



In The Name Of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

المعهد الإسلامي في تورنتو

Islamic Institute of Toronto

Education for Virtuous Living

# The Five Cs for Happy Marriage: Legacy of the Prophet

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Marriage can work. It can even make us happy, fulfilled, and full of joy. You might ask, how? Allow me to answer this question.

When I say marriage can work, be happy and fulfilling, I do not, by any means, mean to say that this can be achieved simply, as if by waving a magic wand - nothing could be further from the truth.

In order for marriage to work, we need to invest time and energy in it. We need to take concerted action. Once we have made our best effort, while placing our trust in Allah, a successful outcome is guaranteed. This is what Allah says, ***“If they both cherish the intention and resolve in their mind to realize peace and reconciliation Allah will bless their efforts (in achieving it).” (Qur’an: 4:34)*** In other words, Allah’s laws are clear: We get in life what we strive for: Our daily thoughts, words, and actions will either make or break our marriage. We reap either joy or misery via the thoughts, words, and actions which we consistently cherish and nurture.

It is, therefore, within our power to build a happy marriage: Every couple should be able to do it by mastering the keys: this calls for commitment, and earnestly striving with all the spiritual and emotional resources within us, and lots and lots of prayers.

I have had a life-time of experience in marriage. I was married more than four decades ago at an unusually young age; I can honestly say I made my marriage work by following this basic formula. I have also dealt with family issues for over three decades as an imam. My recipe for a successful marriage comes from reflections on the Prophetic legacy: The prophet’s exemplary character has guided my efforts in building a blissful marriage. The Prophet is indeed the greatest benefactor for me, second only to Allah, in this as well as in all other aspects of my life.

I would distill this Prophetic wisdom, into a few key words all starting with ‘C’: connection, companionship, compassion, charity, compromise and contentment.



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Let us begin with connection. The connection between married couples cannot be based on infatuation, or a purely physical attraction, or built on a fling; rather it must be based on one's connection with Allah, the Creator and Sustainer.

By connecting with Allah, we connect to a higher source of values that transcend our petty & selfish needs, desires and concerns. Through this, we can anchor marriage on a firm foundation. We become connected to each other not so much because of our own emotions, but because of our shared commitment to Allah.

Even as *tawhid* or faith in One God connects us with everything around us, it should serve to nourish and strengthen a couple's bond. With faith and trust in Allah, marriage establishes a spiritual bond they cherish and rely on as they face the challenges of life. Hence, their joint prayer: ***"Our Lord, grant us joy in our spouses and children and make us role-models for the God-fearing folks."*** (Q. 25:74)

Couples who are connected through *tawhid* become partners and companions whose primary goal is to do the will of God together. This leads to the second key for a happy marriage: companionship.

The Prophet emphasised that good companionship was the source of true joy in life. He said, ***"This world is a brief sojourn and the best asset one can have is the companionship of a righteous wife."*** (Reported by al-Mundhiri)

Companionship cannot just happen: it must come from shouldering one's responsibilities, doing chores together, and sharing the ups and downs of life. The Prophet set an example for us through his own participation in daily chores. Aishah was asked, ***'what was the Prophet doing at home? She replied, "he would be helping the family in their household chores."*** (Reported by Bukhari). Once, when he was just about to lead a congregational the prayer, he told them to wait; he went home and returned saying: ***"I forgot to put the lid on the cooking pot!"***

By doing chores together and cooperating on large and small things, a couple cements their ties, and builds trust and mutual love for one another. This is the most potent recipe for building a lasting relationship.

Companionship is further strengthened by nurturing compassion; which should stem from recognition of the fact that one's partner is part of oneself. Allah teaches us in the Qur'an that He



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created spouses for us from among ourselves. Thus, by recognizing each other as an extension of ourselves, we engender peace and tranquility in relating to each other.

This is the closest thing to a foretaste of paradise: tranquility born of mutual love and affection. Compassion is reflected in acting kindly and affectionately: Allah tells us this is the foundation of true joy in marriage. The Prophet - as attested to by his companions and wives - was full of compassion: they knew of no-one more compassionate and loving to his family. Aishah further stated that the Prophet was consistent in this, and all his other excellent character traits.

Compromise is another crucial ingredient to happiness in marriage. This can only come from awareness of one's weaknesses and the strengths of their spouses, or from higher spiritual awareness such as that of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This was the secret to the Prophet's success in forging and uniting people, and is the same principle he recommended for achieving bliss and peace in marriage. True compromise means that both parties will still feel respected and that their needs have been met. Both spouses are bound to find such a relationship worthy of investment, as it satisfies their innermost needs for love and respect.

This is why the Prophet, when deadlocked in arguing over an issue with his beloved wife suggested that she find a third party to arbitrate the issue. You may wonder: How could the Prophet bring himself to do this? He did so in order to set an example for all of us: that this is the way to resolve issues in marriage if a couple cannot do it themselves - we need to be willing to open up.

This openness should be manifested in one's willingness to examine issues from the perspective of others; very often a husband and wife get caught up in their own narrow views. *Tawhid* teaches us to look at the bigger picture, and to consider issues from the perspective of the greater reality. This would provide a better view of the situation, one closer to truth and justice.

Finally, contentment is another vital element in a happy marriage. Happiness in marriage - or life, for that matter - can never be attained without developing contentment. Contentment is the result of one's sincere appreciation for God's blessings, and trust in God's Decree. The Prophet said, ***"Richness is not accumulating material things; richness is the richness of the heart."*** (Reported by Bukhari)

By consistently nurturing a strong connection with Allah, and daily practice of these principles of companionship, compromise, compassion, contentment, couples can indeed make marriage work and worthy of celebration.