Wedding Anniversary Celebration

AUGUST 13, 2017

Couples married 50, 55, 60+ years share their advice for a successful marriage
“I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health.
I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.”
Marital Bliss

What a joy it is to me to introduce this incredible compilation of marital experience and wisdom. In the pages ahead, you will read of 57 couples married for more than 50 years – representing almost 3,000 years of marriage! The respondents completed a short survey sharing their stories and lessons learned in the hopes that it will benefit those already married or considering marriage in the future. What emerges is a picture of true marital bliss that is only possible this side of heaven because of the steadfast commitment of love and faith kept by each of these couples.

Here are some interesting facts for the 57 responding couples:

- The average marrying age for respondents was 20 years for women and 23 years for men.
- The average number of children per couple is 4. The largest families include 10 children.
- The average number of grandchildren per couple is 9; John and Margaret Walz have the largest number of grandchildren at 55.
- The average number of great-grandchildren per couple is 2. Vernon and Carol Suchomel and Jerome and Maurine Kauchak have the largest number of great-grandchildren at 20.

The survey questions asked of each couple included:

- How did you meet one another?
- What did you love most about each other when you were engaged?
- What did you find to be most challenging in your marriage?
- What helped you most to overcome these challenges?
- What is the most rewarding part of being married?
- How has your faith helped your marriage?
- What advice would you give to couples getting married?

I invite you to flip through these pages and read the insights of couples who have experienced the true joy and happiness of the Sacrament of Matrimony. May God continue to bless each of the celebrating couples in this special anniversary year and all the years ahead.

In Christ’s Love,

John Joy
Marriage & Family Coordinator
Diocese of Madison
What challenges did you face? At exactly eight years of marriage and newly pregnant with the fifth child, by far the most serious challenge was Victor’s contracting Guillain-Barre Syndrome (sometimes called French polio) and after hospitalization for six months, being left with permanent paraplegia and permanent loss of one vocal cord due to malpractice, a devastating loss for a radio announcer.

How did you overcome them? The Lord granted strength and unbounded joy with the blessing of a beautiful new baby and her Baptism at home at one week of age the same week of her daddy’s discharge from the hospital. She was the gift that brought this family through these troubled times. Yet another blessing, a wonderful baby boy, born eleven years later. The Lord God sent us blessing after blessing.

What’s most rewarding about being married? The most rewarding thing about being married is the way love for each other reflects God’s faithful love. He knows what is needed and grants it-- or allows it-- for spiritual growth. Now after 55 years together, 6 wonderful children and 13 amazing grandchildren, we understand that all of it, the joy and the pain, has indeed brought us to true happiness as the Lord intended.

How has faith helped your marriage? Faith kept us praying for help in need, for gratitude in joy and for consolation in disappointments. Because of his faith, Victor took up his cross and was again successful in the radio broadcasting business in the Midwest and still insisted his wife remain at home with the children as before.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Keep God first in your marriage by attending Mass regularly, by receiving the sacraments and by praying aloud together. Make financial sacrifices so that the young mother is home with the children. Display your favorite sweetheart-style wedding photograph in your bedroom for reminiscing. Learn more in Elizabeth Aimé’s new book.

How did you meet? Employed by the same company, but working in separate buildings, a certain young lady caught his attention as she walked by at the same time every day. Victor was smitten and determined to meet her. His friend, who worked in her department, told him her name and agreed to convince her to meet him at the coffee shop. After some weeks, Elizabeth finally gave in, met him at the appointed time and was speechless in his presence; overwhelmed by his unabashed interest in her.

What do you love most about your spouse? Elizabeth loved his strength of character, stories of growing up in New Jersey, of his experiences in radio broadcasting and his adventures in the Air Force during the Korean War—very different from her background of life on a Wisconsin dairy farm. Victor loved Elizabeth’s immersion in the Catholic faith, her love for family, music, singing and ballroom dancing. Each recognized in the other: strong faith in God, chastity, respect for life, faithfulness, dedication to their families, promise of permanency in a life together and acceptance of children God may one day entrust to their care.
James and Virginia Best
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet? We met while attending the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point.

What do you love most about your spouse? We had very similar values including the importance of faith, family, education, and hard work.

How did you overcome them? Our strong faith helped us to overcome any challenges that arose.

What’s most rewarding about being married? One of the many rewarding parts of being married is the loving family that has come from our union. The two of us have grown into a family of 13 including 3 generations.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Take time to get to really know each other. Then proceed with great patience and understanding. Also, work hard to cultivate some similar interests.

Robert and Rochelle Birrenkott
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 5

How did you meet? We met at a dance at Edward’s Park in McFarland, WI.

What do you love most about your spouse? Each other’s caring personalities.

What challenges did you face? Balancing time between work and family.

How did you overcome them? Working together as a team to make sure bases were covered.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Sharing everything in our daily lives.

How has faith helped your marriage? Attending mass as a family built our trust in God.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Trust and work with one another to accomplish your common goals.
Anonymous

# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 4 # of Great-Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet? We met through mutual friends on a blind date they’d set up.

What do you love most about your spouse? Carol had all of the qualities that I admired in my mother. She was also the most beautiful person I ever met, both inside and in appearance. I really felt that Ken loved me more than anything else. In addition he was very attentive and caring.

What challenges did you face? Balancing time and affection between spouse and children.

How did you overcome them? Take every day and every challenge one at a time. We are respectful and caring, even when we disagree. We say, “I am sorry” when we disagree.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Always having someone there for me that I can count on. Always a companion, a soulmate and a best friend.

How has faith helped your marriage? Knowing that God is there to guide us through life’s journey. Knowing that the sacrament of marriage is holy and the most important thing in our life.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Make your commitment of marriage your number one priority. Never give up on each other. Remember what made you fall in love when times are challenging. Never ever go to bed angry at each other. Personal egos are a detriment to any relationship.

Kenneth and Carol Brockman

# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 8

How did you meet? We met at a civic picnic in Vesper, WI.

What do you love most about your spouse? There was physical attraction and the fact that our personalities “meshed” but there was also the desire of welcoming children into our lives to be a family. Since my husband wasn’t Catholic at the time and wasn’t ready to convert, I had to think long and hard about that aspect of our lives. But because God was part of our marriage from the beginning, I hoped and prayed he would want to share my faith. And 49 years later, he did!

What challenges did you face? We had to accept each other for who we were and know we couldn’t change each other. And then there was the difference in faith.

How did you overcome them? Prayer! Going to Mass regularly and receiving the sacraments regularly.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Being a parent, grandparent, and now great grandparent! That wonderful comfortableness of knowing each other so well for so many years! God has truly blessed us.

