

5 Post-Wedding Tips for Newlyweds



By [Terri Orbuch PhD](#)

Adapted from her book, “5 Simple Steps to Take Your Marriage from Good to Great”

Congratulations! You’ve survived one of the most difficult and stressful events in your relationship: the wedding. Now the two of you are settling in for the long haul. If you’re like the vast majority of newlyweds, the next 6-12 months will be some of your happiest. Relationship researchers call this “the honeymoon period,” and it’s characterized by a sense of newness and possibility.

But how can you keep that freshness and optimism going after the initial glow wears off? Here are five post-wedding tips that have been shown to build and strengthen marriage bonds, derived from my landmark Early Years of Marriage (EYM) study:

Don't hide anything when it comes to money.

When happy couples in the EYM study were asked if their spouses were completely open and honest about money, their answers differed significantly from those of the unhappy couples in the study. Nearly 8 out of 10 happy couples said they "never" feel their spouse tells them things that aren't completely true about money, compared with only 54% of the other couples. **The take-away:** Money secrets and lies erode marital happiness.

Empty your "pet peeve pail" frequently.

My study found that couples who failed to talk about the small things that bothered them, letting those pet peeves grow into big resentments, were more likely to be unhappy in their marriages down the road. If you hate that she leaves her hair in the sink, tell her nicely. If you hate that he smokes cigars in the car, discuss it fairly. **The take away:** If you ignore small annoyances, they add up to major discontent over time.

Make each other feel appreciated—daily.

My research shows that the accumulation of small acts of kindness is more essential for building a strong marital bond than occasional grand gestures and big pronouncements. At least once a day, make your spouse feel loved, appreciated, noticed, valued, or respected. Give her a surprise kiss or ask her advice; make his favorite meal or give him a heartfelt compliment. **The take away:** Frequent acts of caring reinforce long-term intimacy in marriages.

Don't forget to have fun—together.

The happiest couples in my EYM study characterized their spouse as someone they enjoyed spending time with. Too often, as marriages mature, partners tend to look outside the marriage for friends and entertainment. Seek out fun activities to do with your spouse. Incidentally, studies show that doing an activity that's new to both of you restimulates the feel-good excitement associated with dating. **The take away:** Avoid relationship ruts by actively seeking fun, laughter, and novelty.

Make your circle bigger.

My research found that husbands, in particular, are happier when their wives have good relationships with their extended family. Also, the couples in my EYM study who made an effort to get to know—but not necessarily share—their spouse's friends were more likely to be happy in the long term than couples who maintained separate friends. **The take away:** It takes a village to make a marriage happy.

Psychologist Terri Orbuch PhD, known as The Love Doctor, is a research professor, a long-time marriage and family therapist, and a popular love advisor on radio, TV, and peoplemedia.com, most recently seen on NBC's Today. Project director of the landmark, NIH-funded Early Years of Marriage Project, the longest-running study of married couples ever conducted, she is author of 5 Simple Steps to Take Your Marriage from Good to Great (Random House). You can find out more about her at www.drterrihelovedoctor.com.

5 Reasons Why Powerful Men Like Arnold Schwarzenegger Cheat



By Terri Orbuch PhD, The Love Doctor[®],[¢]

As a researcher and psychologist who's been studying marriage and divorce for more than 25 years, I'm interested in the motivations of men who seem to "have it all" and then throw it all away, facing public humiliation in the aftermath and subjecting their families to the same.

Here are five ways to understand why men like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Tiger Woods and John Edwards risk it all to

have an affair:

1. The illusion of invulnerability. Often, powerful men have affairs because they think they won't get caught. And even if they do, they believe they won't get in trouble because they have the resources to cover it up. These men often don't worry about the long-term effects of their actions on others, only the short-term gains for themselves.

2. Ample opportunities for temptation. Wealth, fame and power are attractive to many women, who make themselves available to powerful men, sometimes aggressively and without scruples. Then such men are away from home for days at a time, and the loneliness and the desire for female companionship can trigger infidelity.

3. Adrenaline dependency. Many powerful men have positions that require a lot of responsibility and authority. They perform well under high stress and continually need and enjoy excitement or challenges to drive them forward. An affair gives them the same type of exhilaration in their private life.

4. Enabled by yes men. Powerful men tend to be surrounded by people who protect them, idolize them, and even "enable" their vices in order to remain inside their influential orbit. Being surrounded by people who don't challenge your decisions or give you honest feedback has an effect on your ego and your sense of propriety and limits.

5. Desire for change. Let's not forget that powerful men are still men, and usually an affair signals an internal need for change. Something in the man's life or his relationship isn't okay – and the affair creates the trigger for change. Boredom and relationship ruts are common reasons couples cite for infidelity.

While influence, wealth and celebrity may present some

additional challenges that are unique to powerful men, the fact is that not all such men succumb to infidelity. And the explanations above are certainly not excuses for the behavior of those who do.

Terri Orbuch PhD, known as The Love Doctor, is project director of longest-running study of married couples ever conducted, funded by the NIH and ongoing since 1986. A practicing marriage and relationship therapist for more than 20 years, she is also a popular love advisor on radio, TV, and peoplemedia.com, most recently seen on NBC's Today. Her new book is 5 Simple Steps to Take Your Marriage from Good to Great (Random House). Learn more at www.drterrihelovedoctor.com.