

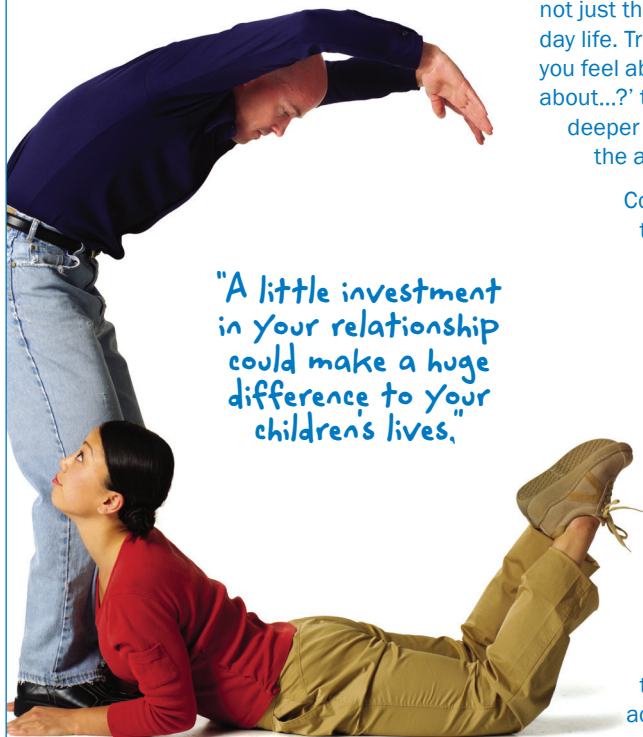
C is for...

Maintaining a loving relationship with your partner is not always easy, particularly when you add in the demands of small children. In 2009, over a fifth (21%) of children experiencing parental divorce were under 5, and 63% were under 11¹. A little investment in your relationship could make a huge difference to your children's lives, as well as your own. Here are four 'Cs' that could help secure your future together.

C is for... Companionship

This is foundational. You probably got together as a couple because you enjoyed each other's company. Are you still best friends? Do you laugh together? Do you share the ups and downs of each others lives?

It can be hard to find time for companionship in the busyness of life. You may need to be creative. How about a 'date night' each week? You don't necessarily need to have a babysitter, just turn off the phone and spend the evening doing something together.



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C is for... Commitment

Research shows that couples are more likely to stay together if they are committed to each other. One expression of that commitment is marriage but other ways include sharing finances and planning the future together. Do you talk mainly about 'we' and 'us' or do you still see yourselves as two individuals?

C is for... Communication

Talking to each other is important but we need to make sure that we are talking about the things that really matter to us, not just the organisational details of every day life. Try asking questions like 'How do you feel about...?' and 'What do you think about...?' to start a conversation on a deeper level. And remember to listen to the answers.

Conversely, if you have something to say then remember to do it in a way that the other person will receive it. This might mean waiting until they have unwound from a hard day at work or the baby has stopped crying. The 'When you ... I feel ...' is a useful tool for tackling difficult issues.

If you love your partner, make sure that they know it! The author, Gary Chapman, wrote about the five 'love languages'. These are: quality time, words of affirmation, gifts, acts of service and physical

touch. If you want to communicate your love effectively you need to find out which 'love language' your partner understands. Take a look at www.5lovelanguages.com.

C is for... Conflict Resolution

We are all human and most of us will, therefore, from time to time, find ourselves in disagreement with our partners. Hopefully, with good communication, you can talk about the issue and deal with it quickly. However, it takes time to develop conflict resolution skills. Assistance with this may be provided by a local counselling organisation.

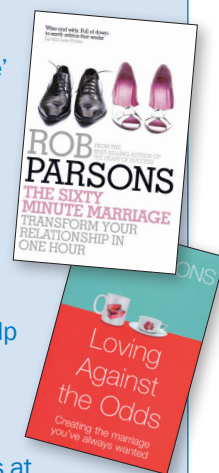
Help with the great 'adventure' they call marriage:

Just starting out? 'Marriage by Design' is a brand new one-day marriage preparation course coming soon from Care for the Family. A DVD version of the course will be available to purchase separately for use at home.

Keeping going? 'The Sixty Minute Marriage' is a quick read but is packed with thought provoking advice.

Finding love tough? 'Loving against the odds' is a beautifully written book by Rob Parsons which will help you to get back on track.

You can buy all of these great resources at www.careforthefamily.org.uk or call (029) 2081 0800



¹ ONS 2011 Divorces in England and Wales, 2009 (Statistical Bulletin) p.3.

This information is supplied in good faith but Care for the Family cannot accept responsibility for any advice or recommendations made by other organisations.

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