How has faith helped your marriage? I think we are closer because of it. Even in the troubled times, I know that God healed us. Sometimes it was difficult to pray but when I did I always found the strength to go on, to stay together. God gave us peace.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Allow God to be a part of your marriage and go to Mass every Sunday. Pray together. Don’t try to change each other - ask for God’s help! Always forgive each other!

How has faith helped your marriage?

Even in troubled times, I know that God healed us. Sometimes it was difficult to pray but when I did I always found the strength to go on, to stay together. God gave us peace.
Ray and Arlene Brost
# of Children: 10 # of Grandchildren: 16 # of Great-Grandchildren: 12

How did you meet?
Ray worked part time at a restaurant while attending college and Arlene was employed nearby. Through mutual friends and relatives we became acquainted.

What do you love most about your spouse?
Communication; the will and skill to talk things over. Having a sense of humor was and still is important.

What’s most rewarding about being married?
Always having your spouse with you to share in the good times; as well as the not so good times.

Advice for Engaged Couples?
Give it a chance!! Don’t give up on a good thing. Just remember to say, “Yes, Dear.”

Sam and Beverly DiMaggio
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet?
We grew up in the same Southside neighborhood so we knew each other since we were 12 years old. If you do the math, that means we have been the bestest friends for 71 years.

What do you love most about your spouse?
Communication; the will and skill to talk things over. Having a sense of humor was and still is important.

What’s most rewarding about being married?
Always having your spouse with you to share in the good times; as well as the not so good times.

Advice for Engaged Couples?
Be understanding, tolerant, and have a sense of humor.
Thomas and Sheila DiPiazza  
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 4

How did you meet? We grew up within a few miles of each other and met when we both worked at a small grocery store during high school.

What do you love most about your spouse? Planning our life together and just being with each other.

What challenges did you face? Raising our family and finding quality time for everyone. It was quite a challenge with both of us working and all of the activities of Church, school and sports.

How did you overcome them? My husband was raised in a large Catholic family and I was raised in a Catholic Irish family. Both families were great role models for us and a wonderful support system at all times.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Living and succeeding in life with the same person for 50 years and being able to see your children grow up. Becoming grandparents and being a part of their lives is so rewarding and special. Just knowing you have someone who loves you and cares about you in good times and in hard times, a best friend and a partner for life!

How has faith helped your marriage? We are so thankful for all of God’s blessings throughout our life together. Our faith kept us strong when things are good as well as the difficult times.

Advice for Engaged Couples? No one is perfect so try very hard to have patience, respect, understanding and love for each other.

Anonymous  
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet? We met when we both belonged to the Dominic Club.

Dennis and Phyllis Disch  
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 4

How did you meet? We both belonged to the Dominic Club.

What do you love most about your spouse? Planning our life together and just being with each other.

What challenges did you face? Raising our family and finding quality time for everyone. It was quite a challenge with both of us working and all of the activities of Church, school and sports.

How did you overcome them? My husband was raised in a large Catholic family and I was raised in a Catholic Irish family. Both families were great role models for us and a wonderful support system at all times.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Living and succeeding in life with the same person for 50 years and being able to see your children grow up. Becoming grandparents and being a part of their lives is so rewarding and special. Just knowing you have someone who loves you and cares about you in good times and in hard times, a best friend and a partner for life!
**How did you meet?** We met at Mount Horeb High School. We were in the same class of 1965. We started dating in February of our senior year.

**What do you love most about your spouse?** We loved each other’s company. We loved spending time to get to know each other and planning our wedding.

**What challenges did you face?** Learning to get along with both families. Also, raising 3 children and now our 4 grandsons.

**How did you overcome them?** By working together as a team with God as our leader. Going to church every weekend to pray for guidance to help us raise our family.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Sharing and respect for each other. Most of all, our faith. God was here to help us through our problems. He gave us a second chance in life. Both of us had health problems but our prayers were answered.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** I was raised in a very Catholic family and Dennis was not. He joined the Catholic Church and was baptized and confirmed before we were married. Having the same religion and faith helped our marriage. We prayed together every day.

**Advice for Engaged Couples?** Learn to love and laugh together. Never go to bed mad and say “I love you” each day. Most of all, have God in your life for any problems and answers. Just pray! He is here.

**Ken and Donna Dorn**

**# of Children:** 3  **# of Grandchildren:** 8  **# of Great-Grandchildren:** 2

**How did you meet?** We met at the Waterloo root beer and ice-cream drive up. We started talking to each other.

**What do you love most about your spouse?** Ken's sense of humor and being able to talk to each other about anything. Donna's charm and outgoing personality.

**What challenges did you face?** At first it was our religion. I was not Catholic but converted. Be able to adapt to differences. We had a couple of miscarriages and we also had a devastating farm fire and lost almost 50% of our cows and income. We had to get new jobs off the farm and adjust to them.

**How did you overcome them?** We talked things out. We communicated and had faith. We prayed a lot and had great friends and family.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Our children. Becoming patient with each other. Our faith. Also, 8 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren and many friends and neighbors.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** It has made both of us stronger and being able to talk to our priests with issues through the years has helped.

**Advice for Engaged Couples?** Always keep the lines of communication open and don't be afraid to suggest things. Don't be afraid to hug each other!
Anonymous

# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 14 # of Great-Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet? We met at a wedding of a friend.

What challenges did you face? Raising our three boys.

How did you overcome them? Working together to solve challenges as each child was growing up. All three boys were different.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Our faith in each other and God.

How has faith helped your marriage? Asking God to help us through all the ups and downs.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Always work out problems together.

David and Nancy Dwyer
# of Children: 5 # of Grandchildren: 2

Chris and Mary Ila Esser
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 7

How did you meet? While walking home with a friend - he and a friend offered us a ride.

What do you love most about your spouse? Just being together; movies, bowling, family events, going out with friends. She was a good Catholic girl and was honest, caring, and hard working. I had no doubts about wanting to marry her. He was easy to talk to, very respectful, and his friends were fun to be with. It seemed right from the start.

What challenges did you face? As the wife and mother it was tough learning to help farm and raise our 4 daughters. Then we both got jobs off the farm as well which was rough on a relationship but helped out with the finances. I was either farming, at work (shift work 3 weekends out of 4) or sleeping which left very little time to help with the kids. We did take them on a trip every 4 years. We had to have part time baby sitters and help making the hay. We ALWAYS had good help and have many friends from those days. Our kids had chores to do and helped cut and bale hay.

