

National Family Life Education

Pastor James and Margaret Neely. Directors.

Theme: Marriages are Worth Admiring.

Maybe you never thought of other marriages this way.. Do you know of one to choose and is it yours? Here is an amazing article of loved ones expressing admiration for healthy marriages.

The Marriages We Admire,

by Dave Boehi

Sometimes I think we forget just how much impact our marriage has on our family and friends. If our marriage is good, they notice and they learn. If it's bad ... they notice and they learn.

Recently Family Life held an Easter contest in which the grand prize was a free Weekend to Remember® marriage getaway. For those who made it to the final stage, one of the questions they answered was, "Whose marriage do you admire most, and why?" I found the answers fascinating, and revealing.

It quickly became obvious that the influence of parents and grandparents is immeasurable. Some quotes:

I most admire my parents' marriage. They started out very young, getting married at 19 and 17 years old, with a baby on the way. In December, they will be married for 40 years. (How amazing!) They have been through many, many struggles and joys through the years. They have held on tight to each other and to God when times were tough, and they have celebrated their joys together too. They have helped each other to grow *and yet accepted each other unconditionally. ... What a blessing to grow up in a household where these were my role models! My parents' love for each other, for their children, for their grandchildren, and for Christ is an inspiration!*

I admire our parents' marriages most. Our parents have stayed married through many years and many ups and downs. We know their lives behind the scenes. They have been wonderful examples to us on how to stay married.

I think I would choose my grandparents. They spent a lot of time at church together and

working to share God's love, but then they could fight like nobody's business but then go to bed happy and contented. They enjoyed spending time with family and laughing. Playing games and things. When one died before the other they missed the other one immensely. They shared their happiness with each other and stayed together throughout life's many challenges.

Did you catch that line, "We know their lives behind the scenes"? Our children know how we act behind closed doors; they see every good and bad thing we do and take it to heart. So when a child says he most admires his parents' marriage, that's saying something.

I also noticed that children are watching how their parents take care of each other as they grow old. One reader wrote:

My father-in-law passed several years ago due to Alzheimer's disease. They were high school sweethearts. As his disease progressed my mother-in-law would fill in the words where he could not, and she knew exactly what he needed even when he could not *remember what it was*. ... *The day before he died, she was sitting on the edge of his bed. Though he had not spoken an intelligible word for weeks nor had he been responsive for three days, his eyes opened, he pulled her close, she gave him a kiss and he patted her on the back. It is a scene that I will never forget. I pray that my husband and I can be in such communion that no matter what happens to either of us, we always reach for the other.*

Other readers said they most admired the marriages of friends and pastors. One wrote, "The marriage I admire the most is my boss's marriage. He and his wife had many years of conflict and divorce was imminent at times. ... They are now enjoying an intimate and loving union and their story is an encouragement to many others with struggling marriages."

Perhaps the most unusual was a note from a husband who said, "I most admire my wife's former marriage to her deceased husband, Randy. They were married for around 30 years before he succumbed to cancer. He was a godly man, and they raised two great children, who have since [given] us grandchildren. My wife and her former husband together helped a lot of people to strengthen their relationship with Christ or come to Christ in the first place. I pray I can do as good a job as a husband and father as he did with my wife and his children."

How many husbands would be secure enough to write a tribute like that?

After reading all the responses the one thing I took away was that the way we love our spouse will be one of our greatest legacies. As one reader wrote:

Early on in their marriage my dad was unfaithful. Now that I'm married and an adult, I have no idea how she stayed with him. I don't believe I could have. But, God's grace is *bigger than us* ... *My mom forgave my dad, forgave the other women, and loved my dad. I was the last one out of six to become a Christian, so watching this unfold in front of me made me love and respect my mom and dad more. ... With God's love inside of*

them, they repented and made their marriage thrive! My mom passed away right before their 42nd anniversary, but I'm telling you what, she left a legacy for all of us kids, that spoke, "You can do all things *through Christ.*" *My parents' marriage was one of* commitment, covenant, and promise. I believe the road work has been paved for generations to come.

Whose marriage do you most admire, and why? Let us know in the comments section below, and I'll use your answers in a coming edition of Marriage Memo.

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