

"Because of this, we got to travel the country. We were blessed." They also played bowls for the Geldenhuis Deep Bowling Club for many years, and were both champions in the sport. "I don't know where all the years have gone," says Min. "Time goes very quickly. That's why you have to cherish the moments." With the exception of themselves, nobody in their wedding photograph is alive today. "I think God has blessed us with long, active lives."

what have they learnt?

- To love and respect each other.
- To stick to the old school of doing what your parents taught you ... to hold on to your values and morals.
- That integrity makes a man.
- That friends give joy to life and to a marriage.
- To see things from each other's point of view.
- To never go to bed cross with each other.
- To say "I love you" each evening before the lights are turned out.
- And, to get married on Boxing Day ... "It worked for us. If we had to do it all again, we wouldn't change a single thing."

Arbor Village recently opened the doors of its new health care centre. There are rooms available for elderly men and women who need special care. For more information, contact Lynn on 083 453 1002.

10 tips for an awesome relationship

by bedfordview personal life coach, marcia francois

Everybody wants to have a happy and successful relationship. We must remember that good relationships don't just happen. We have to work at them. Here are 10 key points for relationship success:

1. **Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!**
Don't expect your partner to read your mind. We all know that men and women use different languages – learn to speak your partner's language.
2. **Resolve conflicts or disagreements respectfully.**
It is a myth that happy couples never disagree. You are two unique people – of course you'll think differently about things. Learn to resolve conflicts when you are calm and can think things through rationally. And, always try to maintain the other person's dignity and self-esteem. That means no name calling!
3. **Have goals for your relationship.**
It is always a good idea to set goals together as a couple – whether three-month, six-month, one-year or five-year goals. For example, your goal this year might be to have more fun together as a couple.
4. **Stop keeping score.**
This is a biggie. Keeping score can be really bad for our relationships because we give from a position of expectation instead of out of love.
5. **Keep the romance alive.**
Remember when you first fell in love? How you spoke for hours on end just staring at one another? Start flirting again – use SMS, email, phone, notes on pillows, etc. Have a specified date night, at the very least, once a month.
6. **Ensure that each other's needs are met.**
Men and women have very different ideas of what is most important to them. If you don't know what your partner's top five needs are, ask them.
7. **Decide to be happy rather than right.**

Continually ask yourself, "do I want to be happy or right?" You may win the argument but have you won in love? Learn to admit when you're wrong and say sorry.

8. **Focus on your partner's strengths.**
Sometimes we forget why we fell in love. When we take our eyes off the negatives, we start to appreciate our partner's unique gifts and characteristics. When you're focused on what a good father your husband is, it's hard to keep remembering that he leaves the toilet seat up, or forgets to change the toilet roll.
9. **Make time for fun.**
You have to schedule it because if you wait until you have time to do fun things, you'll be waiting forever!
10. **Say "I love you" often.**
Those three little words mean such a lot. Don't assume that he/she knows it so you don't have to say it.

The good news is that you don't need him or her to be a willing participant to see a difference in your relationship. Of course, it's nicer if both of you decide to change your relationship for the better.

■ Marcia Francois is a personal life coach who teaches people how to get more from their lives. Visit www.takechargesolutions.org for your free success pack, articles and helpful tips.

special announcement for get it readers

Marcia introduces Love 101, a six-part coaching programme for couples. You will receive a 10% discount for any sessions booked for and paid during the month of February, just to celebrate Valentine's Day. To reserve your place or for more information, contact Marcia on 084 504 7229, or email marcia@takechargesolutions.org.