How did you overcome them? Working together to solve challenges as each child was growing up. All three boys were different.

What challenges did you face? As the wife and mother it was tough learning to help farm and raise our 4 daughters. Then we both got jobs off the farm as well which was rough on a relationship but helped out with the finances. I was either farming, at work (shift work 3 weekends out of 4) or sleeping which left very little time to help with the kids. We did take them on a trip every 4 years. We had to have part time baby sitters and help making the hay. We ALWAYS had good help and have many friends from those days. Our kids had chores to do and helped cut and bale hay.
How did you overcome them? Wonderful families and friends. And our trust and love for each other. Our parents were always there to help out. When the kids had school and church activities we tried hard to be there for them.

What’s most rewarding about being married? As a woman it is feeling safe and trusting he will always be there. As a man it is being able to always come home to a clean house and a good meal or news of other possible things to do. If she is gone for a day or two, I will look over at her chair and want to tell her something. We have never been apart for more than 2 weeks.

How has faith helped your marriage? Belonging to a faith filled church community enabled us to work together with others as well as each other.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Keep your faith in God. Go to mass together if possible and often. Don’t go into debt more than needed. We lived in a very old house for 10 years but were happy. Then we built a new one. Never had a car until retirement and were out of debt. You have to like your job or you won’t be happy. Money is not everything. Treat others well and they will usually do the same in return.

Advice for couples:

☞ Look for the bright side in a bad situation.

☞ When there is a disagreement, do not lash out in anger. Take a moment to quiet your thoughts, and take a deep breath. Ask yourself, “What do I want to accomplish?” Pray for guidance and wisdom before speaking.

**Donald and Shirley Ewelt**

# of Children: 5 # of Grandchildren: 10 # of Great-Grandchildren: 4

How did you meet?

At a wedding dance.

What do you love most about your spouse?

Just being together when we could as Dan was in the Army during our engagement.

What challenges did you face?

Moving to Madison, trying to find jobs and supporting our family was very difficult as we did not have a lot of money and Shirley was a stay at home mom. We did not have a lot of time with each other but made the best of it.

How did you overcome them?

Just kept working at it.

What’s most rewarding about being married?

After retiring we had time for each other and it is rewarding to see our children’s accomplishments and we hope we were good role models for them.

How has faith helped your marriage?

Through prayer and going to church every Sunday. Faith in God.

Advice for Engaged Couples?

Have great communication even if you are not in agreement.
What do you love most about your spouse? We were engaged in 1948. Bob took instructions to become Catholic before we were married. This was important for Mary and her family.

What challenges did you face? The most challenging was when Bob was drafted into the service in 1952, serving at Fort Hood, TX.

How did you overcome them? Mary went home to live with her family until moving to Texas to be with Bob.

What’s most rewarding about being married? The most rewarding was raising a family of three children.

How has faith helped your marriage? We belonged to Old St. Joseph’s on Park Street. Mary’s older sister sang in the choir. Her younger brother Sam rang the bells at church. And Mary would help keep the church clean. We transferred to St. James when the children were old enough to start their Catholic Education.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Good question! We have been married 67 years and still love each other very much.
David and Lauraine Hach

# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 7

How did you meet? We met at Cliffs Café in Muscoda. Lauraine was 14 and Dave was 19. Because of the difference in age we didn’t start dating until Lauraine was 18.

What do you love most about your spouse? We became engaged in April of 1966. He was a devout Catholic, had wonderful parents, and we both loved to dance. He had good values and was a down to earth gentleman. Linda and I seemed to be a lot alike and felt comfortable with each other. I was hoping she would say yes early on in our dating.

What challenges did you face? Getting used to each other and because Dave worked long hours it was especially challenging. Especially after the kids were born.

How did you overcome them? We attended a Madison Marriage Encounter weekend in 1989 and we learned how to communicate as a married couple should and to share our feelings and remember that feelings were neither right nor wrong.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Having a family and a best friend to share our lives with and having many wonderful times together and having many memories to share amongst ourselves, our family and our friends.

How has faith helped your marriage? We share the same faith and the same values. We have learned to accept the good with the bad and thank God at the end of the day for what he has given us and to be grateful for what we have. I have learned to put myself in God’s hands and ask Him to do as He wills. I trust in the Lord very much.

Advice for Engaged Couples? I would advise couples getting married today to attend FOCCUS - a marriage preparation experience. It is designed to assess each of our habits, expectations, and values and find out about each other’s strengths and weaknesses.

How did you meet? We met on a blind date. I worked at Wisconsin Retirement Fund in Madison with a lady who was the wife of my husband’s boss at a barbershop in Madison. We met in May of 1965 and dated for two years before getting married.

What do you love most about your spouse? We met at Cliffs Café in Muscoda. Lauraine was 14 and Dave was 19. Because of the difference in age we didn’t start dating until Lauraine was 18.

What challenges did you face? We became engaged in April of 1966. He was a devout Catholic, had wonderful parents, and we both loved to dance. He had good values and was a down to earth gentleman. Linda and I seemed to be a lot alike and felt comfortable with each other. I was hoping she would say yes early on in our dating.

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Gerald and Alana Hoddinott
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 9

How did you meet? We met at the Hollow Log in Oshkosh with other friends. I was a senior in nursing school and he was on leave from the Army as a Captain. After being introduced, we danced all night to every dance.

What do you love most about your spouse? His kindness, ambition, sensitivity, shared values and not to mention, good looks. She was so pleasant, easy to talk to, had a great smile, was very attractive and just plain fun to be with.

John and Evelyn Hajdu
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet? We met each other at work.

What do you love most about your spouse? She was soft spoken. It wasn’t one thing, it was a combination of little things showing he cared.

What challenges did you face? The challenges of day-to-day living together, the annoying habits of the other.

How did you overcome them? Prayer and learning to compromise.

What’s most rewarding about being married? The companionship and enjoying the same activities.

How has faith helped your marriage? My husband became Catholic when we married so he’s not as steeped in the faith as I am being a “cradle” Catholic. My faith through prayer has been the anchor in seeking answers for challenging family situations.

Advice for Engaged Couples? When there is a disagreement, do not lash out in anger (be slow to anger; quick to forgive). Having disagreements does not mean giving up on the marriage. Take a step backwards, take a moment to quiet your thoughts, and take a deep breath. Ask yourself, “What do I want to accomplish?” Pray for guidance and wisdom before speaking. Remember: “This too shall pass.”
How did you meet? We belonged to the same 4-H Club and Sacred Heart Catholic Church, which nearly all our ancestors belonged to from the time they came to the area from Germany in the 1800’s. We jokingly would say our meeting was due to “divine intervention”. After 60 wonderful years, we believe it!

