

## 6 Tips to Transform Your Marriage



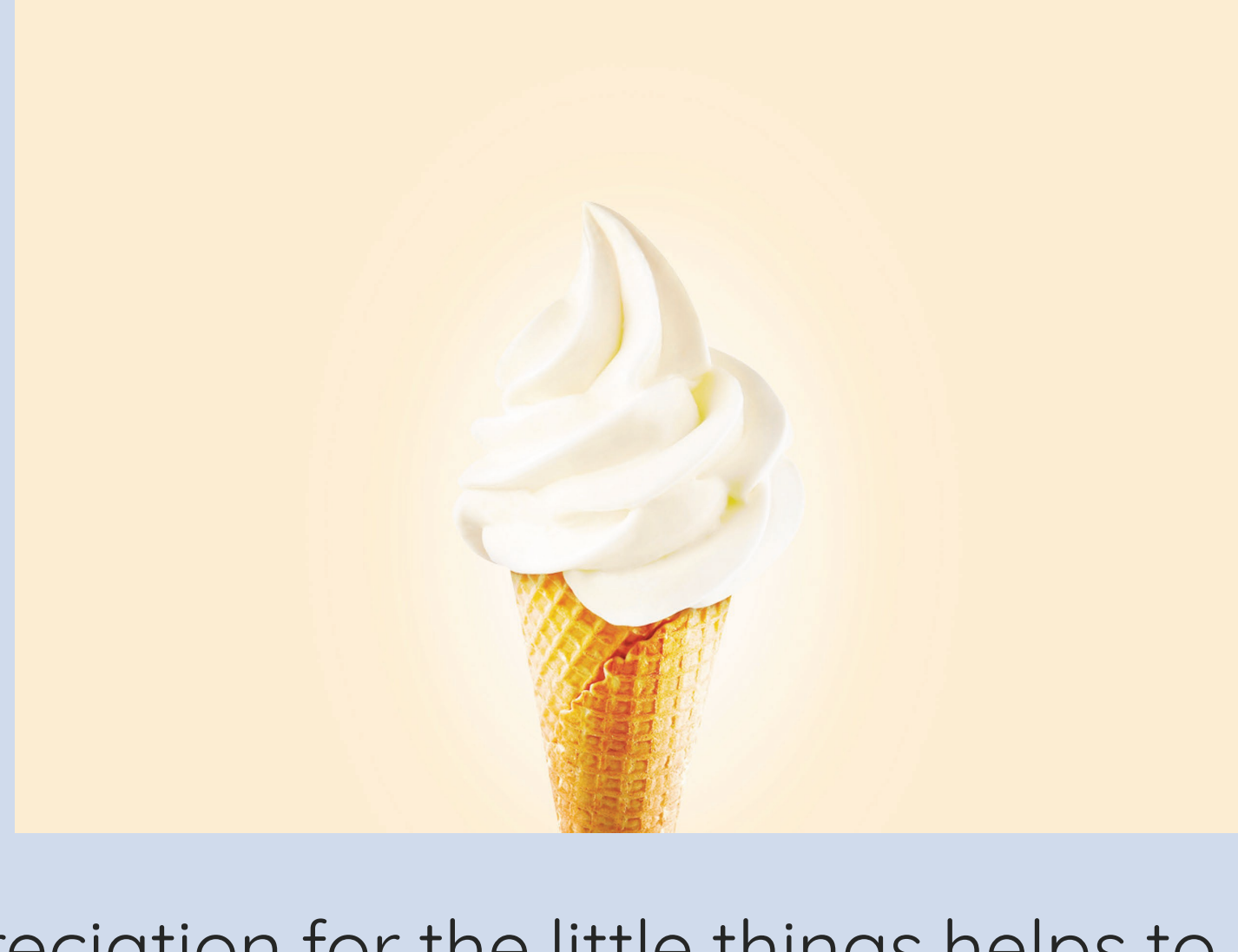
Marriage, like any facet of life, has its ups and downs. Whether things are going smoothly, or you feel you have hit a rough patch, there are things couples can do to smooth the gears in their relationship.

We sat down with four marriage therapists from Lakeside Family Services (Lakeside) as they shared their personal favourite tips for strengthening marriage – tried and tested by the couples they counsel. We hope you find them beneficial too!

### #1 Appreciate and admire your partner

When was the last time you expressed appreciation for your partner? One simple thing couples can do to strengthen their marriage is to express appreciation for their spouse and accept it when given.

In counselling couples, Elaine Lee helps them bridge their differences by getting them to notice little things they can appreciate about each other, for example, when their partner puts away the laundry, stocks up their refrigerator with ice cream and treats, or brings the other out for a meal.



