while he goes with his buddies to Scottsdale or better yet, Scotland. After some weeks apart from each other, removed from the grind of ordinary life, marriage seems way hotter than the tepid state in which you left each other in. Couples who allow each other to grow separately are the ones with the best chance of growing together and staying together.

6. Indulge in boy-best-friendships: Platonic friendships are a sexy pick-me-up without the complications of adultery. Women who love the company of men shouldn't have to eliminate male friends from their lives; these extra-marital males who always think we're smart and beautiful (because they don't live with us) are actually a relief for any smart husband. Benign boyfriends that offer manly insights and advice means less work for the man you are married to.

7. Lower your expectations: It's a dangerous fantasy to think marriage really means happily ever after. Expecting perfection in a marriage or a mate is a fast ticket to divorce. This realization forces women in aging marriages to be urgent about creating their own purpose and passions outside of their relationships. Marital bliss is possible if each partner is blissful without the other.

8. Be grateful: In between wifely gallivants and self-exploration, remember to love the guy you're with – kiss him hello and goodbye, and make time for conversation and intimacy, no matter how crammed your schedules are. Remember to thank the confident and flexible husband that allows you to have an independent and fulfilling life beyond your marriage. Don't try to win every fight; give in, surrender and say "I'm sorry" (even if you're not sorry one bit) instead of holding onto snarly anger that forms toxic wedges over time. Demonstrating ongoing vulnerability and compassion definitely makes spouses behave better. And the ability to bounce back from strife and arguments is the real secret that makes

marriages last forever.

For more tips on staying happily married, check out Iris Krasnow's new book "The Secret Lives of Wives" at Amazon.