What do you love most about your spouse? Growing up in similar backgrounds, Lloyd the youngest of 7 children, myself the oldest of 6, and being of the same faith we shared similar values and goals. We recognized and respected the qualities we found in each other that were important to us.

What challenges did you face? In 1965 we purchased a farm and moved to Watertown, 70 miles from our families and friends. The caring and nurturing of our 7 children while struggling to survive economically on our dairy farm during a period of high interest rates and challenging economic times.

How did you overcome them? Our children attended Catholic school which helped instill their faith, we participated in parish groups such as Catholic Family Movement and Small Church Community. Our desire to succeed, our faith, Clergy who were always there for us, and supportive friends who shared their faith, time and talent with us.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Being blessed with 4 wonderful children and watching them grow up and succeed in life. We always agreed on parenting issues because family was first.

How has faith helped your marriage? When the kids were babies and toddlers we would attend Mass individually while the other stayed home. After they were older, we had the tradition of taking the whole family to weekly mass and then out for pizza.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Remember marriage vows are forever and forgiveness unending. Always be friends and keep dancing.

Lloyd and Rosemarie Holterman

# of Children: 7
# of Grandchildren: 14
# of Great-Grandchildren: 8
Jerome and Maurine Kauchak
# of Children: 8 # of Grandchildren: 24 # of Great-Grandchildren: 20

How did you meet? We met on a blind date arranged by Carole's college roommate when she was getting a nursing degree at Marquette University in Milwaukee. Six of us went for a spaghetti dinner and then dancing at the Studio Lounge in Milwaukee and a walk by the lake.

What do you love most about your spouse? When we were engaged, it seemed very natural for us to be together as we had a lot in common. We were both from families who were strong in their Catholic faith, so we had a common foundation. Our faith was, and still is, important to both of us, and has carried us through our 55 years of married life. Of course, there was a strong physical attraction as we loved being together and having fun. We just knew we belonged together.

What challenges did you face? Our biggest challenge came when our ten year old healthy son was diagnosed with Leukemia. We put our trust in Jesus that He would be at our side to get us through this trying time, and He did! It was a difficult 3+ years, but the two of us supported one another, and hope today we are stronger because of it. Our son is a healthy young man today and is married with two beautiful children.

How did you overcome them? Our trust in Jesus to be with us day by day has brought us through any serious challenges we have faced. Attending Mass regularly and various liturgical functions throughout the year, as well as being active in our parish has kept us strong in our commitment to our marriage vows. Our faith means a lot to us!

What's most rewarding about being married? Always having someone with you that understands you, cares about you, and looks out for your best interests. Of course, having children is a great blessing and seeing them and grandchildren grow up is very special!

How has faith helped your marriage? Our faith has been a rock in our marriage. It has been at the forefront throughout our 55 years.

Advice for Engaged Couples? When you strongly disagree on something, listen carefully to the other person, and ask your spouse to do the same. It can help you see things in a whole new light! Put Jesus

Bill and Carole Kinney
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 5

How did you meet? At a square dance.

What challenges did you face? Not having enough money to go around.

How did you overcome them? Hard work.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Get married with the idea that it is for as long as you live. Work through your challenges and have faith in God.

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What challenges did you face? Not having enough money to go around.

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Advice for Engaged Couples? Get married with the idea that it is for as long as you live. Work through your challenges and have faith in God.
in the center of your lives and worship together faithfully. Be active in parish life where you make lifelong friends and have good times together.

Gilbert and Ann Kleckner

# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 4

How did you meet? We met at Monroe High School in Monroe, WI.

What do you love most about your spouse? We shared common interests and attended the same church.

What challenges did you face? Our eldest son’s death at age 38.

How did you overcome them? Through our faith.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Companionship and our children.

How has faith helped your marriage? It has provided a great basic foundation.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Both of you should give 90% and take 10%.

Anonymous

# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 4

How did you meet? We met at my husband’s high school at a teen dance in 1965.

What do you love most about your spouse? His kindness and love for me.

What challenges did you face? Raising our children and husband’s work travel.

How did you overcome them? Our children were good but busy. We tried to do things as a family and a couple to spend time together. His travel was 1-3 nights a week.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Having someone you love at your side.

How has faith helped your marriage? We were both raised Catholic and we do practice our faith.

We participate in things together including mass. We had parents who were examples of faith and love and were married 36 and 50 years.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Practice your faith and pray as a couple. Always find time to have together especially at meal time. So many families don’t have their meal together or talk. They are on phones and texting. Communicate in person. Compromise! It is not all one person’s way.

Jim and Carol Knox

# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 4

How did you meet? On a blind date.

What do you love most about your spouse? Kindness and thoughtfulness for each other and being together.

What challenges did you face? There were no big challenges. We just worked them out including raising 3 children.

How did you overcome them? Talking to each other and figuring out the best way to handle it. Also praying to make the right decision.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Doing things together as a family.

How has faith helped your marriage? By being there for us each and every day.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Do not go to bed over an argument.
Bob and Judy Knutson

# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? We met at a Christmas party in December 1965. We were introduced by a friend.

What do you love most about your spouse? How we smiled and laughed at each other.

What challenges did you face? Raising two children on one income.

How did you overcome them? Working two jobs.

What's most rewarding about being married? Having a constant companion that you can count on through thick and thin.

How has faith helped your marriage? I believe the strongest marriage is one built on a foundation of shared faith. The more you love God, the more capacity you will have to love each other.

Advice for Engaged Couples? It is easy to feel like you and your spouse are on 2 different sides of a coin. When in reality you are facing the same direction. You are not on opposite sides. You are on the same team and as long as you present a united front, there is nothing you can't do together.

David and Jean Kollasch

# of Children: 5 # of Grandchildren: 9

How did you meet? Blind date arranged by my brother.

What do you love most about your spouse? Each other's gentleness, kindness, similar goals for life. We also enjoyed each other's company and being together.

What challenges did you face? Financial issues and the stress of raising a family day to day. Challenges related to long work days and financial limitations.

How did you overcome them? Support from both sets of parents and friend's interactions.

What's most rewarding about being married? Family across three generations! Enjoying work and gardening and travel together. Companionship - we are there for each other regardless and always. We support each other but encourage independence.

How has faith helped your marriage? Individual support from a priest when needed was helpful. Words of guidance and guidance in our prayer. Praying the Memorare to Mary has been important to us.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Communicate daily both verbally and through gentle and caring touch.
Carl and Mary Lentz
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 11 # of Great-Grandchildren: 19

How did you meet? We met by chance.