Appreciation for the little things helps to build mutual admiration in the relationship. So don't be afraid to be generous with compliments and praises!

### #2 Work on yourself – you'll be glad you did!

Why does marriage seem so challenging at times? Ong Bee Yong says, "Sometimes we don't know ourselves until we are married. We might hold traumas we didn't even know we had. Marriage, like parenting, holds up a mirror to our past and reflects its impact on the present as we interact with our spouse and children."

This is especially true when we allow our personal issues to affect those nearest and dearest to us. The challenge is to thus become a better version of ourselves.



Wendy Yeap adds, "Marriage is an experience that shapes you one lesson at a time. When you show unconditional love, you learn to be humble, gracious, and regulate your emotions. It is hard work, but it is worth it."

### #3 Cultivate other-centredness

What does it mean to be other-centred? It is when you allow your partner to be who they are, and appreciate the person you married, even if they are different from you. You might not make the same choices or handle things the same way, but that is what makes your partner unique and your relationship interesting.

Wendy Yeap says, "It's all very intentional. When children come, you must be extra intentional. When you communicate from a



place of other-centredness, it reduces the stress of living together. You start having fun, fall in love all over again, and the love is stronger. The fuzzy feeling does come back!"

### #4 Guard your couple time

Do you still paktor (go on dates) with your partner after getting married? You should! Quality time is important because it provides opportunities for couples to communicate and have fun.

Elaine says, "A common challenge in marriage is finding time to communicate, especially after having children. When communicating, try to understand your partner's perspective without judgment and listen by putting yourself in the other's shoes."

Bee Yong adds, "Some couples may find it too hard to talk after not talking for a long time. But they can do things together that don't require much talking, like seeing a movie or going for a run. Next time, progress to going for supper together. Do what is comfortable at this point."



So, treasure any pockets of time you get with each other, such as when the kids have gone to bed, or establish "rituals" like going on annual couple staycations or cultivating hobbies together.

Quality time brings stability to family life, and having fun together is what keeps things fresh decades into the marriage.

### #5 Communicate with love

Ever had a loved one say something that rubs you the wrong way? Sometimes, they may not even be saying what you think they mean. Before feeling attacked and allowing the situation to escalate, it helps to ask clarifying questions first.

Also, if we have a valid point, how do we put it across? Do we use words that are constructive, building up rather than tearing down our partner? Wendy Koh says, "Language can be helpful or abusive, hitting below the belt. It's not a lack of language, but how we use it."

Although we may not always like what we hear, we can choose to give our partner the benefit of the doubt.



Elaine says, "Taking a negative view of small little things can lead to big arguments. Couples who come to see me started with one tiny fault line that was not attended to."

Bee Yong adds, "Two people who build a wall in their relationship cannot communicate much. To remove the wall, we must feel safe enough to start lowering it."

### #6 Seek marriage counselling if needed

Things aren't going as well as you hoped? Don't despair! Everyone needs help sometimes. If you and your partner are willing to see a marriage therapist, it means there is hope. Lakeside provides marriage counselling through our Marriage Support Services and Family Service Centre.

If both parties come in with a desire to work things out, we can guide you through this journey, from seeing one another's viewpoints, to modelling conflict resolution and more.

Wendy Koh put it best, "Nobody gets married to divorce, right? It's sad to see broken marriages, and the impact on the next generation when they see marriage as



hopeless. Children go through trauma seeing their parents fight, and they pick up on the good, bad, and ugly of it all. That is why we are change agents for the marriages that are hurting in silence."

Find out more about marriage counselling at Lakeside's [Marriage Support Services](#) and [Family Service Centre](#).

## Calling for Mentors



If you are interested in journeying with youths aged 11 to 17 years old, join The GRIT Academy (TGA) as a mentor!

TGA is a mentorship programme under our The GRIT Project where mentors walk alongside their mentees as they undergo a journey of self-discovery through experiential activities.

Sign up to make a difference in the lives of the next generation! Learn more about [The GRIT Academy](#).

## Volunteering Resumes at Lakeside Student Care



Our children from Lakeside Student Care (Jurong East) were so glad to see the easing of the safe management measures as it allows us to introduce a wider variety of

activities. Thank you, Epson volunteers for organising the enjoyable terrarium workshop for our children. They certainly enjoyed themselves!

Lakeside Student Care provides after-school care and supervision for children aged 7 to 12. Other than providing meals, homework help, and enrichment programmes, we partner with volunteering groups to bring our children a variety of experience like outings, workshops and learning trips.

If you or your organisation would like to partner with us and do something meaningful for the children, drop us an [email](#)!

### Follow Us