



LIVING
THE FAITH

Creating and Maintaining Balance in Your Marriage

BY KATHLEEN BILLINGS

As a family, one of our favorite summer activities is swimming in our pool. Having an inground pool within a few steps of our backdoor has been a sweet blessing. We splash, play, relax, and bond. My husband, Troy, works hard to maintain the pool and preserve the appropriate chemical balance, often referring to it as one big chemistry experiment! Now and then, the chemical balance is lost due to external factors such as a large amount of rain in a short time.

For the first time in 13 years, we have had an issue with nitrates eating our chlorine. It is so serious that after numerous attempts and way too much money spent on chemicals, we must now empty all 23,000 gallons of water and refill it with fresh water to fix the problem.

As I was lamenting our pool situation today, I thought about it in relation to marriage. I reflected on how sometimes outside influences seep into marriages and cause them to get completely off balance. Other times, our own marital neglect shifts the “chemical balance.” Maintaining a healthy, holy marriage requires diligence and a daily investment of time.

The first step to creating and maintaining balance in your marriage is ensuring that you have your priorities correctly ordered: God first, marriage second, children third, and work fourth. Rearranging the order causes imbalance, which leads to disorder and then eventually to chaos.

Work is at the service of your family, while children find security in parents who have a strong marriage. A solid prayer life and a deep relationship with God are the foundations of a loving, stable marriage. As God is the source of the grace necessary to live the sacrament of

marriage, maintaining this order is vital to the health of both your marriage and family life.

Life circumstances might require a temporary shift in your focus, but not a rearranging of your priorities.



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Do you have order in your marriage? Perhaps you need to “readjust the chemicals,” to maintain the proper balance. Maybe you need a completely fresh start and must drain the entire “pool” to recalibrate.

To assess the pool water, Troy also uses test strips which tell him precisely where the chemicals are registering. Occasionally, when everything registers perfectly, but the pool water still looks off, he takes a sample to the local pool store to have it evaluated. This extra step usually uncovers the underlying issue that the test strip was not able to pick up. How do you gauge the health of your marriage? You can start by taking a good, clear look at it. Is your spouse happy? Are you happy? What is the tone of your home? Do you need outside intervention to honestly assess where you are? If this is necessary, do not be ashamed or embarrassed. Having the courage to seek help demonstrates strength of character and wisdom. Many couples are not fully equipped with the tools necessary to be in a life-giving marriage. Outside advice can help provide these essential tools.

On the other hand, if your marriage just needs some minor calculated changes to get back on track, then I encourage you to talk about it with your spouse. Come up with a game plan together to readjust your lifestyle to create stability in your marriage and peace in your home.

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Even if your entire pool needs to be dumped, do not lose hope. At first, we tried band-aids on our pool problem, thinking we could avoid a costly refill. We didn’t want to deal with the underlying issue quite yet; but now we can no longer avoid it. When it comes to marriage, don’t do the same thing. Covering up your marital issues with band aids and avoiding the underlying problems only wastes time. Be bold and brave. Empty yourself and allow Christ to completely refill you, so you can create and maintain balance in your life and in your marriage.

Are you ready to dive in and discover the joy that comes from living a well-ordered, Christ-centered life?