What challenges did you face? The biggest challenge was managing finances when we had 4 children in 4 years.

How did you overcome them? We prayed together to stay together. We did not let fads take the place of the necessary and important things.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Raising a great family.

How has faith helped your marriage? We married in faith and practiced it all of our lives.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Get married to see how long you can stay married and not how fast you can end it.

Edmund and Linda Marks
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 5

How did you meet? We met on a blind date. My best friend was dating his brother.

What do you love most about your spouse? We were engaged April of 1967 and we were happy to go for walks, go to parks and talk.

What challenges did you face? Coming back from Michigan and telling our parents. I wasn’t Catholic so I took instructions and we had our marriage blessed by Father Ihm in his office with Ed’s parents there at St. Stanislaus Church in Berlin.

How did you overcome them? Father Ihm.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Always having someone to bounce ideas off. Someone there to comfort you in the bad times.

How has faith helped your marriage? Linda has something to call on when the times get bad. Ed knows that your faith can help you in the times of distress.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Always listen with both ears while your spouse is talking. Always work together on any problem. Don’t get into debt. It is harder to get out than you think.
Jerry and Connie McCabe
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 8

How did you meet? We met at a “Sun Hop” dance. We both liked to dance and attended one every Saturday night.

What do you love most about your spouse? That we both shared our Catholic faith and we both wanted children. We also loved our dates together. We cared about other people and being kind toward others.

What challenges did you face? The financial struggles that come with raising a family.

How did you overcome them? Growing constantly in our faith with frequent confession and having a good spiritual director and good communication with each other.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Having a partner for life with the faith that we can turn to Jesus and our Mother Mary and St. Joseph when trials come upon us. God never let us down! Helping one another strive for Heaven!

How has faith helped your marriage? With both of us being Catholic we have been blessed with the tools we need from our Catholic upbringing. Especially the sacraments. We love daily Mass and being involved in our Church.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Get to know each other first. Love grows from this friendship. Always keep God in your marriage because a marriage consists of the three of you - husband, wife, and God. Before marriage stay pure of body and heart! Virginity is a must! Consider each other as precious!

Art and Pat McClure
# of Children: 1 # of Grandchildren: 1

How did you meet? We met at the University of Minnesota in the school of Architecture library.

What do you love most about your spouse? Getting to know each other, similar interests. Participating in church and prayer. Talking about our future together. Setting mutual goals.

What challenges did you face? Balancing careers, family, and home.

How did you overcome them? Patience, prayer and a willingness to listen and support each other!

What’s most rewarding about being married? Having a partner for life with the faith that we can turn to Jesus and our Mother Mary and St. Joseph when trials come upon us. God never let us down! Helping one another strive for Heaven!

How has faith helped your marriage? With both of us being Catholic we have been blessed with the tools we need from our Catholic upbringing. Especially the sacraments. We love daily Mass and being involved in our Church.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Listen to each other.
Set mutual goals. Problem solve together. Have a strong faith. Pray together.

**Ben and Mary Minter**

**# of Children:** 9  
**# of Grandchildren:** 21  
**# of Great-Grandchildren:** 4

**How did you meet?** We met at a dance at Rainbow Garden’s in Spring Green.

**What do you love most about your spouse?** We liked some of the same things like dancing and getting together with friends. We had common interests.

**What challenges did you face?** We were farmers and didn’t have a lot of money in the early years along with all the hard work and being busy raising a family.

**How did you overcome them?** Our faith helped us and we worked hard to make a living.

**What's most rewarding about being married?** We have nine wonderful children, 21 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. We love it when they all come home. It is nice to be able to do things together.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** We always attended church every Sunday with our family.

**Advice for Engaged Couples?** Take time to work things out. Don’t spend money on things you really don’t need. Save for big items. Plant a garden if possible and eat healthy. Take time for each other.

**Lyle and Joanne Neesam**

**# of Children:** 3  
**# of Grandchildren:** 6

**How did you meet?** We met at a dance in Baraboo at Devil’s Lake. We did not see one another for 6 months again as I was engaged. I ended that, met Lyle 6 months later and we started dating at that time. So happy we met and got back together 6 months later. We did it properly!

**What do you love most about your spouse?** Same likes. Simple pleasures. Family values. We liked everything about one another, laughed together, so important. We became friends.

**What challenges did you face?** Lyle’s accident causing traumatic amputation of leg and the problems it created for him and our family. He handled it so well and courageously. He never ever complained. Then 6 years ago our beautiful youngest daughter died of cancer at 38. She was a delight in all of our lives. She left us a beautiful daughter Olivia and Olivia’s father is great. We are blessed to have a part of our Jennifer. She is missed every moment.

**How did you overcome them?** Our love, faith, family and friends. Our strengths and belief.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Spending your life with the person who completes you and shares the hard and the joyous times.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** We are lifelong Catholics, one just believes. The church we belong to today in Briggsville, WI is the church my grandparents were married in in 1900. Their framed wedding license hangs in my home. All my family was baptized, confirmed and married there.

**Advice for Engaged Couples?** Know one another well!! Beauty and handsome catches the eye but goodness, kindness, and values are what last. We are best friends and have been for 60 years as well as husband, wife and parents.
John and Mary Nordlie

# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 5

**How did you meet?** We met at MATC. We were running for an office in the DECA Club and the rest is history.

**What do you love most about your spouse?** Being together, doing things together and having fun. We were so young everything was a new adventure and having someone to share and experience it with made it perfect. I guess it was the war years and so every moment counted. No one knew what would come next.

**What challenges did you face?** We were too young to know if there were challenges. Too young, too poor - we didn't know they were challenges. We just thought that was what normal is.

**How did you overcome them?** We accepted everything and moved on. No questioning, “Why me Lord?” We dealt with everything together. None of the, “that’s your job.” If it needed done, it got done.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Having your best friend with you all the time to share everything, do everything together, experience life together.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** It gives us a base. We do it all together, church time, parochial school time, reinforcement with friends that share your values and their children’s values. It made life so much easier and we can honestly say our dearest, closest friends all came from faith based experiences. We all shared one common base.

**Advice for Engaged Couples?** Don’t overthink it! Be flexible! Be patient! Be willing to compromise and forget. Move on. Life is too short to waste on the little things. When you get older, you realize how very trivial things can be when you see the whole picture.

Thomas and Margaret Pezzi

**How did you meet?** We met at a CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) dance on the south side of Milwaukee. I walked in with friends shortly after the dance began, saw Margaret, and thought that she was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. Plus she was and is an incredible dancer!

**What do you love most about your spouse?** Interestingly enough, we were engaged long distance. I was in Vietnam and she was in Milwaukee. I sent money home to her sister and she took it to the jeweler to pay off the ring. I wrote a letter to her and her sister placed it on her dresser and told her to go to her bedroom, there was something special there for her. We just seemed to connect.

**What challenges did you face?** We got married immediately on my discharge. I was likely suffering from PTSD, felt the church and my country had abandoned me. Margaret didn’t know the person she was marrying but she obviously weathered the storm. The first few years were hell on earth for Margaret.

**How did you overcome them?** Margaret’s love and patience.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Having a partner that you can share so much with on a daily basis. It’s the knowledge that you have someone who shares not only your joy but supports you through the down times and challenges. It has also been rewarding to watch the growth in each other, which continues on in our lives.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** We wandered away from the Catholic Church for over 30 years. At one of the low points in our lives, Margaret sought help from a priest (also a longtime friend of Tom’s). That priest led us both back to the Church. Involvement in our Church and faith has strengthened us spiritually. It has also taught us that our love for God also makes our love for each other all the more significant. Participation in our faith has also brough so many wonderful friends into our lives.

**Advice for Engaged Couples?** As we watch the young married couples in our family grow, we see so much more importance put on things as a measure of success. Our advice to them would be to not forget that there is so much more to life than an accumulation of things. In recent years Margaret
and I have made every effort to bring our families closer together. At gatherings we now share, we have found so much joy, support, and love. And we regret that it has taken us this long to initiate this. Final advice: go to church, love each other, make this world a better place! But most of all Love God!

Fred and Gloria Pumper

# of Children: 6 # of Grandchildren: 11

How did you meet? We met on a blind date arranged by a mutual friend of ours. He and his wife are still friends of ours, 50 years later. We went to their 50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration last year.

What do you love most about your spouse? We liked to do things together, especially ballroom dancing, UW football games, and visiting state parks. We also studied together at the library. I was an elementary school teacher and Fred was working on his Ph.D. in Agricultural Education.

What challenges did you face? There were three times in our marriage that my husband was laid off or his job was discontinued. We had to supplement and carefully watch our money. Also my husband has a hearing loss from farm machinery and factory work while in college and the use of a chain saw. It makes it difficult to hear female voices. This frustrates my wife and me and hearing aids don’t completely overcome the loss.

How did you overcome them? It was necessary for me to redevelop my resume and I also took a high school teaching job for one year. I applied for many jobs. I was worried about supporting 4 children and my wife. I prayed that the Lord, Mary, and Joseph would help me to obtain a new professional teaching job.

What’s most rewarding about being married? The most rewarding part of our marriage was watching our 6 children grow into responsible adults. All attended college and have professional jobs and families. We are proud of all of them-2 teachers, 2 pharmacists, and 2 engineers/managers.

How has faith helped your marriage? We always prayed together in a crisis and attended church every Sunday. We prayed meal prayers together and prayed every night with children at bed time.

Advice for Engaged Couples? As a family try to eat at least one meal together every day and ask the children about their day and what they did. We said good night to each other at bed time and said that we loved each other. We did this even when there were difficult times.

Advice for couples:

- Life is too short to waste on the little things. When you get older, you realize how very trivial things can be when you see the whole picture.

- Don’t forget that there is so much more to life than an accumulation of things.

- Every day work on your marriage and keep loving and taking care of each other in good times and trying times.

- Remember marriage vows are forever and forgiveness unending. Always be friends and keep dancing.
Frederick and Beatrice Rauls
# of Children: 5 # of Grandchildren: 9

**How did you meet?** We met as students at the University of Wisconsin in 1953.

**What do you love most about your spouse?** We shared common values including reliability, similar interests, Catholic principles and the loving and caring attitude we found in each other.

**What challenges did you face?** We found military service separation and work load with our four young children to be most challenging.

**How did you overcome them?** We found working together, spending time with and enjoying family activities, sharing problems and successes, establishing good relationships with friends/neighbors, and maintaining strong connections with priests and parishioners at St. Maria Goretti to be most helpful in meeting the many challenges of early married and parental life.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** We treasure our lives together, building a faith filled family, and the love and activities of our four children, ten grandchildren, and six great grandchildren. We are also blessed to have had wonderful relationships with other married couples and their children, and have found the greatest reward is maintaining a lifelong love and respect for each other.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** We have been charter members of St. Maria Goretti Parish since 1959. Our children received the sacraments, we taught CCD classes for a time, we have always prayed together at meals and at bedtime when the children were young. Rita attended St. Raphael’s School, and Bob taught at Edgewood College for 17 years. All of these aspects have contributed to the success of our marriage.

**Advice for Engaged Couples?** Every day work on your marriage and keep loving and taking care of each other in good times and trying times. Pray to God. He is with you.

Bob and Rita Reif
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 10 # of Great-Grandchildren: 6

**How did you meet?** We met at a wedding dance in Waunakee, WI.

**What do you love most about your spouse?** His tenderness and hard work.

**What challenges did you face?** Raising 5 children on one income and husband’s health.

**How did you overcome them?** Coming from a family of 12 children and being trained to cook, sew, and can.

**What’s most rewarding about being married?** Loving each other and seeing our 5 children being happy in their married lives. Our 9 grandchildren’s graduations from High School and College. Being able to celebrate the wedding of our college grad grandson and being there.

**Advice for Engaged Couples?** Before marriage, be sure you are compatible on faith, children, money, and other topics. Be sure to revisit these and other important topics as you move through married life. Get involved in church, neighborhood, and community efforts and model service for your children and others. Be respectful to your spouse. Cooperate; do not compete with each other.
Robert and Frances Ringberg
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 7 # of Great-Grandchildren: 3

How did you meet? We met in Junior College in an organic chemistry class.

What do you love most about your spouse? The companionship we had together which still continues.

What challenges did you face? Raising children because anymore so many things can go wrong.

How did you overcome them? Working together to overcome the challenges. And having our children know we love them.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Just day to day life. The chances to look back over the years and see what we have accomplished.

How has faith helped your marriage? Faith in our marriage has given us strength. It can help to work out many problems.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Just give each other a break. Don’t go flying off the handle at each other. TALK to each other.

Victor and Susan Rossetti
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? We met at the hospital where Susan was working as a nursing assistant and Vic was working in the laundry for summer jobs. Vic’s uncle who was a patient pointed Susan out and told Vic, “You have to meet her.”

What do you love most about your spouse? We were both in college and nursing school. We enjoyed spending weekends visiting and catching up with each other. We also enjoyed sharing experiences and friends.

What challenges did you face? Work obligations, family needs and eventually moving about every 5 years.

How did you overcome them? Our faith and commitment to each other. Our love for each other helped get us through the ups and downs.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Having a soul mate with whom you can share life and love.

How has faith helped your marriage? It has made us stronger as individuals and as a couple.

Advice for Engaged Couples? It is always a work in progress. There are always changes and events that occur. Stay close to your faith and you will stay close to each other.
Richard and Jean Rydecki
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? We both attended meetings and participated in events sponsored by Bethel Lutheran Church. The name of the social group was Madison Young Adults.

What do you love most about your spouse? We had similar interests and goals, and we were spiritually and physically attracted to each other.

What challenges did you face? Following World War Two, there was a real housing shortage, and we experienced a very difficult time finding adequate housing.

How did you overcome them? We prayed a lot for guidance and the faith and love that we had for each other.

What’s most rewarding about being married? We have had a wonderful time sharing life together. We are extremely proud of our four sons and their wives. We feel very blessed that we have lived to appreciate the fine way they have raised their families.

How has faith helped your marriage? We were both blessed with the good fortune of sharing the same religion. Our shared faith has been a very important element from the beginning of our courtship and throughout our lives.

Advice for Engaged Couples? We would stress the importance of having common goals, good communication, loyalty to each other, and to view marriage as a permanent union.

Robert and Rita Schelble
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 9 # of Great-Grandchildren: 8

How did you meet? Through mutual friends.

What do you love most about your spouse? She was the loveliest girl I had ever met. She was pretty, smart, and practical.

What challenges did you face? We had four children in five years!

Charles and Anne Scott
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 1
How did you overcome them? Our faith in God, faithfulness to our church, love for each other, and concern for our kids.

What’s most rewarding about being married? One is not lonely having someone to share each day with.

How has faith helped your marriage? It has helped keep our marriage together.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Be sure you will be happy with this person forever and ever! Not easy, but necessary.

LaVern and Barbara Seibel
# of Children: 10 # of Grandchildren: 22 # of Great-Grandchildren: 11

How did you meet? Reeseville high school had burned. LaVern’s cousin was sent to Waterloo. Sue asked me if I would like to write to her cousin going into the army? I did. When he was discharged he came to take me to the movies for a thank you.

What do you love most about your spouse? He was nice and considerate. He had a job in town and still helped his dad on the farm.

What challenges did you face? Probably the two sets of twins and getting all 10 kids ready for church on time.

How did you overcome them? With a lot of help from the Lord.

What’s most rewarding about being married? We are there for each other. Both of us have had cancer. All are good now.

How has faith helped your marriage? All 5 sons were altar boys. We served funeral lunches for 24 years. Barbara sang in the choir for 47 years.

Anonymous
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 10 # of Great-Grandchildren: 2

How did you meet? We met on a blind date, set up by a cousin who met the groom at a wedding of her co-worker. The groom at the wedding was one of nine guys that went to school and church together. We still get together with whoever is left every 4th of July. Only 3 of 9 are left.

What do you love most about your spouse? We loved all the things we had in common, family values, and good friends. We loved doing things together and with friends.

What challenges did you face? Raising 3 boys and 1 girl. Taking in and helping raise 4 grandchildren for about 10 years. We just got our children out on their own and started over with a 1 year old. In the last few years we have been dealing with major health problems. Becoming more of a care giver than an equal partner was hard.

How did you overcome them? Good friends and family. Many answered prayers for strength and understanding. A daughter who helped whenever she could. Being a nurse answered many questions for health issues.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Having someone to talk to, listen to, just spend time with. Knowing that no matter what happens you have someone that loves you and will help you and stand by your side.

How has faith helped your marriage? Going to Mass together has a special meaning to us. Early in our marriage, because of work schedules, we didn’t always get to go together. Our family values were based on the teachings of the Catholic Church and we strived to raise our children and enrich our marriage by keeping the faith foremost in our lives.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Take your vows seriously! Do not give up on each other if the going gets tough. Talk about your problems and find solutions together. And, never go to sleep at night without telling your spouse that you love them.
Advice for Engaged Couples? Help your partner get to heaven by doing your best and make this commitment for life. Pray, work, play and have fun together. Always make time for your family. A positive attitude and a good sense of humor help to make the journey easier!!

John and Mary Lee Steinmuller
# of Children: 2 # of Grandchildren: 6

How did you meet?
Mary Lee moved to Racine, WI from Rochester, NY during high school. She could not get into the same Catholic high school John was attending. However we did meet while working at a drive-in restaurant just before going to college together. Because John told his mom at age twelve that he was going to marry an Italian Catholic woman, it was providence we were married early in life when we were both twenty.

What do you love most about your spouse?
Learning more about each other and families because we grew up in different parts of the country but had the same traditional upbringings. We were in sync from the moment we met.

What challenges did you face?
The fact that John went into the military and left for basic training two months after we were married. We learned to communicate by letters only. This helped cement our relationship when John was sent to Vietnam for a year. Years later, after our first child, it was challenging because John traveled with his
career. All these separations and trust in God help us continue a strong marriage.

How did you overcome them? Our strong faith and close family ties have always been the foremost reason to have a committed marriage for fifty years.

What’s most rewarding about being married? Sharing life challenges, creating a family, and growing together is the most precious gift as we prepare for the next life. Everyone close to us is amused at the intense verbal discussions we have, but we found this a loving way to understand each other clearly.

How has faith helped your marriage? Committing to each other forever and having the Catholic Church rich in its fullness for salvation. It’s a blessing to have the sacraments to keep us on track and the support of living the best we can.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Respect, honor, love each other every day. Know you are committed to each other for a lifetime. Always communicate your feelings and say “I love you” every night to each other and to God. Never go to bed mad with one another. Say your prayers even when you get older.

Vernon and Carol Suchomel
# of Children: 8 # of Grandchildren: 25 # of Great-Grandchildren: 20

How did you meet? We met in high school.

What do you love most about your spouse? We shared everything. And I (Carol) became a convert.

What challenges did you face? Being apart while he was in the service and being busy with our family.

How did you overcome them? We did a lot of praying. And we enjoyed seeing our family grow up.

What’s most rewarding about being married? That we each had one another to lean on.

How has faith helped your marriage? Our faith is a tremendous help for us and our family. We pray the rosary every day and have done this for about 50 years.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Never keep secrets from each other. Share all your thoughts and dreams together.

Help get your partner to heaven by doing your best and make this commitment.

Always communicate your feelings and say “I love you” every night to each other and to God.
Charlie and Maureen Turner
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 9

How did you meet? We attended the same high school.
What do you love most about your spouse? We admired and honored each other’s values and morals. It was a perfect foundation for considering marriage.
What challenges did you face? Raising children to attain Catholic Christian morals.
How did you overcome them? Our persistence, determination, and faith.
What’s most rewarding about being married? Companionship and loving one another. Sharing and believing in God.
Advice for Engaged Couples? Talk, listen, laugh and enjoy!

Byron and Evelyn Tetzlaff
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 8 # of Great-Grandchildren: 4

How did you meet? Byron came in to meet friends at the store fountain I worked at. He loved hot fudge sundaes. He was home on leave from the U.S.M.C. Three days was all we had. He had to return to base. After one and a half years he returned to me. Byron later switched to work for the State of WI as a program coordinator.
What do you love most about your spouse? We shared our thoughts, talked many things out and were always together.
What challenges did you face? When we didn’t have work and we had 4 children’s mouths to feed. Work during winter was hard to get for a carpenter. We had to learn to do with only a little. But with faith in God and the will to succeed we worked it out.
How did you overcome them? Our faith in God and each other and our family.
What’s most rewarding about being married? Companionship and loving one another. Sharing and believing in God.
Advice for Engaged Couples? Talk, listen, laugh and enjoy!

How has faith helped your marriage? Our faith has greatly strengthened our marriage! We know that God is at the core of our relationship.
Advice for Engaged Couples? Follow the 10 Commandments.
How did you meet?
We met at a birthday party in Milwaukee where we were attending college.

What do you love most about your spouse?
We loved being together as much as we could.

What challenges did you face?
There were always the day to day challenges. Our first true challenge was when John's Army Unit was activated and deployed to visit Vietnam. Our daughter was just 3 days old. John was sent to Fr. Knox, Kentucky for 6 months of jungle warfare training and then on to Vietnam for 12 months.

How did you overcome them?
With the help of family and friends and total faith that God would bring John home safe.

What's most rewarding about being married?
Sharing our lives together through good times and tough times. Raising four beautiful children, educating them well and knowing they have kept their faith.

How has faith helped your marriage?
Faith has always been a part of our life together. We thank God every day for blessing our lives and the lives of our children and grandchildren.

Advice for Engaged Couples?
If you make the commitment to love each other for a lifetime then do it. Ask for God's help and guidance. Be sure to kiss a lot and say "I love you."

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How did you meet?
My very close friend married a young man serving in the U.S. Navy while aboard the USS Independence Aircraft Carrier. When they came back to port my friend's husband decided to play cupid and went about to make sure we were both in the same place at the same time. Our first date was a blind date set up by our friends.

What do you love most about your spouse?
The ability to share feelings, goals, expectations and dreams for the future without the presence of our relationship being an artificial fantasy of what our lives together would be.

What challenges did you face?
Unconditional love. We took the traditional vows at our wedding. The better health and for richer is easy but the worse truly tries the desire to keep your marriage together. To love your spouse is easier than to like your spouse. There are times of great love and admiration and times when it is hard work to keep your spouse the center of your life.

How did you overcome them?
I grew up in a home where we learned, once you're married, it is FOREVER. There was no running home to mommy and daddy when you had your first disagreement. My husband grew up in a very volatile atmosphere. His parents did divorce but he obtained a deep seated Catholic faith.

What's most rewarding about being married?
Sharing our lives together through good times and tough times. Raising four beautiful children, educating them well and knowing they have kept their faith.

How has faith helped your marriage?
Faith has always been a part of our life together. We thank God every day for blessing our lives and the lives of our children and grandchildren.

Advice for Engaged Couples?
Trust. I have always believed that if I live my life the way God wants me to that He will be there. As a convert
I have found the Catholic Church defined the rules we were to live by with no watered down versions. It is very hard for me to understand people who proclaim they are Catholic but think abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, assisted suicide, etc. is acceptable.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Marriage is not always a rose garden. There are plenty of thorns along the path. True love is giving of yourself 150% and expecting little in return. God has to be at the center, the rear, and in front of you. As a couple, attending church together is a must. Talk first about religious beliefs and make a commitment to attend church together. Do not expect your spouse to change their beliefs for you. Your family needs solidarity in what faith you follow as a couple.

Ronald and Sylvia Wentz
# of Children: 4 # of Grandchildren: 8

How did you meet? We met on a blind date. My girlfriend introduced me to her brother.

What do you love most about your spouse? Ron was very respectful to my family and friends. Sylvia’s Catholic faith was very much in the forefront and I was Lutheran. I became Catholic in June of 1973.

What challenges did you face? Ron’s parents, Alvin and Leona Wentz, were killed by a drunk driver in October 1967. It tested us and our faith. We were very young, 21 and 24. But love from family and friends helped us. As our sons were born the love and respect for each other grew.

How did you overcome them? Our love of God and each other. One’s family can help young couples just being supportive.

What's most rewarding about being married? Enjoying our sons grow up, marry, and have families. We took family vacations together camping. But we tried to always be best friends. The grandchildren are our rewards for raising our sons.

How has faith helped your marriage? We all go through loss of loved ones and faith has taught us that Jesus is always with us and praying helps.

Advice for Engaged Couples? Always put your husband or wife first. Talk problems out and don’t let your faith in each other be lost. Pray and be active in your church family. Celebrate joys and successes.

Ken and Kay Wipperfurth
# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 7

How did you meet? We met at Smitty’s Bar and Dance Hall in Waunakee. We had many good times at Rusty’s bar in Middleton.

What do you love most about your spouse? We both loved God and enjoyed going to church every Sunday. We both had loving parents who taught us family values.

What challenges did you face? Who is going to budget our finances. Two people living under one roof who have different ideas on how to do things.

How did you overcome them? The man of the household will pay all the bills. Sometimes you have to compromise with each other.

What's most rewarding about being married?
Enjoying each other’s company and having a family of 3 children and 7 grandchildren.

**How has faith helped your marriage?** When things are not going well you pray to God and ask Him to help you find answers to your problems.

**Advice for Engaged Couples?** Give marriage a chance. Talk to each other and listen carefully and be kind. Never go to bed angry. Pray to God so you have a happy marriage.

**Eugene and Diane Zander**

*# of Children: 3 # of Grandchildren: 3*
I believe the strongest marriage is one built on a foundation of shared faith. The more you love God, the more capacity you will have to love each other.

- Bob and Judy Knutson